

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians

Guarding the Gospel of Grace

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A compilation of hand-out notes which were distributed during an expositional teaching series in a local assembly.

Index:

Index:	1
Introduction:.....	2
Overview of Chapter One:	6
Chapter One Text.....	7
Overview of Chapter Two:	30
Chapter Two Text	31
Overview of Chapter Three:	51
Chapter Three Text	53
Overview of Chapter Four:	83
Chapter Four Text	83
Overview of Chapter Five:.....	103
Chapter Five Text	103
Overview of Chapter Six:	134
Chapter Six Text	135

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Introduction:

Galatians is a treatise which defends our Christian liberty.² It contrasts law and grace; both of which have their purpose in God's plan for us, but must be applied as God intended. The purpose of the law³ as shown in Galatians is to show us our need for God's grace⁴ and *to bring us to belief in Jesus*. (Gal. 3:19-26), (See also Rom. 3:19, 20). Grace is the means by which we are eternally saved (Eph. 2:8, 9) *and* the means by which the believer should live (Col. 2:6; Titus 2:11, 12).

In reading both Galatians and Romans, it seems as though they are quite similar in content and therefore, somewhat redundant.⁵ After time and further study it seems that at least part of the explanation to that is the following:

Romans *defines* the Gospel message and Galatians *defends* the Gospel message. Romans emphasizes the mechanics and details of the saving message and Galatians emphasizes what our response should be to those who would pervert the saving message.

If this be so, where does the book of John come in? Its purpose statement is that we would believe in Jesus and have life (John 20:31). It doesn't even use the words "justify" or "justification" (the mechanics) but mentions belief in Jesus almost 100 times. It shows us the only thing that we can do; believe in Jesus (John 3:16, et al). The rest of it God handles, As we mature we need to know about those things also.⁶

To illustrate: If the goal is for a small child to grow an oak tree from an acorn; Romans gives us the details and mechanics of how it is to grow; Galatians defends the necessity of how it is to grow and be protected, e.g. it needs water, sunlight, nutrition, etc. but John doesn't go into those details. It just tells the child to put the acorn in the ground and cover it with dirt. He likely could not even understand the mechanics of the growth process.

¹ An "epistle" (ἐπιστολή - ep-is-tol-ay') is synonymous with a "letter" which was written to someone or to a group of people — contrary to the humorous definition of an epistle being the wife of an apostle.

² "Liberty" (ἐλευθερία- el-yoo-ther-ee'-ah) is used 4 times in 3 verses: 2:4; 5:1; 5:13.

³ "Law" (νόμος- nom'-os) is used 25 times in Galatians and is clearly shown NOT to be the means of justification in God's sight (Gal. 2:16, 21; 3:21, 22; Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:20, 28). It can refer to the five books of Moses, the Mosaic Law (either the 10 commandments or all 613 of them), civil law, or a principle or precept. This distinction is usually made clear by the context.

⁴ "Grace" (χάρις - khar'-ece) is mentioned 7 times in Galatians and is the determining factor for the true Gospel message (1:6-10).

⁵ ☺ Humorous sign on office door - "Department of Redundancy Department."

⁶ If by any chance you as a reader of this study do not know for certain that you will go to heaven when you die, please, right now, take God at His word and believe in Jesus to save you as He says in John 3:16. 1st John 5:13 tells us, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life,..." Eternal life is a free gift that cannot be lost, (Eph. 2:8, 9) and If we then obey God as a believer we can experience true joy and fruitfulness in our lives. Much of this study will help in that area. If we can assist you or if there are questions concerning believing in Jesus and receiving eternal life, please contact us at Free@FreeGraceResources.org.

While we should avoid being contentious, there are some principles and doctrines for which it is worth contending. Jude 3 exhorts us that we, "...should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." In the next verse the reason for this exhortation is given; there had been, "...certain men crept in unawares, ...ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." The apostle Paul experienced a similar attack of Satan's emissaries in the Galatian churches He had taught true doctrine but others had come in and undermined both Paul and his teaching.

Paul's critics have come to be known as *Judaizers* since they were trying to make observance of the Jewish law a condition for salvation and for sanctification within Christianity. They not only attacked his doctrine but they attacked Paul himself by trying to undermine his apostleship. As we stand for God's truth we should not be surprised if we experience similar trials. II Tim. 3:12. tells us, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." If you are not suffering persecution, either you are not living "godly in Christ Jesus," or, cheer up, just wait a while; it's coming. Matt. 7:6. further elaborates, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." Sometimes the messenger is rejected along with the message.

We need to grasp the historical context of the epistle if we are to more fully realize the spiritual content of the epistle:

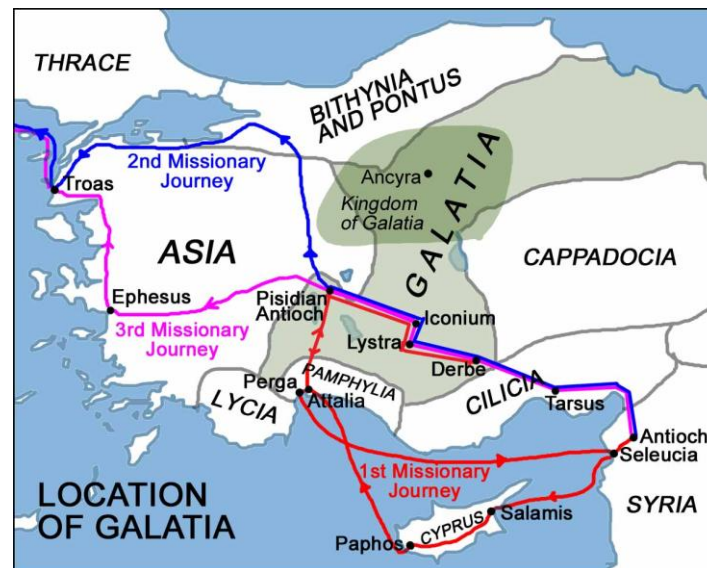
The writer of the book: God is the Author (2 Tim. 3:16), but the Holy Spirit used the apostle Paul to pen this letter as is seen in the first two verses: "Paul, an apostle... unto the churches of Galatia:" (See also 5:2). Paul was a native of the large and influential city of Tarsus (Acts. 21:39); located near the northeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. (Please see the map on the next page). Tradition places the date of his birth at two years after Messiah's birth. His Hebrew name was Saul (meaning "desired") and he was later known by his Greek name as Paul⁷ (meaning "little").

The first mention that we see of him is in Acts 7:58 (ca A.D. 36): As the Jewish mob began to stone Stephen for his stinging testimony, "...the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul." Acts 8:1-3. elaborates on Saul's endorsement of persecuting the believers in Yeshua. In Acts, chapter 9, we see the miraculous conversion of Saul while on the way to Damascus to persecute believers. He had been zealous in his obedience to the law (Philippians 3:4-9). His zeal then turned from a misguided religious fervor of arresting believers to a life-long passion of serving his Savior. God used him to pen 13 NT epistles; some believe that he also wrote the epistle to the Hebrews. His parting words prior to his martyrdom were, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me

⁷ Also referred to by some as Rabbi Shaul.(שָׁאוּל - shaw-ool'), (Σαούλ - sah-ool'). Here's a trick question: "When did God change Saul's name to "Paul?" The answer is that we have no Bible evidence that He did. What we do know is that he was known by his Hebrew name until beginning his first missionary journey to the Gentiles mentioned in Acts 13. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13). Saul (when referring to the Apostle) is only mentioned 28 times and only in the book of Acts. Acts 13:9. states, "Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him...." This is the last recorded time that he is called by his Hebrew name. He is called Paul close to 160 times after this.

only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2. Tim. 4:6-8). We should all strive to be able to say the same.

The recipients of the book: As also seen in the first two verses, the recipients of this epistle are "the churches⁸ of Galatia." There is divided opinion whether or not this is speaking of the churches in the northern portion of the province of Galatia or to the churches in southern Galatia which Paul founded during his first missionary journey as recorded in Acts 13 and 14.⁹ Please see the map below. Galatia was not a city, it was a *region* which contained a number of cities. Galatia was located in what is now the central region of modern-day Turkey.



⁸ The Bible uses the word "church" differently than we often do. In modern English the word "church" is used in several ways:

1. A building designated as a place of worship.
2. A denomination or particular sect, e.g. Baptist, Methodist.
3. The Body of Christ; the universal church composed of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture. (Eph. 1:22, 23)
4. The local church; a geographically limited assembly of believers who meet in a specific location composed of members of the universal church. (Gal. 1:2; et al).

Only the last two of these are recognized in the New Testament. The Greek word translated "church" in the N.T. is "ἐκκλησία (ek-klay-see'-ah). It literally means "a called out group or assembly." It was used of the nation of Israel while in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) but not while they were in the land. It is also translated "assembly" and used of a gathering of citizens in a public meeting place (Acts 19:32, 39, 41). These two uses of the word are in striking contrast to the N.T. Church that Jesus said that He would build (Matt. 16:18). He was referring to what is commonly called the "universal" church, "the church, which is His body" (Eph. 1:22, 23) which He "purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). You cannot join this one. You must be spiritually born into it by belief in Christ (John 3:3, 16).

⁹ Just to get the feel of what Paul was doing, I figured the mileage traveled during his first missionary journey which was the shortest of the three recorded missionary trips. I calculated that he covered approximately 1,400 miles; roughly half on land and half on water — All that without interstate highways or a GPS. Paul's first missionary journey is recorded in Acts 13 and 14 (ca 46-48 A.D.), his second in Acts 15:40-18:23 (ca 49-52 A.D.), and his third in Acts 18:23b-21:15 (ca 53-58 A.D.). I also see his trip to Rome as a prisoner to be a 4th "missionary Journey" (Acts 27, 28 ca 60 A.D.) as Paul consistently redeemed the time and presented the Good News of salvation every chance that he had. Should we not do the same?

The date of the book: The determination of the date of the writing of the epistle is dependent upon establishing its recipients. If Paul was writing to the churches in southern Galatia which he had founded during his first missionary journey, then the early date of about A.D. 48-49 is correct. If Paul was writing to those in northern Galatia, then a much later date of A.D. 57-60. would be in order. For reasons not necessary to propose in this study, we believe it most likely that the recipients were the churches in southern Galatia and that the early date is to be accepted as accurate. There is no reason for dogmatism here as neither date changes the tremendous impact of the message.

The theme of the book: The theme of Galatians, and the central theme of the New Testament is that true freedom comes only through Jesus Christ. In Galatians Paul deals with spiritual freedom in two areas: (1) - Salvation, through which faith in Christ alone sets a person free from the bondage of sin and the law. and (2) - Sanctification in the Christian life. This involves the freedom that God gives His children in the Christian life; In other words, Christian liberty.

Chart overview of the book:

FOCUS	GOSPEL OF GRACE DEFENDED		GOSPEL OF GRACE EXPLAINED		GOSPEL OF GRACE APPLIED	
REFERENCE	1:1	2:1	3:1	4:1	5:1	6:1. 6:18
DIVISION	PAUL’S APOSTLESHIP	PAUL’S AUTHORITY	BONDAGE OF LAW	FREEDOM OF GRACE	FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT	FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT
TOPIC	BIOGRAPHICAL EXPLANATION		DOCTRINAL EXPOSITION		PRACTICAL EXHORTATION	
	AUTHENTICATION OF LIBERTY		ARGUMENTATION FOR LIBERTY		APPLICATION OF LIBERTY	
LOCATION	SOUTH GALATIAN THEORY: SYRIAN ANTIOCH NORTH GALATIAN THEORY: EPHESUS OR MACEDONIA					
TIME	SOUTH GALATIAN THEORY: A.D. 49 NORTH GALATIAN THEORY: A.D. 53–56					

Chart from the Open Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville

Chapters 1 and 2	Chapters 3 and 4	Chapters 5 and 6
Personal	Doctrinal	Practical
Vindication	Exposition	Application
Testimonial and apologetic ¹⁰	Doctrinal and argumentative	Practical and hortatory
Source of Gospel	Defense of Gospel	Application of Gospel
Gospel from God (1:1)	Gospel superior to law (5:1)	Gospel of Spirit (5:25)
Defends his apostleship	Defends his Gospel message	Defends the Christian life

¹⁰ "Apologetics" from (ἀπολογία- ap-ol-og-ee'-ah, "speaking in defense") is the discipline of defending a position through the systematic use of information. As in Php. 1:17, "...knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel."

We frequently see Paul's epistle's beginning with a strong dose of doctrine, and then concluding with practical application of the doctrine. This tells me that you cannot have right living without right doctrine.

The outline of the book - and what we can expect to learn and apply from this book.

Galatians Outline - Bob Wilkin, Grace NT Commentary

- I. Salutation and Greeting (1:1–5)
- II. Theme: Don't Let Anyone Move You from Paul's Gospel (1:6–10)
- III. Paul's Life and Ministry Prove That His Gospel Is the True Gospel (1:11–2:21)
- IV. The Old Testament Scriptures Prove That Paul's Gospel Is the True Gospel (3:1–4:31)
- V. Only Paul's Gospel Allows Believers to Serve Christ Successfully Now So That They Might Rule with Him Forever (5:1–6:10)
- VI. Epilogue: Paul's Gospel Leads One to Boast in Christ, Not in the Flesh (6:11–16)
- VII. Farewell (6:17–18)

Galatians Outline - Dr. Mark G. Cambron, NT Book By Book Survey

- I. Salutation of Letter** (1:1-5)
 - A. From the Brethren (1:1, 2a)
 - B. To the Believers (1:2b-5)
- II. Shock over Legalism** (1:6- 2:21)
 - A. Perversion of the Gospel (1:6-9)
 - B. Provision of the Gospel (1:10-12)
 - C. Power of the Gospel (1:13-2:21)
- III. Spirit versus Law** (3-5)
 - A. As to Works (3:1-18)
 - B. As to Words (3:19-5:15)
 - C. As to Walk (5:16-26)
- IV. Service of Love** (6)
 - A. Restoring the Brother (6:1)
 - B. Relieving the Burden (6:2-6)
 - C. Reaping the Harvest (6:7-9)
 - D. Regulating the Duty (6:10)
 - E. Resisting the Evil (6:11-13)
 - F. Rejoicing the More (6:14-16)
 - G. Resting the Case (6:17-18)

We will attempt to view the epistle and portions of it first, telescopically, then focus in more microscopically. Both methods are essential in order to realize the content and intent of the message. Our goal is to learn what God is saying to us and to apply it in our lives.

Overview of Chapter One:

Paul begins the epistle with a statement affirming his apostleship, a brief salutation, and then immediately launches into a gallant and urgent exhortation concerning the tragic results of

churches' departure from the truth of the Gospel that he had taught them. He then begins a monologue of his personal testimony verifying the authenticity of the source of the message which flows into chapter 2. Chapters 1 and 2 are personal in nature. Paul defends his authority and the origination of the Gospel that he preached.

Chapter One Text

1. Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)
2. And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:
3. Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,
4. Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:
- 5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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

Verses 1- 5 contain the introduction. Unlike our modern western-style of writing in which we put the writer's name at the end of the letter, the writer conveniently puts his name right at the beginning of the letter. Who is the writer? "Paul, an apostle,..." The first verse tells us that the human author is the Apostle Paul.

"Paul, an apostle..." An "apostle"¹¹ is one who is sent forth with a mission or a message. This term was specifically applied to the twelve and in a broader sense to several more. The original

¹¹ The word "apostle" (ἀπόστολος - ap-os'-tol-os) simply means "one sent with a mission or message." It is used in both a strict sense and in a general sense in the New Testament. Many of them had two names and many of the names were also in common use by others.

Apostles in the Strict Sense

Matt. 10:2-4:

1. Simon (who is called Peter, Cephas - John 1:42)
2. Andrew (Simon's brother)
3. James (*son of* Zebedee)
4. John (James' brother)
5. Philip
6. Bartholomew (likely Nathaniel)
7. Thomas (Didymas - John 11:16)
8. Matthew (the publican, Levi - Matt. 9:9 cf. Luke 5:27-29)
9. James (*son of* Alphaeus)
10. Labbaeus (whose surname was Thaddeus), Judas (*brother* or *son of* James - Acts 1:13)
11. Simon (the Canaanite), the Zealot (Luke 6:15)
12. Judas Iscariot (who betrayed Jesus)
13. Matthias - (Acts 1:23, 26) chosen to replace Judas Iscariot
14. Paul - (Gal. 1:1; 2:8)

Apostles in the General Sense - The wider circle:

15. Andronicus - (Rom. 16:7)
16. Junia (Junias) - (Rom. 16:7)
17. Apollos - (1 Cor. 6-9; 1 Cor. 1-8, 22?)
18. Barnabas - (Acts 14:1-14) [Continued on following page]

apostles and Paul were endowed with sign or miracle-working gifts such as healing, prophecy, etc., which confirmed their spoken ministry and authority (Acts 5:12-16; 28:8, 9; Heb 2:3, 4). Specific apostleship ended with the last apostle, John, and his revelation (ca A.D. 95-97) which completed the written revelation from God (Rev. 22:18, 19).

Two requirements for apostleship were; to have seen the risen Messiah (1 Cor. 9:1; 1 Cor. 15:4-8), and to have been personally appointed by Jesus Himself (Acts 9:1-17; Acts 26:12-18). Paul fulfilled both of these requirements. Another study in itself is about those we hear today in the signs and wonders movement who do *not* meet these requirements, who *falsely* claim to be modern-day prophets and apostles and add to (or change) God's completed revelation. Please see the warning in Matt. 7:15-23 about false prophets who appear to be genuine "sheep" (v. 15, *wolves* in sheep's clothing), who perform miracles (v. 22) but who are eternally lost (v. 23).

The apostles, along with other gifted men, were given *to* the church, the body of Christ (Eph. 4:8-11) and were foundational in their function (Eph. 2:20). The apostles' mission has been accomplished and we now have the completed revelation of God. The apostles spoke with the authority of God. We can't do that. We must speak God's Word with the authority *from* and *of* God's Word (Heb. 4:12).

Though we as believers are sent forth with a mission and a message, we are not labeled as apostles in the Bible. We are called "ambassadors" (2 Cor. 5:20). To us is committed the "word of reconciliation" (v. 19); the message of the substitutionary payment that Jesus made for us in order for us to have His righteousness and receive eternal life (v. 21).

An ambassador:

1. Represents his home country in a foreign land. (We are strangers and pilgrims here - 1 Peter 2:11, 12).
2. Is under orders of his own sovereign, not that of the land in which he resides. (We are to obey God and share the gospel to please Him. - 1 Thess. 2:4; Gal. 1:10; John 14:15; Matt. 5:16; Eph. 2:10).
3. Returns to his homeland when war is declared. (We will be taken up to be with Jesus before the 7 years of tribulation - 1 Thess:4:13-5:11).

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

Paul's apostleship and associated authority was not of *men* (plural) neither by man (singular) but was a direct revelation from Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Jesus from the dead. This is also a reference to two other foundational doctrines: the deity of Jesus (He is different in

19. Epaphroditus - (Philipp. 2:25) "Messenger" is *αποστολος* (ap-os'-tol-os) in the Greek.

20. Silas - (1 Thess. 2:6; cf. 1 Thess. 1:1)

21. Timothy (1 Thess. 2:6; cf. 1 Thess. 1:1)

Two unnamed apostles (2 Cor. 8:18, 22, 23) - "Messenger" in v. 23 is *ἀπόστολος* (ap-os'-tol-os) in the original Greek.

The Lord Jesus Christ - (Heb.3:1) cf. Luke 19:10 - His mission: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." His message: John 6:47, "...He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

False apostles - (II Cor. 11:13) Referring to those who are servants of Satan, corrupting others from the simplicity that is in Christ, teaching another Jesus and another gospel.

form or person than God the Father but He is equal in authority and power. There is only *one* God - Deut. 6:4), and, also a reference to the miraculous event of the resurrection which necessarily had to occur in order for us to be eternally saved (1 Cor. 15:17, 18; Rom. 5:9).

Paul's apostleship was "...not of men," Of" (ἀπό - apo') is the preposition of source or origin. Paul's apostleship did not come from any group of men. Neither the other apostles nor the leaders of the church at Antioch ordained him to be an apostle (cf. Acts 13:3). He wasn't voted in by the church.

Neither was Paul's apostleship received "by man." "By" (διὰ - dee-ah'): through, by way of, by means of, means or agency. He did not become an apostle through the ministry of Ananias who assisted him shortly after his conversion in Acts 9:17. He did not become an apostle through the ministry of Barnabas who introduced him to the church at Antioch as recorded in Acts 11:25, 26. His apostleship did not come from a group of men nor did it come through a human agency. It came as a gracious gift "by (διὰ - dee-ah') Jesus Christ, and God the Father..." This is an example of God's sovereignty.

When we think of the 12 *apostles*, we sometimes assume the terms to be synonymous with the 12 *disciples*. The 12 whom Jesus chose to train for 3 years happened to be both. "Disciple" or "disciples" is found 272 times in the Gospels and in Acts. The *word* "disciple" is not found later in the NT, but the concept is. A disciple (μαθητής - math-ay-tace') is a pupil or learner of a teacher. In the NT culture, a disciple usually followed the teacher as he traveled about and taught.

Disciples are found at 3 different levels: 1. Curious followers (including some unbelievers), 2. Convinced followers, and 3. Committed followers.¹²

We find in the Gospels that the term disciple/disciples almost always is referring to those of the twelve whom Jesus initially had chosen. In Acts the term seems to broaden in meaning some as in a number of instances it refers to those who were becoming disciples or known to be the "committed follower" type (Acts 11:26). We can only speculate why the term "disciple" is not used *after* the book of Acts, especially when Jesus told *His* disciples to "make disciples" (Matt. 28:19, 20). Perhaps it was due to the fact that we can now no longer physically and geographically follow Jesus around and learn of Him.

Discipleship in principle is still for us today. The epistles are replete with exhortations to obey God's Word and Paul even tells others to, "Be ye followers (or "imitators" - μιμητής - mim-ay-tace') of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1). Jesus said in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep¹³ my commandments." The gift of eternal life is free to us (Rom. 6:23) but discipleship is costly (John 8:31; Luke 9:23; 14:53). The cost is only temporary and the eternal reward is great (Luke 18:29, 30).

¹² Taken from an excellent article found at <http://www.gracelife.org/resources/articles.asp?id=20> There are many other helpful Bible studies to be found there. This website also contains the best in-depth study that I have seen concerning what the Bible says about Lordship Salvation: This can be read online or hard-copy can be purchased. <http://www.gracelife.org/resources/dissertation.asp>.

¹³ Grammatically speaking, this verse could correctly translated two ways: If you love me keep (imperative) my commandments, or, If you love me *you will keep* (indicative) my commandments. Either translation seems to be congruent with other Scripture. Various Bible versions differ.

Significant error abounds concerning discipleship today. One extreme is that is that many Christians and many teachers who claim to be teaching the Bible tend to discount obedience to God. We are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10). Titus 3:5 tells us, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

We see in Jesus' parting words to the twelve that discipleship includes obedience to His commands, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matt. 28:19, 20). The first instance of "teach" is actually the verb form of "disciple."¹⁴ In other words, Jesus is saying to "disciple-ize" all nations. The second instance, "teaching" is the usual word used for teaching;¹⁵ we are told to make disciples and teach disciples to obey His commands.

I believe that if these two verses were believed, understood, and applied by church leadership today, that there would be major modifications to and even elimination of many church procedures and programs. If this was to occur there also would also be great revival in our land.

The other prevalent doctrinal error concerning discipleship is the claim of some who advocate what is called Lordship salvation; that being a believer and being a disciple is synonymous — that you must make Jesus Lord of your life (be a disciple) in order to be eternally saved.

Lordship salvation is sometimes supported by the use of this syllogism:¹⁶

1. Major premise - A believer is a disciple.
2. Minor premise - A disciple is obedient to God.
3. Conclusion -Therefore a believer *is* obedient to God.

The fatal problem with this logic and its conclusion is that *the major premise is untrue*; all believers are *not* disciples even though they should be. John 6:60-66 records a situation in which some disciples are not believers. Also, remember Judas, a disciple who was lost (Matt. 26:24; Luke 22:3).

The Differences between Salvation and Discipleship	
<u>Salvation</u>	<u>Discipleship</u>
Justification	Sanctification
By grace	By works
Through faith Free Christ's love for me Christ's commitment to me Christ's cross for me Eternal life	Through faithfulness Costly My love for Christ My commitment to Christ My cross for Christ Eternal rewards
An unbeliever's response	A believer's response

¹⁴ μαθητεύω - math-ayt-yoo'-o

¹⁵ διδάσκω - did-as'-ko

¹⁶ A syllogism is a formal deductive argument made up of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. E.g. 1. All birds have feathers. 2. A crow is a bird. 3. Therefore a crow has feathers.

Instantaneous	Progressive
NEW BIRTH	CONTINUED GROWTH
One condition	Many conditions
Inclusive	Exclusive

Chart is from an article found at <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1999ii/J23-99>

Many of the verses offered to support this doctrine are those which are telling a *believer* how to become a disciple, *not* a lost person how to have eternal life. E.g. John 15:8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

The teaching of Lordship salvation adds man's imperfect work (Isa. 64:6) to Jesus' finished work for our justification and therefore perverting this good news of salvation by grace through faith (See Gal. 1:6-9). The major thrust of Galatians combats this error.

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

Those serving with Paul endorsed this message and greeted its recipients. We can only speculate who he is referring to as "the brethren which are with me." We conjecture that he could have been referring to his fellow church leaders at Antioch or Barnabas and others who were with him on the past missionary journey. The initial recipients of the letter were the churches of Galatia. These likely were the local assemblies that he established during his first missionary journey. He had evangelized, disciplined, and founded churches in the area during his first missionary journey as recorded in Acts 13 and 14.

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

This greeting or very similar was used in all of Paul's epistles¹⁷ and was also used by Peter and John. "Grace" (χάρις - khar'-ece) is used 7 times in Galatians and means "unmerited or undeserved favor, good will, loving-kindness, merciful kindness." It has sometimes been described by comparing it to mercy: Mercy is not getting what you deserve; Grace¹⁸ *is* getting what you don't deserve. A helpful acronym is **G**od's **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist's **E**xpense.

"Grace" (חֵן - khane) is found 39 times in the KJV OT. The same Hebrew word is also translated "favour" 26 times. "Grace" is used 131 times in the NT; 91 of these occurrences are found in Paul's epistles. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians introduced the NT Church to us, perhaps he is also introducing a fuller concept of grace to us also.

A few of the functions of grace as shown in the NT are as follows:¹⁹

Grace is the basis for the gift of our salvation (Eph. 2:8 9).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

¹⁷ It is interesting to note that in 3 epistles (1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus), Paul adds a third part to his salutation: grace, mercy, and peace. These 3 epistles were written to pastors. One commentator suggested that perhaps pastors need more mercy than others.

¹⁸ A humorous fictitious story concerning grace/mercy: There was once an older lady who wasn't known for being very pretty. (When she walked in a room, the mice jumped up on a chair) She went to a professional photographer to have her picture taken. When she later looked at the proofs she threw them back at the photographer and exclaimed, "Young man, these pictures don't do me justice." The photographer picked up the photos, looked at them, and looked at her, then replied, "Madam, you don't need justice, you need mercy."

¹⁹ These points were gleaned from lesson 2 on Galatians by Pastor Dennis Rokser - DuluthBible.org.

Grace is the means of Godly Christian living (Titus 2:10-12).

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;"

Grace is the real issue in spiritual growth (2 Peter 3:18).

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

Grace is the source of God-honoring Christian service (1 Cor. 15:10).

"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

Grace is the focus of the Gospel message (Acts 20:24).

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

God wants every believer to be established in grace (Heb. 13:9).

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."

Both in our justification and our sanctification, we are under grace, not law (Rom. 6:14).

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."²⁰

We will emphasize the importance of the "grace" message throughout this study series because Paul, by the Holy Spirit's direction emphasizes it throughout the epistle.

"Grace *be* to you and peace..."

Many are seeking peace, but in real life, grace comes *before* peace. You cannot have true peace without God's grace. People are looking for peace but are looking for it in the wrong places.²¹

The Bible mentions at least two types of peace that relates to us: peace *with* God, and peace *of* God. Peace *with* God comes from believing in Jesus as our Savior. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). We have the peace *of* God by obedience to his commands: See Philippians. 4:4-9 and also the fruit of the spirit consisting partially of peace, later in this epistle (Gal. 5:22, 23). We have this God-given peace as we "walk in the spirit" (5:16). We will see later that this has to do with obedience to God's Holy Spirit as found in the Word of God.

"Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,"

²⁰ In light of all this it should be evident why we entitled our website www.FreeGraceResources.org.

²¹ A humorous related story is told about a policeman coming upon a drunk one night searching actively on the ground around a lamp post in town. He asked the drunk what he was doing. The drunk replied that he had lost his wallet and was looking for it. The policeman asked if that area was where he had lost it. The drunk replied, "No, I lost it in that that alley over there, but it is too dark there to look for it."

Here Paul not only states the source of this grace and peace but he again affirms the unity and deity of Jesus²² and God the Father. In verse one Paul asserts that his apostleship came from "Jesus Christ and God the Father..." with the emphasis on the work of God the Father, who raised him from the dead. In this verse he emphasizes the work of "our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins," as we shall see in the next verse.

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

"...our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself²³ for our sins;..."Have you ever considered the price that God had to pay that we might be saved from the eternal judgment which we deserve? When God created the earth, which has intrinsic financial value beyond our comprehension, it didn't cost Him a nickel. He just spoke it into existence. When He paid the price for our salvation, it cost Him dearly. He willingly gave His own Son as the payment for our sin. 1 Cor. 6:19, 20 informs us that we "are bought with a price."

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Since we are "bought with a price" and we are not our own, is it not a bit selfish and shortsighted to assume that we should just live our lives as *we* please? We should be seeking God's will for our lives, not our will. Is it not reasonable to assume that God knows what is best for us much better than we do? There are a number of verses which speak of the "will of God" for us. One passage is Romans 12:1, 2:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Among other things, this good, and acceptable, and perfect,²⁴ will of God passage is telling me that if we are not being transformed by the renewing our minds, that we are probably being conformed to this world.

The word "world" (αἰὼν - ahee-ohn') in Galatians 1:4 and the following Rom. 12:2, could be better translated "age" or "period of time." It is the world at a given time; a period in the world's history." It is referring to the "present evil" *age*, not necessarily the physical earth.

"...according to the will of God and our Father:"

²² Please see also John 20:28, where "doubting" Thomas believes and exclaims to Messiah, "...My Lord and my God." (ὁ Κύριός μου καὶ ὁ Θεός μου - Literally, "the Lord of me and the God of me.") These are the same Greek words (kurios - Lord, and theos - God) that the Septuagint translators used to translate "LORD God" (יהוה אלהים - Yahweh Elohim) in Genesis 2:8 and many subsequent passages. In the next verse Yeshua commended Thomas for his perception and belief.

²³ See John 10:17, 18. God the Father willingly gave His Son and Jesus willingly gave His own life.

²⁴ An interesting devotional parallel to the "good, and acceptable, and perfect" will of God here can be found in Eze. 22:31, where Yahweh is exhorting the unfaithful priests, princes, prophets, and people and states, "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."Our LORD is looking for someone faithful who will stand in the GAP, - Good, and Aceptable, and Perfect, will of God.

All this did not come as a surprise to our omniscient God and Father. Has it ever occurred to you that nothing ever occurs to God. He is all-knowing. He is not limited by time as are we (John 8:58). Although He created Adam innocent and without sin, God, in His sovereignty gave to both Adam and to us a free will. Adam chose to sin and we choose to sin but we can also choose (Rev. 22:17) to believe in Jesus who paid for the sin of the whole world (I John 2:2). He knew ahead of time that we would need a Savior. He also made provision for our justification ahead of time (1 Pet. 2:18-20). It is His desire that we *all* be eternally saved (1 Tim. 2:3, 4).

5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

"The new believers in Galatia were in danger of robbing God of the glory due to Him. The false gospel of the Judaizers was already causing the Galatians to bicker and fight (5:13–15, 26). That certainly did not bring glory to God. In addition, unlike Paul, the Judaizers were seeking to receive glory themselves (cf. 6:12–14)."²⁵

The Gospel:

The next verse (v.6) contains the first of a number of references to the word, "gospel"²⁶ in Galatians. The *definition* of the word is simply "good news" and is translated "good tidings" in Luke 2:10 where the angels bring the good news of Jesus' birth to the shepherds.

We approach this controversial subject because it is central to the message of the epistle. In Galatians we are told that some would "pervert" the gospel (1:7) and that we invite God's judgment upon us if we "preach any other gospel" (1:8, 9). These poignant statements and others dictate that it is essential for us know *what* the gospel is in Galatians.

There is no dispute concerning the basic *definition* of the word as "good news." It also has been almost universally accepted in "Christendom" that the meaning of the word *in Scripture* is "the message which must be believed (or in some cases, accomplished) in order to receive eternal life." The contention down through time has been concerning exactly *what* must be believed or done in order to receive eternal life; i.e. is the addition of man's works also necessary and if so, which ones? The Jerusalem council of Acts 15 (ca A.D. 50) was an early example of this conflict.

The majority of "Christendom" today would offer as the *content* of the gospel something similar to the following; repent of your sins and believe in Jesus, give your life to God, turn from your sins or at least be willing to turn from your sins, commit your life to Him, forsake all, give your heart to Jesus, ask Jesus into your heart,²⁷ ad nauseam. Some of these efforts may sound good on the surface and some may be beneficial to achieve, but *every one* of these additional requirements are adding man's efforts to Jesus' perfect payment for our sins and confirm that the adherents of these false messages do not believe the true message of John 3:16; believe in Jesus

²⁵ Paragraph from Grace NT Commentary. <http://www.faithalone.org>

²⁶ The noun form of the word "gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον - yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on) is used 7 times in Galatians (1:6, 7, 11, 2:2, 5, 7, 14). The verb form (εὐαγγελίζω - yoo-ang-ghel-id'-zo) is also found 7 times (1:8 [2x], 9, 11, 16, 23, 4:13) and is translated as "preach" or "preach the gospel." E.g. in 1:11, the phrase "... the gospel which was preached of me..." could literally be translated "the gospel which was 'gospelized' or 'good-news'ed' of me." When Paul exhorts Timothy (and us) in 2 Tim. 4:5 to "do the work of an evangelist," Paul is *not* saying that we should buy a big tent and learn to scream at people. He *is* saying to do the work of a "gospelist" or a "good-newsist." How are we doing with this important task?

²⁷ The primary verse that is offered to support this claim is Rev. 3:20. Several helpful Bible studies in reference to this teaching may be found at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/revelation320.html> .

and receive everlasting life. This false message of faith-plus-works for eternal life is condemned in Galatians *and* throughout God's Word.

We receive eternal life by belief in Jesus; plus or minus nothing (John 3:16; 6:47; Acts 16:31). In Ephesians 2:8, 9, Paul informs the Ephesian believers that they had been saved "...by grace through faith and ...not of works..."). This is same message in different words. The Epistle to the Galatians defends this grace message and so do we. The apostolic conclusion of the previously mentioned Jerusalem council was that they did *not* have to keep the law to be saved as some had taught (Acts 15:5) but "...that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved,..." (Acts 15:11).

It would make sense that if we wanted to determine what was meant by the word "gospel" in Galatians that we should consider what *Galatians* says about this message. Many would agree that Galatians 2:16 summarizes this important message that we are to defend and proclaim to the lost:

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

This certainly describes accurately the good news that shows how we can be justified but is it the full extent of the gospel which Paul is addressing here? Later in chapter two and into chapter three there seems to be a transition into living the Christian life by grace also. We will address more on that when we get to that section. We believe that the Christian life lived by grace is also a "good news" principle which we are exhorted to defend and proclaim.

Usually when one is seeking a Bible definition of the gospel, the classic passage turned to is in the chapter known as "the resurrection chapter," 1st Cor. 15:1-4:

1. Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;
2. By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.²⁸
3. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;
4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

It seems to be pretty clear that the definition of the "gospel " mentioned here is at least the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah. But is there more than that?

Some do not notice that verse 4 is *not* the end of the thought (or definition). This phrase begins a series or continuity of thoughts in verse 4 with "And that..." The following four verses also begin with the linking phrases "And that," "After that," and "Last of all." Each of these verses record instances of people witnessing the risen Messiah. The gospel here is *more* than just the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It also consists of the record of multiple witnesses to the fact of the resurrection of Yeshua.

²⁸ 1 Cor. 15:2 "believed in vain," (cf. v13, 17). The "vain" faith has nothing to do with the quality of our faith, it has to do with the quality of the object of our faith; whether or not Jesus was resurrected from the dead as was prophesied.

If these are facts that I must believe in order to become eternally saved, then I personally have a problem; Since I was a small child I was taught and believed that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again; but I also believed that I had to achieve some vague level of a righteous life or good works in order to be saved. I believed that Jesus died, was buried, and rose again to pay for sins *but I was still lost*. I had not believed in Jesus as per John 3:16; to give me everlasting life. But until years *after* I had believed in Jesus for eternal life, I had not even considered all the witnesses to the resurrection. Was I really saved? According to God's promises, I was and still am. The short doctrinal statement about Jesus is important and helps clarify the issue, but is not necessary for me to know or to believe in order to receive eternal life.

Consider also that most "Christian" religions and some of the false cults also believe in the death, burial, and resurrection but share the same fatal problem that I had; I had not yet believed in Jesus to be saved. I thought that my good works could somehow merit part of the payment for my sin. I knew that Jesus' payment for sin was *necessary* but I did not realize that it was *sufficient*.

Another problem that I have with the common interpretation of this passage, i.e. the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is the "gospel" that you must believe in order to receive eternal life, is that verse 2 introduces an element of contingency or doubt to the efficacy of the gospel. It says that we are saved *if* we keep this gospel in memory. If I forget it after I initially believe in Jesus, am I then eternally lost? Not a chance according to many other verses (John 10:28; I John 5:13; 1 Peter 1:3-5; et al).

Many Bible students miss something else in this context: There is the claim in 1 Cor. 15:18, that "...if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Most will agree that without the resurrection of Jesus that we do not have a living Savior Who paid for our sins, but some miss the fact that some of the believers (cf. 1 Cor. 1:2) in the Corinthian church *did not even believe in the resurrection* (v 12). They were still eternally saved but greatly lacking in their Christian growth. Also, what about those of Jesus' twelve apostles who did not even believe the resurrection until some time after it had occurred. Were they saved earlier as per the message of John 3:16 or were they still lost after they had believed in Jesus for a few years? I suggest that this question answers itself.

I propose that the salvation of verse 2 is a temporal salvation related to their sanctification or obedient Christian life. They needed to be living the "resurrection" Christian life,²⁹ of which we will also see in Galatians 2:19, 20. Our salvation is frequently presented as having three tenses:

Past tense	Present tense	Future tense
Justification	Sanctification	Glorification
We <u>have been</u> saved	We <u>are being</u> saved	We <u>will be</u> saved
From the Penalty of Sin	From the Power of Sin	From the Presence of Sin

In addition, not only does "save/salvation" (meaning to rescue or deliver) in the Bible *not* always refer to receiving eternal life, it does not even always refer to something "spiritual" such

²⁹ This might be likened to the victorious Christian life described in Romans 6. Verse 4 introduces Jesus' resurrection and the rest of the chapter can be briefly summarized as: Knowing, v. 6; Reckon, v. 11, and Yield yourselves, v. 16. The NASB has, Knowing, Consider, and present yourselves.

as justification, sanctification or glorification. In the OT, it almost always refers to a temporal and physical type of salvation such as saving from calamity, destruction by an enemy, famine, etc. In the NT, roughly half of the occurrences refer to some sort of a temporal salvation including physical salvation, such as Acts 27:31: While in a ship during a fierce storm, Paul advised its occupants that, "Except these abide in the ship,"³⁰ ye cannot be saved." Either Paul was starting a new nautically inspired religion or he was warning of the obvious; the imminent possibility of physical death.

More support for this reasoning comes from a study of the Epistle to Romans. The theme verse in Romans is generally accepted as being Rom. 1:16:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Justification by faith is clearly presented in part of chapter 3 and 4 through 5:9. Much of the rest of the epistle has to do with Christian service. If the theme of the epistle revolves around the "gospel," then is only *less than two full chapters* involved or is it referring to *much* of the epistle, i.e. our justification *and* our sanctification? It appears to me that our glorification also enters into the "gospel" in Romans. This phrase "unto salvation" also aligns with the three tenses of salvation.

Have you considered the import of the verse before Romans 1:16; verse 15: Paul proclaims, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." Why would Paul be "ready to preach the gospel" to the *believers* (1:7) at Rome if the "gospel" that he was speaking about consisted *only* of how to receive eternal life? I had assumed early-on that this might be for two reasons: 1. To assist in training believers how to share the good news, and 2. To ensure that any unbeliever who happened into the assembly also heard the good news of eternal salvation and believe in Jesus. I propose that both of these reasons are valid and should be applied more than they usually are, but I also believe that Paul had much more in mind, i.e. justification, sanctification, and glorification. We recommend a helpful study which expands on this theme is, "Why Confess Christ? The Use and Abuse of Romans 10:9-10"³¹ by John F. Hart.

This view of "salvation" and the "gospel" might also possibly explain the enigmatic phrase in verse 17; "...from faith to faith." Perhaps it is speaking of the one-time event of belief in order to be justified, *and* the moment-by-moment faith necessary to live the victorious Christian life. If so, then perhaps the following phrase "The just shall live by faith"³² has a dual meaning.³³

³⁰ A humorous story is told about a man who had enough money to buy a yacht but not enough sense to do more than write the check to purchase it. One stormy day he was out in the ocean when the boat began to take on water. In a panic he got on the Coast Guard radio and frantically hollered, "Maytag! Maytag! We are taking on water"

³¹ "Why Confess Christ? The Use and Abuse of Romans 10:9-10" by John F. Hart. found at <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1999ii/J23-99b.htm>.

³² This phrase is found in Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; and Heb. 10:38. It was the life-changing verse that God used to convict Martin Luther of how to be eternally saved. Luther later was a major instigator of the Reformation which greatly influenced the state of the "Christian" world today.

³³ "Save/salvation" is found in 13 times Romans; once in Rom. 1:16 in the theme statement, then not again until Rom. 5:9 where the subject matter transitions from justification into sanctification, or faithfully living the Christian life. Salvation is *not* mentioned at all in the justification portion of chapter 3, chapter 4, and the first few verses of chapter 5. Rom. 5:9 seems to be the transition point. The justification here is in

What I am suggesting is that the "gospel" in the Bible is something like good news about Jesus in general, dependent upon the context, and in some contexts it is clearly "justification by faith." This sounds radical and it is not universally accepted but please check it out and decide for yourself. Please don't accept it unless you see it in the Word (2 Tim. 2:15). An interesting and informative Bible study which presents sound evidence for these statements is, "The Gospel Is More Than 'Faith Alone In Christ Alone'" by Jeremy Myers,³⁴ This study documents a large number of various ways the word "gospel" is used in Scripture.

The book of John is sometimes called the "Gospel tract of the Bible" because its "purpose" verse claims that these events were written so that we should believe and have life through his name (John 20:31). It does *not* contain the word "gospel" but mentions cognates of "belief" almost 100 times.³⁵

It is noteworthy in this discussion that the Bible does *not* tell us anywhere to *believe the gospel* in order to be justified or to receive eternal life; it says to *believe in Jesus* (i.e. Acts 16:31, et al). I looked up all 132 occurrences of both the noun form and verb form of "gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον - yoo-ang-ghel'-ee-on/ εὐαγγελίζω - yoo-ang-ghel-id'-zo) and found only one instance where someone was told to *believe the gospel*. This was Mark 1:14, 15: "...Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Please note that this is speaking of the gospel of the kingdom of God; a message of national repentance for Israel. The King was rejected and the kingdom has now been postponed. This is not the same message to us about believing in Jesus for eternal life. If we were to force this statement to be an eternal salvation message for us today; not only would it be out of context, but it would be the *only* verse telling us to repent *and* believe in order to be eternally saved (i.e. *two* conditions instead of one). There are over 150 references which state that the *one* requirement for receiving everlasting life is by faith/belief alone.³⁶

the past. The "salvation" is in the future and by a different means. "Wrath" in the NT appears to be a temporal judgment in time due to disobedience. See article "Do Believers Experience the Wrath of God?" by Renè Lopez at www.faithalone.org/journal/2002ii/lopez.pdf

I infer from this that not only "salvation" in Romans is *not* speaking of what we usually attribute it to; eternal life, but that "gospel" or the "good news" in Romans also encompasses living the Christian life by faith (e.g. Rom. 1:17).

³⁴ "The Gospel Is More Than 'Faith Alone In Christ Alone'" by Jeremy Myers, found at <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/2006ii/03%20Myers%20-%20Gospel.pdf>

³⁵ An important side-note: The Gospel of John, the purpose of which is to have us to believe in Jesus and have life through his name (John 20:31), does not even use the word repent or "repentance." Nowhere in the Bible are the terms "repent of sin" or "repentance of sin" even found. Repentance is a Biblical doctrine but is frequently misapplied. Please see studies at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/repentwordstudy.html> and <http://www.freegraceresources.org/likewiseperish.html>

³⁶ See "All about Repentance" by Dr. Richard Seymour, "Chapter 5 - Facing the REAL Facts About Repentance." "...In addition, what do such men do with the fact that over 150 times in the New Testament alone God's word says that salvation hinges upon the sole condition of faith in Christ; not "faith plus sorrow," or "faith plus turning," nor "faith plus anything." I'm not pulling that figure out of my hat. Here are those verses:

Luke 7:48-50; 8:12; 18:42; John 1:7, 12; 2:23; 3:15, 16, 18, 36; 4:39; 4:41, 42; 5:24; 5:45-47; 6:29, 35, 40, 47; 7:38, 39; 8:24, 29, 30; 9:35-38; 10:24-26; 11:15, 25, 26, 41, 42; 12:36, 46; 13:19; 14:1-6; 17:20, 21; 19:35; 20:29, 31; Acts 3:16; 4:4, 32; 8:12, 37; 9:42; 10:43, 45; 11:17, 21; 13:12, 39; 14:1,

So far as the question of how a person is justified or receives eternal life, the issue is not believing the *gospel*, but *believing in Jesus*. It appears to this writer that in some contexts that these are synonymous and in some contexts, they are not.

Galatians is quite clear that we should proclaim and defend the gospel; the good news about Jesus, but it does *not* say that a person must believe all of its facets in order to be eternally saved.³⁷ We are justified by faith in Jesus (Gal.2:16). It does not say that we have to believe a short doctrinal statement about Him.³⁸

Text

1:6. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

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

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

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

After a brief introduction Paul gets to the heart of the matter in verses 6-9.

6. I marvel that ye are so soon³⁹ removed⁴⁰ from him⁴¹ that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

23, 27; 15:7, 9; 16:31; 17:4, 5, 11,12; 18:8, 27; 19:4; 20:21; 21:25;26:18; Romans 1:16, 17; 3:22, 25, 26, 27,28, 30; 4:3, 5, 9, 11, 13, 16, 23, 24; 5:1, 2;9:30, 32, 33; 10:4, 6, 9, 10; 11:20, 30-32; 15:13; I Corinthians 1:21; II Corinthians 4:4; Galatians 2:16, 20; 3:2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11,14, 22, 24, 26; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13, 19; 2:8; 3:17; Philippians 1:29; 3:9; I Thessalonians 1:7; 2:10; 4:14; II Thessalonians 1:10; 2:12, 13; 3:2; I Timothy 1:16; 3:16; 4:3, 10; II Timothy 1:12; 3:15; Hebrews 4:2, 3; 6:12; 10:39; 11:6, 7, 31; James 2:23; I Peter 1:5,9,21; 2:6, 7; I John 5:1, 5, 10, 13; Jude 5."

This book is available for sale at <http://www.clarityministries.org/trumpet/> along with a number of free, short but excellent studies on various Bible-related subjects.

³⁷ For example, It was insightfully mentioned by a pastor whom I respect that some would claim that part of the requirement for receiving eternal life is to believe in the virgin conception of Jesus. He could not have fulfilled prophecy and been our Savior if this did not occur, but if we had to believe that doctrine in order to be saved, then it would disqualify all younger children who had no idea what it meant. Jesus said to "Suffer [allow] the little children to come unto me" (Mark 10:14).

³⁸ There are some respected Bible teachers who correctly decry "Lordship salvation, and claim to be in the "grace" camp, but who also claim that *just* the message of John 3:16 is not sufficient to receive eternal life; one must also know and believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus along with several other doctrinal points. They are not in agreement with each other on which or how many other points are necessary. They also admit that there is no one Bible passage which does tell us. I do not believe it beneficial to pursue this subject further in this paper but for those who do choose to pursue it, I have an abundance of information about this erroneous teaching which I would be glad to share.

³⁹ This was for about 6 months according to the Grace NT Commentary.

⁴⁰ Some in the reformed doctrine claim that if a person is not faithful to the end that this indicates that they were never really saved. These Galatian believers defected from true doctrine in a matter of months but there is no indication that they were not eternally saved. Believers do not necessarily remain faithful to truth, but we are commanded to and are given the means in the Word to do so. God remains faithful even when we do not (Phil. 1:6).

In this verse we see that the criterion for the gospel is "GRACE." (See Eph. 2:8,9). If it adds any sort of works or man's efforts to the eternal salvation message, it is not grace and is in error. But what exactly *is* the Gospel? We have suggested that the Gospel in Galatians is not only clearly "justification by faith alone in Jesus" as defined in Gal. 2:16, but also concerns living the "grace" Christian life as is explained later in the text. In spite of the "expanded" definition of the gospel which we have posited, in some ways the "grace" message of how to have eternal life constantly comes to the forefront; logically, because we cannot live an obedient Christian life *until* we believe in Jesus and become a Christian, and biblically, because the Bible consistently proclaims the free-grace⁴² message of salvation by grace through faith; belief in Jesus for eternal life. We are commanded to "contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, 4).

In these verses Paul is certainly defending the good news message of eternal salvation by grace through faith as per 2:16, but also the good news of the Christian life lived by grace (2:17-3:5 - See also Col. 2:6). Grace brings salvation and also teaches us how to live (Titus 2:11,12.) Paul exhorts Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:1, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." We are to stand fast in this liberty (5:1) and then be free to serve in love (5:13).

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert⁴³ the gospel of Christ.

Verse 6 states that there is a *another* [non-grace] gospel which is not *another* [of the grace kind] mentioned here in verse 7. The KJV⁴⁴ and some others, do not distinguish the difference

⁴¹ The NKJV and the NASB both capitalize "him" implying that "Him" refers to God the Father. Upper-case or lower-case cannot be determined here from the Greek text. It must be determined by the context and comparing with other Scripture.

⁴² The term "free-grace" is somewhat redundant but we see the need to use it for emphasis and clarity. I have attended churches with "grace" in their name and heard an anti-grace, belief-plus-works salvation message from the pulpit.

⁴³ "Pervert" μεταστρέφω (met-as-tref-o) "to turn around," "to twist, distort, or pollute." The Judaizers did not deny the good news, they simply twisted or changed the message. This distortion was accomplished by adding something to the grace of God. It was the teaching of grace-plus-works; a false message that is prevalent and ubiquitous today.

⁴⁴ This study quotes from the Authorized King James Version unless otherwise noted. Though I do not wish to be labeled with some advocates of the "KJV-Only" camp due to unverifiable claims made by some of them, I heartily endorse, study, and teach from the KJV. Several of the reasons are:

1. My research has shown it to be among the better of the translations and that it utilized what my study has shown to be the better manuscripts for its translation. More information is available to any who wish.

2. It is pretty much universally available and accepted.

3. I have studied extensively the Scofield Reference Edition KJV which has accurate and helpful notes. But even more important for me, all size editions (including larger print versions) have the same verses in the same location. This has been invaluable as I wear it out and replace it with a newer copy.

4. I have memorized a number of verses in this translation and my time now could be better utilized in other areas of study rather than in trying to re-memorize a large number of verses in a different translation.

Some people have difficulty with the "thee's" and "thou's" in the KJV. I don't know if everyone talked that way in 1611 but there is a reason for this archaic sounding terminology. "Thee" and "thou" are singular and "you" and "ye" are plural ("t's are singular and "y's" are plural). There are verses which

between these two instances of the word “another.” The first instance of the word means another of a *different* kind. The second instance of the word means another of the *same* kind.⁴⁵ Paul was astounded that they had so soon departed from the truth. These teachers troubled the believers and perverted the true gospel. We will see here that this was an extremely dangerous practice for the Judaizers then and would be likewise also for us today.

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

Paul warns that a curse would be pronounced on any (including himself or angels) who would teach a message contrary to what he had previously taught them. He further emphasizes this in the next verse also. This context demands some sort of a *temporal* judgment as Paul includes himself in the potential recipients of this judgment. Paul was not concerned with losing eternal life but he was concerned about obedience and rewards for faithful service. Please notice also that there is nothing in the text here stating that “born again” teachers could not also teach a false message. This malady seems to be quite common today in the “evangelical” environment.

"Accursed " In Galatians 1:8, 9

“Accursed” (ἀνάθεμα - an-ath’-em-ah) found in verses 8 and 9 - “devoted to destruction or direst of woes; abominable or detestable.” I found 6 Bible versions⁴⁶ which translated

switch from singular to plural or vice versa in the same verse (e.g. Heb. 12:5; Rev. 2:10; et al). Modern English and some other translations do not make this distinction.

The KJV and the NKJV were translated from a compilation of the “Majority text” family of manuscripts of which there are several thousand early copies and fragments. The Greek text used for the KJV was compiled from a few of these and was later known as the “Textus Receptus” or the “Received Text.” These manuscripts are from the Asia Minor area where the originals were first circulated and were available for verification of later copies. These copies were actively used, worn out, and recopied by the growing early churches there.

Most of our newer versions are translated from some form of the “Critical Text.” This was compiled around 1881 and comes primarily from two Western manuscripts (Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus from Egypt) along with a number of various manuscript fragments. Though these manuscripts are older, this writer believes them to be less reliable than those from the Majority text family. The two Western texts have over 3,000 differences between each other just in the Gospels. The textual variations between these two texts and even in comparison to the Majority text are *almost* all minor and doctrinally insignificant. Critics argue that there are important doctrines affected such as some verses omitted referring to the divinity of Christ. This is true and I believe, inexcusable, but many of the other “proof” texts for these same doctrines *still* remain in the Critical text. The manuscripts forming the Critical text are earlier but I believe, along with a number of more competent scholars, *not* the more reliable. It could be called the “*minority* text” by about 6,000 to 2. This persuasion is not universal among Christian leaders today. Though the Critical text and the resulting modern translations have some verses and many words and phrases absent which are present in the Majority text family (about 3,000 words in the Greek NT), the significant doctrines still remain in the shorter text.

You might ask which version is best version to use; for me it is the Large Print version. ☺

⁴⁵ Another” in verse 6 is ἕτερος (het’-er-os), and refers to another of a different type. “Another” in verse 7 is ἄλλος (al’-los), and means another of the same type. Some Bible translations show this distinction.

⁴⁶ These are: New International Reader’s Version, Amplified Bible, Phillips, God’s Word Translation, Good News Translation, New English Translation.

Another popular version, the NIV (1984) inaccurately translates the phrase as “...let him be eternally condemned!” The NIV, by its own admission, is what is called a “dynamic equivalent” translation as opposed to a “formal equivalent” translation. [continued on the following page]

“*anathema*” as to “be condemned to hell” or similar. This translation is in error and fits neither the context nor the inherent meaning of the word. What it *does* fit is the preconceived doctrine of some translators and commentators. One commentary example is from the “MacArthur Study Bible:” “...The translation of the familiar Greek word *anathema*, which refers to devoting someone to destruction in eternal hell (cf. Rom. 9:3; 1 Cor. 12:3; 16:22).” Most translations are similar to the KJV and translate the word accurately as “accursed” or similar.⁴⁷

The Greek word ἀνάθεμα (an-ath'-em-ah) is only used 10 times in the NT (6 noun form and 4 verb form). The following are the verses along with comments. The above translation of the word as being hell-bound does not fit in most occasions of the use of the word.

Mar 14:71. But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

This is the context where Peter is confronted by Jesus' accurate prediction of his denial of the Messiah and the moment when he hears the cock crow. It has nothing to do with eternal damnation.

Acts 23:14. And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves (verb - anathematized) under a great curse (noun), that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.⁴⁸ (lit. with a curse we have cursed ourselves).(See also verses 12 and 21).

This use of the word in these verses alone should convince the student that the word does not intrinsically mean, “to be condemned to hell. No way are they condemning themselves to everlasting destruction if their murder plot was to be unsuccessful.

Rom. 9:3. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Formal equivalent translation is performed with the goal of being as accurate and literal (word for word and grammatical structure) as possible without being too stilted to understand.

Dynamic equivalence, in contrast, seeks to capture the "intended" meaning of the text without overt concern for the original terms or structure of the source Scripture. One obvious problem with this technique is that it allows much latitude for "tweaking" of the text resulting in the translators' preconceived doctrinal bias influencing the determination of the "intended" meaning.

I believe that Galatians 1:8 and 9 are two of many instances where the supposed translation becomes more like a transliteration or an interpretation. We would be better served to be able to depend upon an *accurate* translation and leave the interpreting to the students, interpreters, and expositors, including you and me (2 Tim, 2:15).

Though there is merit to the use of the NIV and other similar translations, I suggest not building your doctrine on these translations until checking with more literal translations and/or with the Hebrew or Greek text.

The NIV 2011 revision corrects this error by translating the phrase as "...let them be under God's curse!" However they have opened another "can of worms" by changing gender-specific terms to gender-generic terms; e.g. "brethren" (ἀδελφοί) as "brothers and sisters" and "men" (ἄνδρες) as "people." Some denominations have rejected the newer version primarily for this reason.

⁴⁷ The Septuagint (3rd century BC translation of the OT from Hebrew to Greek) also uses the word routinely for temporal judgment (e.g., Josh, 6:17; 7:1-13ff.; 22:20; Judges 1:17; Zech. 14:11).

⁴⁸ Cf. Acts 23:12, 13. These men have been otherwise known as the 40 hungriest men in the NT. ☺

In *this* context "anathema" seems to refer to being eternally condemned. Please note the deciding modifier, "from Christ." According to Robertson's Word Pictures - "I could wish (*ēuchomēn*). Idiomatic imperfect, "I was on the point of wishing." We can see that *euchomai* (I do wish) would be wrong to say."

1 Cor. 12:3. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

It is unlikely that His detractors were saying that Jesus was going to spend eternity in hell. It is more likely that they would be attempting to place a curse or judgment of some kind on Him.

1 Cor. 16:22. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."

"Maranatha" is of Chaldee origin meaning, "Our Lord comes." Where in God's Word are we told that if we do not *love* Jesus that we should be condemned to hell? The criterion in all other places is belief or unbelief. This is not speaking of being hell-bound but of some sort of temporal curse or judgment.

Gal. 1:8. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

All fallen angels already have their destination determined (Matt. 25:41). God's righteous angels also have their destination determined. Is Paul saying that if he teaches a false message then he is hell-bound? Not if other verses are true about never losing our eternal life.

Gal. 1:9. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

"Anathema" in these last two verses is simply warning of dire judgment for those who would pollute God's grace message presented here. Nothing in the context implies loss of eternal life. Paul was not concerned with losing his eternal salvation; he was concerned about losing rewards by not being faithful to God's Word. "Anathema" in Galatians is some sort of temporal judgment. I do not know precisely what it is but I am certain that I do not want any part of it; for myself or for others.

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

Paul again confirms the importance of the purity of his gospel by mentioning not only the message that he had taught but also that which they had received. The Galatian believers were in danger of being duped into becoming false teachers and coming under this condemnation. Apparently some already had (v. 6). We also need to be alert to the danger of falling into this same error which is so prevalent in "Christianity" today.

What happens when we compromise this grace message of Galatians and add man's works to the one requirement given in God's Word; believe in Jesus for everlasting life? (John 6:47). The following are some empirically realized results⁴⁹ of polluting the eternal salvation message with some of man's imperfect works:

1. Dishonors God by dishonoring His Word.
2. Confuses the lost with a good-sounding message that does not save.
3. Confuses the saved so that they won't reproduce.

⁴⁹ From messages taught by Dr. A. Ray Stanford. Please see footnote 244.

4. Causes persecution for those who teach the Biblical grace-gospel.
5. Brings God's judgment upon those proclaiming the false message.

If even just *one* of these results occur if we present a false, faith-plus-works salvation message, can we not see the tragic consequences? There will be great temporal and eternal loss and damage incurred from disobeying God in this area.

Text

1:10. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

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

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

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

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

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

It is not inherently wrong to "please men." The key word here is "seek to please men." If our goal is to please others by what we teach, we will not be Christ's servant (Prov. 14:12). When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus in John 3 or the woman at the well in John 4, He didn't give them what they *wanted*,⁵⁰ He gave them what they *needed*; God's truth. We should do the same in our witnessing. The message that pleases the world is not God's message, it is that of the "god of this world" who blinds the minds of the unbelievers so that will not be saved (2 Cor. 4:3,4). Man-made "gospel" messages tend to elevate man and *his* works instead of the righteousness of Jesus.

1 Thess. 2:4 "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."

We are warned in 2 Cor. 12:3 not to be corrupted from the simplicity⁵¹ that is in Christ. The same chapter later warns of Satan's methods toward this end (verses 13-15). His ministers are

⁵⁰ This highlights a problem that I see with the current trend of churches striving toward being "seeker friendly." Certainly we should care about people enough to try to tune in to their needs and interests (1 Cor. 9:19) but that is not the end goal. We are told to go into all the word and preach the Gospel *not* to go into all the world and install sanitary sewers.

Some time ago I read portions of a popular book written by the pastor of a "seeker-friendly" mega-church. It contained some Biblical and helpful admonitions. It also contained what I believe to be some serious shortcomings which were promoted. One of them being the idea that in order to build a "successful" church ministry that one needs to conduct a demographical study to see what the people want; then supply that product (paraphrased; not the exact wording from the book). Jesus did not give Nicodemus nor the woman at the well what they necessarily *wanted*, He gave them what they *needed*: the truth of God's Word.

⁵¹ A humorous story which illustrates the folly of unnecessarily complicating something that is simple:

“ministers of righteousness;” usually elevating man's righteousness, but they do not teach us how to have God's righteousness imputed to us by faith.

Much could be said about each of these 5 results of teaching a false gospel but briefly speaking, none of them are good nor honoring to our Savior. May we seriously apply the following verses:

Gal. 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

And then use this great liberty that we have correctly:

Gal. 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

...And heed the message of Gal.1:6-10 by sharing the unpolluted good news to the lost world who needs it so much.

Verse 10 begins a paragraph that continues until the end of the chapter. The thought extends into the second chapter. We see in this section Paul defending the truth of his message by using several arguments. C. I. Scofield sums up this logic with the following:

- (1) The Galatians know Paul, that he is no seeker after popularity Gal. 1:10.
- (2) He puts his known character back of the assertion that his Gospel of grace was a revelation from God (Gal. 1:11,12).
- (3) As for the Judaizers, Paul had been a foremost Jew, and had forsaken Judaism for something better (Gal. 1:13,14).
- (4) He had preached grace years before he saw any of the other apostles (Gal. 1:15-24).
- (5) When he did meet the other apostles they had nothing to add to his revelations (Gal. 2:1-6).
- (6) The other apostles fully recognized Paul's apostleship. (Gal. 2:7-10).
- (7) If the legalizers pleaded Peter's authority, the answer was that he himself had claimed none when rebuked (Gal. 2:11-14).

One commentary⁵² aptly outlines this portion (and into chapter 2) as:

II. Personal: A Defense of Paul's Authority (1:11-2:21)

The Lone Ranger and Tonto went camping in the desert. After they got their tent all set up, both men fell sound asleep. Some hours later, Tonto wakens the Lone Ranger and says, 'Kemo Sabe, look towards sky, what do you see?'

'The Lone Ranger replies, 'I see millions of stars.'

'What does that tell you?' asked Tonto.

The Lone Ranger ponders for a minute then says, 'Astronomically speaking, it tells me there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, it tells me that Saturn is in Leo. Time-wise, it appears to be approximately a quarter past three in the morning. Theologically, the Lord is all-powerful and we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it seems we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What's it tell you, Tonto?'

Tonto replies, "Kemo Sabe, "You're dumber than a box of rocks. **It means someone stole the tent!**"

⁵² The Bible Knowledge Commentary, by Dallas Theological Seminary Faculty.

- A. He was independent of the apostles (1:11-24)
 - 1. Thesis: Paul's Gospel Was A Revelation (1:11-12)
 - 2. Events Before Paul's Conversion (1:13-14)
 - 3. Events At Paul's Conversion (1:15-16a)
 - 4. Events After Paul's Conversion (1:16b-24)
- B. He was recognized by the apostles (2:1-10)
- C. He rebuked the reputed chief of the apostles (2:11-21)

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

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

Paul makes a claim here concerning the *source* of his gospel message similar to his defense of his apostleship in verses 1 and 2. This message is not "after" man, nor according (κατα - kat-ah') to man, nor did he receive it of or from (παρα - par-ah') man. He was not taught it from man, but was taught it from Jesus Christ Himself. Many believe that this occurred during the 3 years mentioned in verse 18.

13. For ye have heard of my conversation⁵³ in time past in the Jews' religion,⁵⁴ how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted⁵⁵ it:

14. And profited⁵⁶ in the Jews' religion above many my equals⁵⁷ in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Paul's manner of life in the past should glaringly demonstrate to any doubter that he did not adopt this new teaching based upon his past pattern of being a zealous Jew and persecuting believers who believed what he now actively advocates. It was common knowledge that he had tried to destroy the Church.

The first mention that we see of Paul is in Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3, where he was consenting to the stoning of Stephen due to his stand for Yeshua; a stand which the religious Jewish leaders disliked to the extent of being ungodly about it. The ninth chapter of Acts records the account of Jesus getting Paul's attention while he was on the road to Damascus with the mission to arrest

⁵³ "Conversation" does not mean "how we talk" but does include it. The word (ἀναστροφή - an-as-trof-ay') means "manner of life, conduct, behavior, deportment."

⁵⁴ The "Jews religion" in verses 13 and 14 is literally "Judaism" (Ἰουδαϊσμός - ee-oo-dah-is-mos'). "Religion" is not usually spoken of favorably in the Bible. In the other 3 instances of the word "religion" in the KJV (Acts 26:5; James 1:26; 2x, noun and adjective, James 1:27) the word is θρησκεία - thrace-ki'-ah, which means "outward religious service or worship, ceremonial observance."

The English word "religion" comes from the Latin "religio." "Ligio" meaning to bind and "re" meaning "again" or "back." A ligament binds bones to bones across a joint. Religion is man trying to bind himself back to God by trying to do something of his own goodness. Paul's Gospel is not a "religion." He says that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8).

⁵⁵ "Wasted" (πορθέω - por-theh'-o) means "ravaged." The other 2 times that this word is found in the NT it is translated as "destroyed" (Acts 9:21; Gal. 1:23).

⁵⁶ "Profited" (προκόπτω - prok-op'-to) meaning to advance or increase.

⁵⁷ "My equals" (συνηλικιώτης - soon-ay-lik-ee-o'-tace) means "equal in age."

more believers in Yeshua.⁵⁸ Philippians 3:4-6 expands on Paul's qualification as a zealous Jew and avid law-keeper. Verses 7-10 sum up his assessment of all these works.

It is interesting to note that many of the accounts of persecution of believers in the Bible are instigated by "religious" people. This same ungodly intolerance by "religious" groups prevails today; more so in some other countries at the present time. One Bible teacher has remarked about the arrogance of American believers assuming that we should escape the religious persecution that the majority of believers in the majority of the world have experienced for the majority of the past 1900 years.⁵⁹

The book of Revelation records what will be horrendous worldwide devastation for much of mankind during the 7-year week of Jacob's trouble. We can present Biblical evidence that the "church;" the believers of today, will be taken out before that time to be with Jesus. That is not just wishful thinking based upon an escapist philosophy. I also have Biblical and extra-biblical reasons to believe that it is likely that growing and serious persecution will be in store for many believers, even in the USA, before this worldwide devastation. Whether or not we will be facing this anticipated persecution for Christ, we still need to strive to remain obedient to our Master.

Text

1:15. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

16. To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

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

19. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

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

21. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

22. And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:

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

24. And they glorified God in me.

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

⁵⁸ Further details of this event are recorded in Paul's defense before the hostile crowd in Jerusalem (Acts 22:1-16) and in his defense before King Agrippa (Acts 26:1-29).

⁵⁹ A classic book on the subject of persecution of believers is "Foxe's Book of Martyrs," available for download at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/foxesmartyrs.doc>. This book documents the persecution and murder of millions of believers from the 1st century into the early 19th century. There were numerous accounts when many thousands of Christians were murdered at one time. This was all done in the cause of religion; mostly those claiming to be Christian. More Christians have been murdered in the 20th century than in all 19 previous centuries combined.

"Separated" (ἀφορίζω - af-or-id'-zo) is the same Greek word that is used in 2 Cor. 6:17, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing;..." It means "to mark off from others by boundaries, to limit, to separate, to appoint, to set apart for some purpose." It does not mean that God physically *took him out* of his mother's womb. All of us could claim a similar experience. It means that God had set him aside for a particular purpose *from the time* that he was in his mother's womb. In Rom. 1:1 Paul states that he is a called apostle, "separated unto (or "into" εἰς - ice) the gospel of God." He was not necessarily separated *from* something but he was separated *unto* something;⁶⁰ a particular purpose. Before Paul's birth, he was set aside for a particular purpose which we see in the next verse. This calling was through God's grace.

16. To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Paul declares that God had separated him before his birth for a purpose; "To reveal his Son in [him], that [he] might preach him among the heathen...." ("To reveal" is in the infinitive mood and "that" [ἵνα - hi'na] introduces a purpose clause). "Preach" here is the verb form of "gospel" or literally to "good news-ize" or to proclaim the good news about Jesus. "Heathen" (ἔθνος - ethnos) is usually translated as "Gentiles"⁶¹ or "nations." It does not necessarily mean what might come to our mind when we hear the word; i.e. some wild barbarians in the jungle dancing around in grass skirts and banging on alligator skulls. To the Jew, it included anyone who was not Jewish.

Paul realized *and* lived his intended purpose in life. Believers are bought with a price and are exhorted to then glorify God in our lives (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). At the end of his journey he was able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness..." (1 Tim. 4:7, 8). Paul has no doubt heard the welcome words from His Savior, "...Well done, good and faithful servant..." (Matt. 25:23). I seek the same in my life. How about you?

The phrase, "... immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:" is another reference to the divine source of his message; "flesh and blood" typifying human weakness. The source of Paul's message was not the other apostles, it was from Jesus Himself.

Paul relays some of the key events in his life and places where he had been since his conversion. Scholars are unsure about when and where some of these events fit in with other Scripture. Perhaps I am in good company as I am also unsure of some of the details.

17. Neither went I up⁶² to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

⁶⁰ Please note also that Moses was chosen of God for a purpose (Ps. 106:23); Isaiah was called before his birth (Isa. 49:1); Samson was chosen before his birth to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines (Judges 13:1-8); Jeremiah was ordained a prophet before his birth (Jer. 1:5); and John the Baptist was chosen for a purpose before his birth (Luke 1:15; cf. Matt.3:3). We are children of the King and members of Jesus' body. He has a purpose for us also.

⁶¹ The phrase, "Jews and Greeks" is also used in the NT; "Greeks" (Ἕλληνας - hel'-lane) referring to Gentiles living in the known, civilized world which was essentially Greek due to the influence of Alexander the Great 300 years earlier.

⁶² "Went up to Jerusalem." Jerusalem is at an altitude of about 2,400 feet. (Jericho, which is about 16 miles NE of Jerusalem, is about 800 feet *below* sea level). But more importantly, due to the fact that

He gives more reasons to establish that he did not depend upon others for his divine message. Damascus is 120 miles NNE of Jerusalem. The Arabian desert is east of Israel and extends from near the Euphrates River NE of Jerusalem to the Red Sea well south of Jerusalem. (See map).



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

Many Bible teachers believe that much of this three year period was the time during which Jesus personally taught Paul the revelation that He had for him.

19. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

He spent only a brief time with Peter and saw only one of the other apostles.

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

This message is so important that he, in effect, takes a solemn oath about it

21. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

Please note on map in the NE corner of the Mediterranean Sea that we find Cilicia and Syria. Paul's hometown, Tarsus, is in Cilicia, and Antioch, the new center of spreading Christianity, is in Syria. For an idea of distance involved, Antioch, Syria is about 330 miles north of Jerusalem.

22. And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:

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

Jerusalem is such an important city in the plan of God and that it was highly revered by the Jews, no matter from what altitude or compass direction you began, you always went up to Jerusalem.

Up until this time Paul had spent very little time in Judaea⁶³ since his conversion. The believers knew of his reputation but had not personally known him.

24. And they glorified God in me.

"Glorified" is in the imperfect tense meaning that they *had kept on* glorifying God. Paul said that the believers in Judaea glorified God *in him*. We should properly honor faithful believers (Philip. 2:29, 30; 1 Tim. 5:17) but the idea of *glorifying* men is foreign to scripture. Glory belongs to God (Rom. 16:27; Jude 25). Anything "glory-worthy" in us is by God's grace. They glorified God for the work that He was doing through Paul. They likely were praising God that one of the chief persecutors of believers now preached Christ.

1 Cor. 6:19; What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Overview of Chapter Two:

Paul continues in the defense of his authority and the authenticity of his message. We see his confirmation by the Jerusalem apostles in their acceptance of Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile, and their approval of Paul and his ministry to the Gentiles. The claim of the Judaizers was not to directly nullify belief in Messiah, but to *add* man's works to Jesus' righteousness; a chief claim being the Mosaic Law requirement of circumcision⁶⁴ for the Gentile in order to be saved (cf. Acts 15:1). Adding man's imperfect work to Jesus' finished work is an error which is prevalent today. We have seen that those who teach this false gospel of faith-plus-works for eternal salvation are, along with other serious outcomes, bringing God's judgment upon themselves (Gal. 1:6-10).

He mentions his encounter with false brethren who propagated their error for the *intended purpose* of bringing the Galatian believers into bondage and Paul's immediate and authoritative response to them.

He recounts Peter's hypocrisy displayed when the "big boys" from Jerusalem arrived. Peter's compromise threatened to undermine the dissemination of the true gospel. Paul's public rebuke

⁶³ Judaea/Judea; under the Romans at the time of Christ denoted the southernmost of the three divisions of Palestine; Samaria and Galilee being to the north. Jerusalem is in the northern part of Judea, about 35 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea and about 15 miles west of the Dead Sea.

⁶⁴ Circumcision; περιτομή - per-it-om-ay'- literally, to cut around. It was initially commanded to Abraham and his household as a sign of God's covenant to him and was commanded for every male child on the eighth day after birth (Gen. 15:10; Acts 7:8; Rom. 4:11; Phil. 3:5).

It was codified by Moses to Israel during the Exodus (Lev. 12:2, 3; John 7:22, 23) and is still practiced in Judaism today. It had become a symbol of pride for the Jews and the lack of such, a corresponding symbol of contempt for the Gentiles or the uncircumcised.

In the Bible the term could refer to the physical act of circumcision (Phil. 3:5), the Jews as a nation (Gal. 2:9), implying the keeping of the Mosaic Law (1 Cor. 7:19), or figuratively as a symbol of purity of heart (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Rom. 2:2).

A humorous riddle brings to mind a question about Jewish circumcision: What do they call a Jewish baby who has not been circumcised? Answer: a little girl. The unanswered question is: If the Judaizers claimed circumcision was a requirement for eternal salvation, where do the females fit in? I don't know.

of Peter's actions defended the truth of the gospel and also demonstrated his approval by the Jerusalem apostles.

He then summarizes a clear stand for both salvation by faith without the deeds of the law and embarks on some principals of the "grace" Christian life which continues into chapter three.

Chapter Two Text

2:1. Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also.

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

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

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

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

2:1. Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also.

These verses deal with the defense of the gospel of grace in Jerusalem. Paul had previously spent some time there in his zeal for persecuting believers. He likely was reminded of the damage that he had done there both to individual believers and to the cause of Christ. He also knew that the grace of Christ had completely settled the debt for all his sin and that he was forgiven. To any who think that they have sinned too much to be saved or to be forgiven as a believer; remember that no one has "out-sinned" the grace of God yet (1 John 2:2; Heb. 10:10-14).

Fourteen years after what? Was this referring to his conversion in Gal. 1:15-17, or his visit with Peter and James in verses 18 and 19, or the famine relief trip in Acts 11 and 12, or the Jerusalem council recorded in Acts 15?⁶⁵ Commentators are divided on the initiating event but agree that there was some time lapse spoken of here. Christian growth and maturity came with time and obedience in his life as is with us. Though there is some likelihood that the fourteen years began with his conversion, what I believe to be crucial here is not the precise timing, but *what happened* when he went up to Jerusalem.

Barnabas was the one who first introduced Paul to the other apostles in Jerusalem and kind of "broke the ice" for him as the apostles initially feared him (Acts 9:26, 27). He was Paul's companion on his first missionary journey (Acts 13 & 14). In fact, "Barnabas" was not even his original given name. He was called Barnabas (son of consolation⁶⁶) apparently due to his pattern of life that had been exhibited over time (Acts 4:36).

⁶⁵ Some commentators place the Jerusalem council before this time. Paul did not mention this important meeting and the apostles' conclusion in Galatians. If it had occurred prior to the penning of Galatians, he could have saved some ink by referring to it.

⁶⁶ "Consolation" here is from παράκλητος - par-ak'-lay-tos; the same Greek word that is used to describe the Holy Spirit in John 14:16; 26; 15:26; 16:7 and for Jesus Christ in 1 John 2:1 (advocate). The

If you have someone in your life who draws along side of you when you need encouragement; be thankful for that person. Let us reverse that reasoning and ask ourselves if we are an "encourager"⁶⁷ to others (Gal, 6:2). So many believers are negative and self-centered at times.⁶⁸ We all need encouragement because there are obstacles and difficulties along the way (1 Pet. 4:12). There is a time for loving and Biblical reproof but we all need encouragement. Sometimes this does not even involve sharing an appropriate Bible verse or "giving good advice." It could consist of just being a loving listener. As we are faithful in this area God can use us to be a "turn-point" in someone else's life.

We will see more about Titus in verse 3.

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

Paul went up to Jerusalem by, or according to (κατά - kat-ah') revelation. The details of the revelation are not stated but Paul probably included this fact in order to establish that he had independent but equal authority as the other apostles. He had not been summoned by the apostles nor sent by the church. God had sent him and his mission there had to do with the gospel.

What did he do in Jerusalem? He "communicated"⁶⁹ unto them that gospel which [he preached] among the Gentiles." He privately presented the message that God had given to him and that he had been proclaiming for at least 14 years in order to obtain their assessment of it.

Who are the "them" which were of reputation" in Jerusalem? They are alluded to in verse 6 and named in verse 9: "...James, Cephas⁷⁰ (Peter), and John, who seemed to be pillars," i.e. some of the other apostles.

word means an "intercessor," "consoler," "advocate" or "comforter." Its root is from two words meaning to call near or along side. The verb form also contains the sense of "exhortation." In this sense the Holy Spirit is also not just a "comforter" as stated John 14:16, but He is also a "discomforter" in the sense that He convicts of the sin of unbelief (John 16:8-11).

⁶⁷ A humorous fictional account of someone who is not an encourager: A few months after the Katrina debacle two men were sitting next to each other while on an airplane flight. One noticed that the other man seemed to be quite agitated. He asked him if there was a problem. The other man replied that his company had just transferred him to New Orleans and that he was terrified about the crime problems, drug wars, race riots, etc. that were occurring there. The other man answered him and said that he lived in New Orleans and these things just are not a problem. He advised that it was important to choose the right neighborhood in which to live, choose good schools for the children, don't go to certain areas at night, and so on.

The worried man was greatly relieved and thanked him profusely. He then said, "Oh by the way, what do you do for a living? The other man replied, "Oh, I'm a tail-gunner on a Budweiser truck."

⁶⁸ The story is told about the self-centered lady who proudly proclaimed, "I've come to the realization that Galileo was wrong. The world doesn't revolve around the sun; it revolves around ME." We sometimes see this spirit manifested when we drive in rush-hour traffic.

⁶⁹ "Communicated" ἀνατίθεμαι (an-at-ith'-em-ah-ee) to place or set forth for consideration or discourse. This word is used only in one other place in the NT: Acts 25:14, "...Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king...." This is not usual word that is translated "communicate," e.g. in Gal. 6:6, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. This word, "κοινωνέω" (koy-no-neh'-o) means more to "share" or to "be a partaker with."

⁷⁰ "Cephas" Κηφᾶς (kay-fas') Aramaic name of Peter; means "a stone" (John 1:42). Note the play on words in Matt. 16:18, where Jesus said, "...thou art Peter (Πέτρος - pet'-ros; a piece of rock; a stone), and

This desired assessment was *not* for the purpose of Paul seeking to find out if his message was correct. He knew that he was right because he had received it directly from Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12). If the apostles endorsed Paul's message it would work together to further the spread of the good news.

The other apostles could add nothing to the revelation that Paul received. In actuality, the other apostles could learn some things from Paul. To Paul was given the mystery of the dispensation of grace; the church age (Eph. 3:2-6; 5:32). The original twelve initially had received a message intended *only* for the Jews (Matt. 10:5, 6) which had to do with the offer of the *earthly* kingdom (v. 7). The Jews as a nation wanted the kingdom but they had rejected the King. Thus, God's promises to Israel were postponed and the "church" age was initiated. The "church" was unknown in the OT but it was not a surprise to the all-knowing God. He left a space for it in the prophecy timeline as evidenced by the cryptic gap between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel, chapter nine, as in other places.

The Matthew 10 passage is evidence that there *is* such a doctrine in the Bible as "dispensations."⁷¹ We see in Matt. 10:5 and following, that the original twelve apostles were initially sent, *not* to the Gentiles, but *only* to the house of Israel (Matt. 10:5, 6, also Matt. 10:9, 10 early in His ministry, cf. Luke 22:35, 36, the night before His crucifixion). After the Jewish leaders repeatedly rejected the King and He is crucified and resurrected, there is then a significant change in the big program; The promised earthly Kingdom is postponed for a while. His charge then to the apostles is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15) and "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matt. 28:19, 20).

We believe that this is also Jesus' charge to us today. As we consider how we spend our time and resources we need to evaluate how much of this effort has *eternal* value. I suggest that even many churches are majoring in minor things⁷² with some of the goals and programs that they

upon this rock (πέτρα - pet'-ra, rock or rock mass, i.e. Himself) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Peter was not the foundation of the Church; Jesus was and is.

⁷¹ "Dispensation" as in Eph. 3:2. (οἰκονομία - oy-kon-om-ee'-ah) The management of a household or of household affairs, specifically, the management, oversight, administration, of another's property; The office of a manager or overseer, stewardship, administration, dispensation.

In Biblical theology a dispensation is a period of time during which God deals with man in a particular way in respect to sin and judgment. Dispensational theologians generally accept seven dispensations: Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace or the Church age (the present dispensation), and Kingdom (also known as the Millennium). Mankind has always been justified by faith (e.g. Gen. 15:6 with Abraham; cf. Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23).

⁷² Some have likened this frequently seen pattern to "putting up new window curtains on the Titanic as it was sinking." The passengers on the Titanic needed *lifeboats*, not new curtains. There are lost people all around us who have not heard the clear Gospel. We have a God-given responsibility to share the truth in love (Eph. 4:15; 1 Thess. 2:4).

Amy Carmicheal was a missionary to India in the early 1900's. For a convicting message along the same line, please read the brief account of a dream that she had about believers' priority of putting the making of daisy chains above the welfare of lost mankind. <http://www.thetravelingteam.org/articles/amy-carmichaels-dream>

enthusiastically pursue. People are dying and going into a Christless eternity without hearing the clear and true Good News of eternal life through belief in Jesus while some are playing games at Sunday School picnics.

I find it ironic that when Jesus came the first time that He *asked* to be King. We see in Revelation that when He returns the second time to rule as King, that He isn't going to bother to ask anyone.

"...Among the Gentiles," What gospel did Paul preach to the Gentiles? He preached the same gospel to the Gentiles that he preached to the Jews. During Paul's first missionary journey he preached "justification by faith" to the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch Pisisdia which was located in the Galatian province. (Acts 13:14, 38, 39. See map on page 4). After many of the Jews rejected the message, he then spoke this same message to the Gentiles (vs. 42-49).

Paul was not intimidated for someone to examine his gospel message; Neither am I and neither should you be (Acts 17:11). If it's true to the Word of God, examine it all that you want. If it is not true to the Word of God, we need to correct it.

"... But privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run,⁷³ or had run, in vain."

In consulting with the Christian leaders at Jerusalem Paul had principally in view their formal endorsement of his work. Their official declaration that he had not been running in vain would materially aid him in his mission. It seems that Paul knew that his efforts thus far had not been in vain but that they could be more productive if the leaders were all of one mind concerning the gospel message. This is true today in the Christian ministry.

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

Titus likely was saved under Paul's ministry (Titus 1:4). He later was an elder in the early church of Crete. His responsibilities in the churches there were the occasion of Paul's epistle to Titus (Titus 1:5). He also played a significant role in this instance of the Jerusalem visit to the other apostles. Titus was an uncircumcised Gentile; a test-case for the non-Jew not being required to be circumcised, or to become a Jew order to be eternally saved.

What about Timothy, who accompanied Paul during his *second* missionary journey, which included the same areas in Galatia as did his first missionary journey? (See map on page 4). Paul circumcised him. Why was circumcision prohibited here but endorsed with Timothy?

Timothy's situation was different. He was Jewish and in this case it would have been a stumbling-block for the Jews if he had not been circumcised. His mother was Jewish but his father was not (Acts 16:1, 3), which implied that Timothy had not been circumcised either. See this principle in Paul's ministry explained in 1 Cor. 9:19-23.

4. And that⁷⁴ because of false brethren unawares brought in,⁷⁵ who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

⁷³ The term "run" (τρέχω - trekh'-o) is a favorite metaphor with Paul. See also Rom. 9:16; 1 Cor. 9:24, 1 Cor. 9:26; Gal. 5:7; Phil. 2:16; Phil. 3:13, Phil. 3:14.

⁷⁴ Is "that" referring back to the issue with the circumcision issue with Titus, or is referring to the content of verse 4; "...because of false brethren..."? The phrase "that because of" is from δὴ (dee-ah') in the original and means, "through," "because of," or "on account of." It is referring to the same verse and following. The verse could be accurately translated, "But because of the false brethren privately brought

These detractors from the grace gospel were unsaved (false brethren). They were religious but lost. In contrast to *these* corrupters of truth, it is a mistake to think that *believers* cannot willfully fulfill this same role as enemies of the truth (of which we are warned in Gal. 1:7-9). We see here and elsewhere (5:12; 6:12) that more than one person was involved as he spoke of them in the plural. We also see here that their goals were neither innocent nor unintentional. The last phrase, "... that they might bring us into bondage" is a "purpose" clause. The word "that" in Greek is ἵνα (hin'-ah) which means "so that," "in order to," or "for the purpose of," These false brethren were using their treachery purposely and with the motive and goal to enslave the believers. We would be naive to think that this does not occur today. This action not only occurs today, it proliferates.

5. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour;⁷⁶ that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

It is evident from Paul's decisive action in this matter that we are to contend for the Gospel of Grace without compromise. "...The truth of the gospel" is paramount. He did not adopt the ecumenical spirit that is so prevalent today in "Christian" circles that in order to maintain peace at any price, we should all just hold hands, sing Kum-ba-yah, and forget about our doctrinal differences." Endorsing fundamental doctrinal error is not loving nor is it obeying God's commands (Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Thess. 2:4).

Any group of diligent Bible students will legitimately differ with one another on some peripheral doctrines and should do so in a loving and humble spirit, but the "truth of the gospel" is one doctrine in which we must "draw a line in the sand." Please see comments about Jude 3 on page 3 of this study. This is the main thrust of the whole epistle to the Galatians.

It is imperative to maintain not only the *truth* of the gospel, but also its clear and understandable presentation. Accurate verbal communication is important but sometimes difficult.⁷⁷ Several factors come into play here: 1. What is meant by the speaker, 2. What is *said* by the speaker, 3. What is heard by the listener, 4. What is understood by the listener; which is all filtered by his culture, attitudes, degree of interest, education, etc..

Many married folks will testify that they sometimes have great difficulty understanding what their mate means when they say certain things. Just a sample of this would be if my wife asked me, "What do you think about the kitchen sink faucet dripping?" I might answer the *question* and reply, "I don't think that it's much of a big deal." I answered the question that was asked, not realizing that she actually was not seeking my expert knowledge of leaking faucets. What she was *thinking* was, "Get up and fix the faucet." There was a lack in effective communication

in who came in privily (or stealthily) to spy out (or make a treacherous investigation of) our liberty for the purpose that they might bring us into bondage (or slavery)."

⁷⁵ "Unawares brought in," lit. smuggled in. "Privily," lit. stealthily. "Spy out" lit. inspect insidiously. These are not "nice" guys. They are Satan's ministers (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

⁷⁶ "Hour" (ὥρα - ho'-rah) not necessarily sixty minutes but a definite point of time, a moment.

⁷⁷ A humorous illustration which demonstrates the need for clarity of communication: There is a story told of a homeless man who knocked on the door of a Palm Beach mansion seeking employment in exchange for something to eat. The lady of the house was eager to help and advised the man that there was a 5 gallon can of paint and a paint brush in the garage and that he could paint the porch for a meal. A while later the man came back to the lady with a satisfied smile on his face. She asked if he had completed painting the porch. He eagerly replied, "Yes ma'am, I painted the Porsche and I also painted the Rolls Royce."

somewhere. I submit to you that this might be the beginning of a bigger problem than just the leaky faucet.

We see that there are some obstacles to overcome. When sharing the good news of eternal life through belief in Jesus with others, sometimes the meaning of the words need to be clarified. For example, when speaking with a Jehovah's Witness, he may agree with you completely that Jesus is God. Further discussion would reveal that *he* means by that, that Jesus is just a god⁷⁸ but Jehovah is separate and is the Almighty God. Many of the cults use the same terminology as do we but they use a different dictionary.

A good way to clarify something is to also state what it is *not*. If I were to address a hundred evangelical pastors and enthusiastically proclaim that what the world needs is to believe in Jesus for everlasting life per John 3:16, I would probably receive a hundred "Amens." If I then stated that what I *mean* by believe in Jesus is that I don't need to promise to turn from sin, reform my life, give my heart to Jesus, make Jesus Lord of my life, etc. to receive eternal life, it is likely that I would then only receive a couple of "Amens." We are in the enemy's territory and the message that Satan dislikes is also unpopular in his present domain (2 Cor. 4:3, 4; Eph. 6:10-19). This principle is demonstrated later in this chapter in verse 16 where Paul emphasizes both how we are *not* justified and how we *are* justified.

Along this line, a hint that has helped me greatly in sharing the good news is to deliberately misread a verse in order to emphasize what is really true. For instance, when showing 1 John 5:13 to someone I might say, "These things have I written unto you that (turn from their sin, try real hard, join a church) believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know (hope, guess, maybe) that ye have (life until you sin again or mess up real bad) eternal life, ..."

Even terms that are Biblical and dear to us need to be clarified or explained. What in the world does an unsaved person think that we mean if we tell him that he must be "born again?" When Jesus used this terminology, he explained it (John 3:3 cf 3:16). It is true that we must be born again in order to "see the kingdom of God" but we cannot "born" ourselves. Only God does that and only if we believe in Jesus for everlasting life as per John 3:16, et al.

Furthermore, we certainly should not use expressions that are unbiblical or in error, such as "give your heart to Jesus," "turn from your sins to be saved," make Jesus Lord of your life," "commit your life to Jesus, etc. in order to have eternal life," If we in any way make our good works or law-keeping a requirement to receive eternal life then we do not believe in Jesus for our eternal life. There would be no reason for Christ to die to pay for our sins if we could do it for ourselves. See Gal. 3:21.

We will see that the phrase, "the truth of the gospel" mentioned here in reference to the message of salvation by faith without works, is also referred to in verse 14 where it has to do also with liberty in the Christian life.

Text

2:6. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed *to be somewhat* in conference added nothing to me:

⁷⁸ This reply has been offered to me several times in reply to John 1:1; that Jesus was just a god. They also correctly maintain that there is only one God (Deut. 6:4 - יהוה אחד - one LORD). I don't know how they reconcile these two contradictory statements.

7. But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter;
8. (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)
9. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.
10. Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

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

The other apostles were reputed as persons of some consequence, but that is not of importance to Paul. Their high position in the church did not alter the facts. They not only could not add to Paul's message, they endorsed it as well.

7. But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter;

The "gospel of the uncircumcision" and "*the gospel* of the circumcision" are *not* two different gospels. They are the *same* message directed to two different cultures or groups of people; the Gentiles and the Jews.⁷⁹ It is the same message for *all* (Mark 16:16).⁸⁰

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

Even though Peter was the mechanism which God used to open up the gospel to the Gentiles in Acts 10, his charge, his mission, his focus, was to the Jews. In contrast, Paul, in his early travels frequently went first to the Jew, then to the Gentiles (Acts 13:5; 14; 17:2, 3; et al). This practice apparently was somewhat modified after his encounter with the blaspheming Jews in

⁷⁹ Peter preached the same eternal salvation message to the Gentile, Cornelius, (Acts 10:43) as he did to the Jews (Acts 15:7-9). Paul preached the same eternal salvation message to the Jews and he did to the Gentiles (Acts 13:38, 39, 42, 47, 48). The decision of the Jerusalem council was in agreement with Peter's declaration; that the Jews and Gentiles are to be saved the same way (Acts 15:11).

⁸⁰ There is a doctrine accepted by some which is frequently called, "hyper-dispensationalism" or ultra-dispensationalism, which among other things propounds, that the Church began not at Pentecost, but sometime after the conversion of Saul/Paul and that only his epistles relate to the church today. This verse is offered in support that the gospel of Paul to the Gentiles superseded Peter's gospel to the Jews. It should be noted that Paul himself states not only that those who teach another gospel have God's anathema upon them (Gal. 1:6-10) but also that he persecuted the "church of God" and therefore it had to exist before the time of his conversion mentioned in Acts 9. (Acts 8:3; Gal. 1:13).

2 Tim. 3:16 tells us, "All scripture [not just Paul's epistles] is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" One Bible teacher's comments on this verse include: "**doctrine** - what is right; **reproof** - what is wrong; **correction** - how to get right; **instruction in righteousness** - how to stay right."

Antioch, Pisidia, but in this context, he taught both groups the same grace gospel (Acts 13:42-47). He was "the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" (Rom. 15:16; Acts 22:21;⁸¹ 26:16, 17).

Paul is saying here that the same God Who gave Peter the wisdom, knowledge and power needful to establish the church among the Jews, had also fully endowed Paul for a similar work among the Gentiles (cf. 1 Cor. 12:6; Phil. 2:13; Col. 1:29).

9. And when James,⁸² Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars,⁸³ perceived the grace that was given unto me,⁸⁴ they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

"... Who seemed to be pillars" could be translated, "who were reputed to be pillars." Paul was not questioning their position or authority.

"... They gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship: that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." This was not just a polite social gesture. This incident was an official endorsement. The apostles formally approved both of Paul's apostleship and his message; including his calling to the Gentiles.

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

"Forward to do" means that this was an action that Paul was "diligent to do." This was Paul's pattern (Acts 24:17; Rom. 15:26, 27; 1 Cor. 16:3).

Text

2:11. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

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

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

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

⁸¹ The context of this verse shows that the Jews were not any too happy with this fact. See Acts 13:46 where Paul and Barnabas declare that it was necessary that they proclaim God's Word first to the Jews (as per Rom. 1:16) and due to their rejection of it that they then turn to the Gentiles. The Jews did not like that God was, for a period of time, shifting his emphasis from them to the Gentiles and the building of the Church (which included *both* believing Jews and believing Gentiles). Since the Jews as a nation had rejected their Messiah, God's promises to Israel had been postponed but *not* canceled (See Rom. 9-11).

⁸² This is likely James, the half-brother of Jesus as James, the brother of John was martyred earlier (Acts 12:2).

⁸³ "Pillar" A post; figuratively a "support." A humorous quip: "Are a pillar in your church, or are you a caterpillar; just crawling in and out occasionally?"

⁸⁴ Paul speaks frequently of the grace that was given to him. (Rom. 1:5; Rom. 12:3; Rom. 15:15; 1 Cor. 3:10; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:8).

Aren't you glad that grace is given to us also? (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 1:4; 2 Cor. 6:1; Eph. 4:7; Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5).

Chapter two can be broken down into two parts; the following chart showing its comparison and contrast:⁸⁵

The defense of the gospel of grace in Jerusalem: 2:1-10	The defense of the gospel of grace in Antioch: 2:11-ff
The gospel of grace is defended principally	The gospel of grace is defended practically
The gospel of grace is defended because of false brethren	The gospel of grace is defended because of a hypocritical brother
The Apostle Peter recognizes Paul's gospel ministry and extends to him the right hand of fellowship	The Apostle Paul rebukes Peter for not walking straight according to the gospel
The meeting was a private gathering	The meeting was a public gathering
The gospel was defended in its proclamation	The gospel was defended in its application

11. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

This verse begins a paragraph which continues through the end of this chapter. Food and fellowship frequently go together in the Bible.⁸⁶ Why would Paul cause this much commotion among the church assembly? Peter was in error and "was to be blamed," but what is at stake here? There is a higher degree of risk here than may seem on the surface. Peter was a Jew and therefore was not obliged to live after the manner of the Gentiles as he had been doing earlier in this account. But now having gone that far and then broken off, he was now logically compelling the Gentile believers to live as Jews; That is, to adopt the requirement of circumcision, the dietary laws of the Jews, etc. and to deny the earlier teaching of Peter himself. But if the Gentile believers did this they would also sacrifice the truth of the gospel which Paul had proclaimed. This liberty either recently had been,⁸⁷ or would soon be affirmed at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). The church had decided that no such burden of legal compliance was to be imposed upon the Gentile believers. This council determined how the early church was to handle the erroneous message of faith-plus-works for eternal life and the imposition of the Mosaic law on the believing Gentile.

The whole principle of grace was at stake. The logical outcome of Peter's conduct would be to make Jews out of Gentile Christians or else force the creation of two churches; i.e. to create a Gentile church along side of the Jewish church which would break the union of the Body of Christ. The future of the church was at issue here.

⁸⁵ This comparison and contrast insight was gleaned from MP3 message 8 on Galatians, by Pastor Dennis Rokser; www.DuluthBible.org.

⁸⁶ Some have humorously noted that in some of today's church pot-luck suppers that this practice has evolved more into "food and bellyship."

⁸⁷ A number of commentators maintain that this council had already occurred. I know of no way to be dogmatic but think it more likely that it occurred shortly after the writing of this epistle due to the fact that the council's decision is not mentioned here.

As a side note; if Peter was the first pope as the Roman Church claims, he was poor example here. He needed and heeded Paul's rebuke, accepting it as being correct. Peter later endorsed Paul's writings as Scripture in 2 Peter 3:15, 16, and even maintained that some of what Paul wrote was "hard to be understood." Peter never claimed papal authority to interpret what Paul had written for those in the church. (P.S. Peter was also married - Matt. 8:14).

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

"...He did eat..."⁸⁸ is in the imperfect tense meaning that "he had been eating" or that this was his pattern. When God sent Peter to the Gentile, Cornelius, He taught him that table-fellowship with Gentiles was no longer forbidden (Acts 10:9-29). Therefore it was not unexpected that he would be eating with them in Antioch.

Peter had not changed his doctrinal views; his action of withdrawing and separating⁸⁹ from them was motivated by fear. Prov. 29:25 tells us, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." (cf. Acts 11:2).

13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.⁹⁰

When the other Jews saw Peter's hypocrisy, some of them and even Barnabas followed right in with him.

Several applications to consider that might be relevant here to us are: 1. That we all are vulnerable to peer pressure and fear of being socially ostracized. 2. That we do not sin in a vacuum. When we sin, not only do *we* suffer, but it causes damage to the cause of Christ, and usually also damages others who had not sinned in this area. 3. That each of us are being an example, good or bad, to someone, and sometimes with eternal ramifications (2 Cor. 3:2). It has been said that *you* are the best Christian that someone knows.

14. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly⁹¹ according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles,⁹² and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

⁸⁸ Some commentators consider it likely that this was referring to the Lord's Supper because of the NT passages that suggest that the Lord's Supper included a complete meal (e.g. Matt. 26:26-30; Acts 2:42, 46; 1 Cor. 11:17-34). The result of Peter and the other Jews removing themselves from this event would result in causing the Lord's Supper to become segregated; thereby defeating one of the purposes of the church (Eph. 2:14, 15).

⁸⁹ Separation - There are Biblical instances in which we *are* to separate ourselves from other people or groups of people (e.g. Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:17; et al). Invalid reasons for separation might be for our own personal legalistic anomalies of which a partial list might include: woman wearing slacks or make-up, long hair on men, preferences in types of Christian music, some of the KJV-only idiosyncrasies, and areas of Christian liberty (cf. Gal. 5:1; Rom. 14), et al.

⁹⁰ "Dissimulation" ὑπόκρισις - (hoop-ok'-ri-sis), acting under a feigned or false part; deceit. This word is translated "hypocrisy" in most other instances in the NT.

"Dissembled likewise with him" is from the verb form of the same word with the prefix σύν (soon) meaning "with" or "together with." Literally, they were "hypocritical together with" Peter.

⁹¹ "They walked [not] uprightly" (ὀρθοποδέω - or-thop-od-eh'-o) Literally, "straight-footed,"

⁹² The main purpose of the vision of the sheet containing the unclean beasts was that Peter was to bring God's truth to the Gentiles (Acts 10:34; 15:7). Commentators are divided as to whether or not that

This was a sin performed in public by a public leader which needed to be admonished in public. This was not a private quarrel but a matter of public policy which affected the future of the church. Peter was essentially supporting the erroneous doctrine of the Judaizers by compelling the "Gentiles to live as do the Jews." His lifestyle was inconsistent with what he believed about justification by faith, thereby frustrating (nullifying) God's grace (cf. v. 21).⁹³

Peter's hypocritical action here was effectively endorsing the compelling of the Gentiles to live like Jews, to Judaize the Gentile Christians; the very point at issue in the Jerusalem Conference where Peter so loyally supported Paul (Acts 15). Legalism⁹⁴ adversely affects, "the truth of the gospel" both in reference to justification (2:5) and to sanctification (2:14).

"... They walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel." Can we infer from this that compliance with the truth of the gospel will result in a correct walk for the believer? It is likely that simply *knowing* the truth will not accomplish that goal. On the other hand, I do believe it to be a Biblical principle that we cannot have right living without knowing right doctrine⁹⁵ (2 Tim. 2:15).

It is not clear whether Paul's remarks to Peter before the church ended here or in verse 21. However, the entire section is in response to Peter's inappropriate action.

Text

2:15. We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

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

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

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

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

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

this action also included Peter eating non-kosher (common or unclean) food. I don't see at this time how we could be dogmatic either way.

⁹³ Related to this type of hypocrisy is my belief that the 3rd commandment (Ex. 20:7) "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain;" is likely referring not so much to the *vocabulary* of the Israelites, but to their *ambassadorship*. I believe that Yahweh is telling them that if they claim His name or are to be known by His name, that they should maintain the public testimony worthy of His name. There certainly is a NT application to us also today (2 Cor. 5:20).

⁹⁴ One of many definitions of legalism is the excessive or improper use of the law or rules as a requirement for eternal life or for right standing before God. This is frequently manifested in improper judging of other people's actions and spirituality by looking at peripherals instead of the heart; where God looks (1 Sam. 16:7). For more complete definition see <http://www.emmanuelmsu.org> Select "Theological Topics" at left. Scroll down to "Legalism" by Ron Merryman. Other studies there are excellent.

⁹⁵ Some Scripture addresses in reference to the importance of sound doctrine in our lives: Matt. 16:12; Rom. 16:17; Eph. 4:14; 1 Tim. 1:3; 1:10; 4:16; 2 Tim. 4:2, 3; Titus 1:9; 2:7; 2 John 2:9, 10.

These verses are a continuation of Paul's admonition concerning Peter's hypocritical actions mentioned in verses 11-13 when he was eating with the Gentiles and then withdrew himself due to his fear of the Judaizers upon their arrival (v. 12).

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

The " *who* " supplied by the translators is not necessary here. " We" is emphatic in the Greek. We, including Paul, Peter, Barnabas, and the other believing Jews in attendance, were born Jews (who had knowledge of the Scripture - Rom. 3:1, 2), and not sinners of the Gentiles (who did *not* have God's Word), therefore the Jews knew something and were accountable for it; i.e. verse 16. Both ethnic groups are justified by the same Gospel. We also know something and are also accountable for it.

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

This verse, while completing the thought of verse 15, mentions 3 times in varied wording that we are *not* justified by works and 3 times that we *are* justified⁹⁶ by belief in Jesus Christ. This is a good example of making communication clear and simple⁹⁷ as has been previously endorsed. If a reader of this verse does not realize and accept the fact that we are justified by faith in Jesus and not by the works of the law, it is not because of interpretation difficulties; it is because of willful unbelief! One reason that we cannot be justified by the works of the law is because no one (except Jesus) could ever keep the law. (Rom. 3:10, 23, 28).

Please notice also that the text does not say that we are justified simply by faith or by believing in some vague generality. It says that "we have believed in Jesus Christ." It is belief *in Jesus* that saves the believer. There is a well-known Bible teacher⁹⁸ who is known for his enthusiastic stand for Lordship salvation,⁹⁹ who also makes a big deal about the *quality* of our

⁹⁶ This is the first of 8 references to "justify/justified" (δικαίωω - dik-ah-yo'-o) in Galatians. (Gal. 2:16, 2x; 2:17; 3:8; 11, 24). It does not mean to *make* righteous as the Roman Church proclaims. It means to be declared or regarded as righteous or innocent. It is a forensic or legal term.

⁹⁷ A humorous illustration about blondes and simplicity: (For the sake of humor we employ the blonde stereotype. I actually believe that they are much smarter because my wife, who was quite blonde when she was younger, chose to marry me.)

There is story told of two blondes walking through the woods when they came upon a set of tracks. One blonde stated, "Oh look, some deer tracks." The other blonde disagreed, insisting that they were moose tracks. While they were standing there arguing, a train came by and struck them both.

⁹⁸ As a side note: Some years ago I listened to a 30 hour cassette tape study by this same teacher on the epistle to the Romans. Among much that was said which was profitable, he mentioned at least twice that it is sometimes good and healthy for believers to doubt their salvation because it helps to keep them serving God. In the same context of that great assurance verse, 1 John 5:13, which tells us that we can know that we have eternal life if we believe on His name, we are told in verse 10 that if we do not believe God that we make God a liar. This "Bible teacher" is essentially telling people that it is healthy to call God a liar. I don't think that is a good idea.

⁹⁹ "Lordship salvation," sometimes called "discipleship salvation" is the widespread but erroneous teaching that a person must make Jesus the Lord or Master of his life before he can be eternally saved. It usually also includes the requirement for some pattern of obedience after believing; the lack of which would show that the person really did not believe in Jesus. This is *not* the message of John 3:16.

The best in-depth study that I have seen concerning what the Bible says about Lordship Salvation can be read online or hard-copy purchased at <http://www.gracelife.org/resources/dissertation.asp>.

faith; that it must be the right type of faith in order for us to be really justified. What he means by this is that if we do not have a certain amount of good works along with our faith that we are not truly justified. In accordance with the warning of God in Gal. 1:6-9, I would not like to be in his shoes¹⁰⁰ when I stand before my Savior at the Judgment Seat of Christ (the Bema - βῆμα - bay'-ma - 2 Cor. 5:10, 11; 1 Cor. 3:11-17).¹⁰¹

Though the Bible does speak of little faith and great faith¹⁰² ("...O ye of little faith." Matt. 6:30; "...so great faith." Matt. 8:10), *in reference to receiving eternal life*, the Bible says nothing about the *quantity* of faith nor the *quality* of faith; it clearly emphasizes the *object* of our faith; Jesus (John 3:16, et al).

17. But if,¹⁰³ while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

Paul, Peter, and the other Jewish believers were already justified. Is this speaking about the fact that they had accepted this message for themselves and now endorsed it for others? One commentator¹⁰⁴ suggests that "present participles (in this case ζῆτουντες) can be quite flexible in Greek and can refer to present *or* past time. Thus if after Paul and Peter sought and gained justification, they were "found [to be] sinners, is therefore Christ the minister¹⁰⁵ of sin?"

It seems that he is saying here that when we are justified by Christ, that we recognize that we are sinners, and if we recognize that we are a sinners, is Christ causing us to be a sinner? Paul's forceful answer is "...God forbid." This is not a literal translation of the phrase but is an idiomatic expression which carries much the same meaning.¹⁰⁶ Paul is emphatic that neither Jesus' nor Paul's grace teaching are the cause of sin.

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

Paul now shifts from 1st person plural to 1st person singular ("we" to "I"). All the Jews did not contribute to destroying the Church. Paul personally admits his guilt in that regard. (e.g. Acts 8:3). This is true but he likely is saying more. What else did he destroy? He destroyed the whole concept of justification by the Law that was so prevalent among many of the self-righteous Jews.

¹⁰⁰ It has been humorously said that we should not judge a person until we have walked a mile in his shoes. That way we are a mile away and we have his shoes.

¹⁰¹ Some Lordship salvation teachers have chosen to teach that one must turn from sin or turn over the control of their life to Jesus in order to be saved, due to the abysmal lifestyle that many believers are seen to live. The solution to error is not more error. The Bible doctrines of God's loving discipline in our lives (Heb. 12:5-11), the doctrine of the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10, 11; 1 Cor. 3:11-17), and the love of Christ which constrains us, (2 Cor. 5:14) all are powerful and Biblical motivators for service and obedience.

¹⁰² Little or great faith may be referring to faith in little or in great things, not necessarily the amount of faith that the person displays.

¹⁰³ "If" here is 1st class conditional in Greek; meaning that the speaker assumes that the condition is true. It could be translated "since."

¹⁰⁴ Bob Wilkin, Galatians, The Grace New Testament Commentary.

¹⁰⁵ "Minister" δῆκονος - (dee-ak'-on-os) also translated in KJV as "servant" or "deacon."

¹⁰⁶ Other English translations have μη γενοιτο (may genoit'o) as "in no way," "far be the thought," "let it not be," "far from it," "certainly not," "heaven forbid," and the NASB which is closest to a literal translation, "may it never be." It is used a total of 14 times by Paul (Rom. 3:4, 6: 3:31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1 Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14) and only one other time in the NT (Luke 20:16).

If he put himself back under law and sanctioned the requirement for the Gentiles to be under the law for salvation, he would show himself to be a transgressor. One purpose of the law is to show that we are sinners (Rom. 3:19). By endorsing the legalistic teaching which he had been opposing he would also harm the Church, likely more than his earlier persecution had done.

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

We are now beginning to approach some important principles for successfully living the Christian life. What does it mean that Paul was dead to the law? It is important to realize that this verse does *not* say that the *law* is dead, but that *we* are dead *to* the law. The law will not die. We are told that the law will outlast the earth according to Matt. 5:17, 18.¹⁰⁷ "...Am dead..." in this verse is literally the verb, "died."

Although we as believers are eternally saved by what God has *already* done for us regardless of our past or future lifestyle, this verse most certainly does *not* imply that a believer now has the freedom to live in a reckless or lawless manner (cf. Titus 3:5, 8; Eph. 2:10). The purpose clause here indicates something; you guessed it, the *purpose* of us being dead to the law; "that [we] might live unto God." The positive side of this principle will be covered in more detail in the following chapters. Hint: It has to do, not with a rigid list of do's and don'ts, but with the law (or principle) of Christ, (Gal. 6:2). Jesus answered the Pharisees who asked Him about the law, that the law commanded to love the Lord with all their heart... and to love their neighbor as themselves (Matt. 22:36-40); "...Love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom. 13:8, 10.). The law of liberty (James 1:25; 2:12.cf. Gal. 5:1) also factors into this. All this cannot be achieved without yieldedness to the Holy Spirit; the source of the enabling power, which is essential for effective Christian living (Gal. 5:16; Rom. 8). The next verse condenses this into one phrase, "... the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (cf. Col. 2:6). It does *not* say that we live by "obedience to the Mosaic law."

What about being "dead to the law?" The law cannot try a dead man. Furthermore, the law cannot try a person twice for the same crime. Our sin-debt has already been paid! If a man was on trial for a capital offense and during the trial he has a heart attack and dies, the case would then be dismissed, as he is now beyond the authority of the law. The defendant was dead to the law; but in this case it was because he cheated the law.

Paul's case was different. He was dead to the law "through the law." It was as if he was tried, convicted, sentenced, and legally executed. The case was closed. He was not only dead *to* the law but he, "through the law [was] dead to the law." The law was satisfied as it had put him to death. But then, what about when he was later seen alive, walking the streets of the city?

The law can then do no more. It has no provision for resurrection after the death of the executed. The law's dominion stops at the grave. The next verse tells the reason that Paul became dead to the law "that [he] might live unto God." Again, the word "that" here introduces a purpose clause. We too have become dead to the law and been resurrected to newness of life for a purpose; "that [we] might live unto God." (See also Rom. 6:4, "...so we also should walk in newness of life." and Rom. 7:6 "...that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter").

¹⁰⁷ We are aware of Eph. 2:13-15, where we are told that "...Jesus...abolished in his flesh...the law of commandments..." This passage will be discussed when we get further into chapter 3.

Law and grace are not complementary, they are antithetical. They contrast with each other. Under law, if you picked up sticks for a fire on the Sabbath day, what was the result? Death!¹⁰⁸ (Num. 15:32-36). Under the law, what was the result of being a stubborn and rebellious son? Death! (Deut. 21:18-21). It is little wonder that Paul calls the law the "ministration of death" in 2 Cor. 3:7. The law requires perfect obedience. (Rom. 2:14; cf. Rom. 3:10, 23; Gal. 3:10; James 2:10). Our Savior is the only One who accomplished that humanly impossible feat (1 Pet. 2:21, 22). He did this for us (v. 23). "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17).

Jesus came to fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17). Even His gracious response to the woman taken in adultery as recorded in John 8, shows His respect for the law. The accusers hypocritically demanded that she be stoned per the law's requirement (v. 5). Their demand was an attempt to tempt and accuse Jesus; (v. 6) probably to see if He would reject the law by hindering her stoning and tacitly endorsing sin, thereby leaving Him open to judgment from the Jewish leaders, or that He would reject His own teaching of love and sanction her being stoned, which would reveal hypocrisy.

Jesus masterfully invalidated both of these objectives. He requested witnesses as per the law (Deut. 17:6; 19:15). When no witnesses were forthcoming, He handled the matter with love and grace without endorsing her sin; "...go, and sin no more." (vs. 10, 11; cf. John 1:17).

Let us now turn to Romans 7:1-6 for some more background on what is meant by being "dead to the law." We will first look at verses 1 through 3.

Romans 7:1-3

1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

This is where many Bible teachers stop reading in order to promote their erroneous doctrine that the Bible does not, in any situation, allow divorce and remarriage.¹⁰⁹ That important and

¹⁰⁸ This exemplifies to me an apparent inconsistency with those who rigidly require Shabbat worship as being a legal requirement for the believers in this age. I have stated to others that if I were to found a new Christian assembly that I would likely prefer to meet on the Sabbath. We have liberty in this and other areas (Rom. 14:5). The reason that I presently fellowship on Sunday is not because the early pagan pseudo-Christian church decreed it, but because that is the day on which our assembly meets together.

The Law is not a smorgasbord where we get to choose only the items that we want. The inconsistency as I see it is that if we put ourselves under the law, then we should take on the whole law (James 2:10). Can you imagine the stir that would be caused if you read in this week's church bulletin, "Don't miss the gala special event next week. 15 believers will be publically stoned due to their breaking the Sabbath?"

¹⁰⁹ To any who are suffering the results of both divorce and the unbiblical treatment that they receive from the church who *should* be loving and Biblical in their attitudes and actions, we recommend two books to the serious student of Scripture, "Divorce and Remarriage, Recovering the Biblical View" by William Luck, which is available for free download at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/divrem.html> (This book has an excellent and more detailed explanation of this passage at the end of chapter 9) and also a

timely topic is not directly related to the purpose of this Galatians study but we hope to show that this passage does *not* teach that error, but *does* teach something else of importance to all of us.

Besides the fact that it is practically a hermeneutical truism that it is unwise to build a doctrine solely upon analogy and illustration, please note also that this passage *nowhere* mentions divorce and remarriage or whether or not divorce is allowed. This passage is *not* a treatise on divorce and remarriage. That is not the issue which is approached. The matter discussed is that of being married to *two people at the same time*; i.e. bigamy,¹¹⁰ which here is labeled as adultery. The next verses explain why the marriage/bigamy metaphor is used here; If a believer is married to the law, he cannot be married the same time to Christ (i.e. as the bride of Christ). Someone has to die first to permit a second marriage.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

We see in verse 4 again the phrase, "dead to the law." We see also the means by which we become dead to the law; "by the body of Christ."

In summary, this passage seems to be saying that if a wife wishes to be married to another without becoming an adulteress that she is presented with a dilemma;¹¹¹ the husband has to die first. If *she* were to die, a second wedding could legitimately take place, but that would be of no benefit to her.

In the parallel of verses 1-3 explained in verses 4-6, we see the spiritual application; Before a marriage can legitimately occur, one of the married parties must die. God's Law will not die as mentioned earlier. If the believer dies then that party will be unable to get remarried due to their own demise.

What is God's ingenious solution to this perplexing quandary? Instead of the *believer's* death, a Substitute emerges to die in our place. Jesus took the Law's sin-penalty of death upon Himself. We die in Him (We are members of His body - Eph. 1:22, 23; 1 Cor. 12-27). Thus, since we technically die in Him, we have fulfilled the requirement and are no longer bound to the old husband, the Law. And since Christ not only takes us with Him in death but also in the resurrection from the dead, we are alive to be subsequently joined to Him as His bride.

Two stated purposes of this new relationships are "that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (v. 4) and "that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (v. 6). The "faith" life is intended to be anything but a disobedient and fruitless life.

shorter book that is available for sale on the internet, at Bible book stores, or on loan from this writer, "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible," by Jay Adams.

¹¹⁰ There is a story told about a little boy who asked his disgruntled father, "What is bigamy? Is bigamy when you have one too many wives? The disgruntled father replied, "Not necessarily."

¹¹¹ The Scriptural exceptions for divorce and remarriage are not mentioned in the text as they are not germane to the purpose of the of the illustration and would only confuse the issue if included.

We hope that this explanation will be a helpful introduction to the meaning of the next verse.

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

This verse is a continuation from verse 19, "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" and even further back to the thought of verses 15, and 16. Note the opening words in verses 17, 18, and 19; "But if...", "For if...", and "For I..." It is also part of the admonition to Peter concerning his hypocrisy and compromise of the truth of the gospel.

"I am crucified..." is in the perfect tense. Another Greek past tense, the aorist tense, simply indicates that something occurred in the past at a point in time. The perfect tense indicates that the event occurred in the past but that the results remain though to the present time.¹¹² Some translations have it, "I have been crucified...", which is also accurate.

"I am crucified with Christ:" The law has done its job. The death penalty has been paid (Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:20a). The law was never meant to save (Gal. 3:21), but to expose sin in order to convict of the need of a Savior (Rom. 3:19-25) and to lead the unbeliever to the Savior in order that we might be justified (Gal. 3:24).

"...Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:" We were powerless to live righteously under law (Rom. 7:7-25), but now since we "through the law [are] dead to the law," we are free to "live unto God"(v. 19) because "Christ liveth in me" (v. 20).

How is this accomplished? "... and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God,"¹¹³ who loved me, and gave himself for me.

It is not wrong to live in the flesh (ἐν σαρκί - en sarki'). We have no choice about that. But we are not to live according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα - kata' sar'ka) (Rom. 8:12). The life that Paul now lives is *not by the law* but, "by the faith of the Son of God." We are saved through faith (Eph. 2:8, 9) and we are also intended to live by faith. Col. 2:6 exhorts us, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:"

Please also see; 2 Cor. 5:7 "(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)" Heb. 11:6, "But without faith it is impossible to please him:" Romans 14 is an insightful discourse on the proper use of liberty that we have in our Christian walk. The last verse sums up these principles with: "...whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (v. 23).

Many of us are familiar with Hebrews, chapter 11, which is frequently called the "faith" chapter. This is due to its repeated accounts of Old Testament believers who "by faith" accomplished great feats for God's glory and victoriously endured various trials. An important fact to remember when interpreting this passage is that the "faith" spoken of here is *not* the faith by which they were eternally saved. That was already a one-time "done deal," which was also by faith. This is speaking of the faith which they displayed in their daily spiritual life. They had already been *saved* by faith (as in Eph. 2:8, 9) but they also chose to *live* day-by-day by faith;

¹¹² Another example of the commonly used perfect tense is found in well-known verse, Eph. 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:" "...Are ye saved..." is the verb in the perfect tense. Some translations have it as "are ye saved," and some have it as "you have been saved." Both are correct; you *were* saved in the past and you *still are* saved.

¹¹³ "...The faith of the Son of God," According to Robertson's Word Pictures, this is an objective genitive. It is not referring to the faith which the Son of God has, but to our faith in Him.

just as we are admonished to do. In chapter 3 we will discuss further the OT quote found in verse 11, "...The just shall live by faith."

At the end of this list of victorious saints we are reminded of their ministry to us: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,..." ¹¹⁴ (Heb. 12:1a). The example of these faithful servants of God are a testimony and encouragement for us to be faithful throughout our trials and service to our God. The word "witness" here does not carry the emphasis of *viewing* something, but of testifying or being a testimony to something which they had experienced. Many believe that this verse supports the thought that our dear departed Aunt Millie can see us today in our daily living. If that is so, due to the meaning of the word and to the context, I do not believe that this is the verse to use to establish that view.

The passage then goes on to exhort us to lay aside both weights and sin in order for us to run the race that is set before us. It then admonishes us to be "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...."

"Christ liveth in me:" We as believers both have Christ in us ("...Christ in you the hope of glory." Col. 1:27), and we are in Him ("There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,..." Rom. 8:1).

Paul sometimes begins his epistles with several chapters establishing correct doctrine, then launches into a discourse on how to apply this correct doctrine in our Christian lives. For example, the first 3 chapters of Ephesians contain the phrases, "in Christ," "In Him," and "in Whom" about 19 times; i.e. what we have and are in Christ. The 4th chapter begins with an admonition of what the believer's walk should then be in light of what we are and have in Christ. The balance of the epistle is largely practical in nature.

Where do we go to obtain this correct doctrine, and to be more specific, where do we go to obtain the faith that we need? *We go to God's Word for correct doctrine.* ("Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. 2:15), and we also go to God's Word for faith ("So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word" ¹¹⁵ of God." Rom. 10:17). We cannot grow without being fed. (Matt. 4:4,

¹¹⁴ "Witness" Noun, μάρτυς (mar'-toos) from the verb μαρτυρέω - (mar-too-reh'-o) which has the primary emphasis, not of *viewing* something, but of *testifying* to that which one has seen or experienced.

The verb "witness" in modern English has come to mean one who views something or is a spectator. The noun has come to mean one who views or experiences something and then gives evidence of it or testifies of it. In early Greek the emphasis was on the testifying part of the process.

This word is transliterated into English as "martyr," and has evolved into a somewhat different meaning than it originally was. Bible teachers often refer to Stephen as being the first Christian martyr due to the fact that he was executed for the cause of Christ (Acts 8). He was killed for a cause; which fits today's common definition of "martyr." The Greek word μάρτυς was used of those who testified against Stephen (Acts 7:58). I could find nowhere that μάρτυς was used of Stephen in the Bible, but he does fit the Biblical definition in that he *testified* of his Messiah. The fact that he was killed for that public testimony is probably not originally related to the definition of the word.

¹¹⁵ "Word" here is ῥῆμα (hray'-mah) meaning "utterance." It is used 70 times in the NT and almost always is contextually the spoken word or words of someone, including Jesus or God the Father.

This is a different word than λόγος (log'-os), which is found 330 times in the NT and usually translated as "word." It has a broader meaning than ῥῆμα. It is also translated as "cause," "communication," "sayings," et al. This is the Greek word that is used in John 1:1 and 14 referring to the Word which is God

"But he [Jesus] answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

It seems from other Scripture¹¹⁶ that at least the last two references to "live:" "...and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God," appear to be something which Paul made a willful decision to achieve, i.e. he *chose* to have faith in the Son of God in his daily walk as a believer.

Please notice that Paul is not telling us that either he or we *need to be* crucified with Christ. He says that he already *is* crucified with Christ.¹¹⁷ It appears that this is not a command for the believer to obey, but a positional truth which is applied to us when we believe in Jesus. This is how he became dead to the law. In contrast, living by faith is a choice and an ongoing process.

We have seen that believers are dead to the law due to Jesus dying in our place. When He was crucified we were positionally crucified with Him. He took our place to pay the law's penalty for our sin. We not only died with Him, but we were resurrected to walk in newness of life.

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom 6:4).

Furthermore, in God's eyes, we are already seated in the heavenly places.

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places (Lit. in the heavenlies) in Christ Jesus:" (Eph. 2:6).

Rom. 6:6 also mentions our crucifixion with Him. A very brief 3 point synopsis of the Christian life which is detailed in Romans 6 is:

Knowing v.6

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Our old man is crucified in Jesus, we should reckon it so as per v. 11, i.e. Act upon it as a settled fact).

Reckon, v. 11 (NASB, "consider")

"Likewise reckon¹¹⁸ ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (We do not have to yield to our old nature. It does not have to have power over us now).

Yield, v. 16 (NASB, "present yourselves")

in verse one and to Whom was made flesh (Jesus) in verse 14. (Cf. Isa. 9:6, "a child is born" but "a son is given.")

¹¹⁶ E.g. Col. 2:6 et al. Heb. 11 gives record of some who have lived by faith. It is implicit in this record that some also do *not* live by faith. The four instances of the verb "live" (ζάω - dzah'-o) found in verse 20 are in the present tense (present active indicative) in contrast to the perfect tense of "I am crucified with" and the aorist tense of "loved" and "gave."

¹¹⁷ For the technical minded only, "I am crucified with" is one word in the Greek: "συνεσταυρωμαι." Grammatically it is 1st person, singular, perfect indicative passive. Explanation: 1st person - I, not you or he; singular - I, not we; Perfect tense - past action with results remaining to the present; indicative mood - to make a factual statement, in contrast to a command or a wish or doubt; passive voice - the action is being done *to* the speaker, not *by* the speaker.

¹¹⁸ "Reckon" (λογίζομαι - log-id'-zom-ahee) "calculate," "consider," "to take into account," The word was also used in secular Greek as an accounting term; dealing with facts, not suppositions.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" ("Yielding" ourselves goes against our prideful nature. We will examine this principle in more detail in chapter 5 where we are told to "walk in the Spirit").

Romans, chapter 7 explains how we need to have died to the law in order to be married to another. This is so that we "should bring forth fruit unto God" (v. 4) and so that we "should serve in newness of the spirit" (v. 6). Chapter 7 also details the failure of both the law and of our sinful nature to produce righteousness in our life. Romans, Chapter 8 explains the necessity for the power of the Holy Spirit in our Christian life.¹¹⁹

The truths of Romans 6 through 8¹²⁰ seem to present a synopsis of the effective and productive Christian life. What Paul is telling us in Galatians 2:20 is a summary or an abbreviated version of Romans, chapter 6. It is almost like Paul decided to later write an expanded and more detailed chapter on the theme of this verse.

"...I live by the faith of the Son of God..." The Christian life is not rules, it's relationship. So if we want to grow, we do not grow in the law, but we "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

2 Pet. 3:18 "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

Gal 5:24 "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

Gal 6:14 "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Rom 6:8 "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:"

Col. 2:12 "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

Col 2:20 "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances."

Col 3:1-3 "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." ("If" in verse one is 1st class conditional and could be translated as "since").

¹¹⁹ "Spirit" is mentioned 29 times in 22 verses in Romans and most of the time is referring to the Holy Spirit. It is noteworthy that 21 of these times it is found in chapter 8. Chapter 8 is the closing portion of Romans 6-8 which shows us how to live the Christian life. We cannot accomplish this feat by keeping rules, but only by the power of the Holy Spirit.

¹²⁰ We encourage all to pursue a more in-depth study on these passages in Romans and the whole epistle. We would suggest these two commentaries. "Romans Unlocked, Power to Deliver," by René Lopez; Available on loan from this writer or to purchase: <http://www.faithalone.org/bookstore/ru.html> and "Romans, Deliverance from Wrath," by Zane Hodges, to purchase: <http://www.faithalone.org/bookstore/romans.html>

"...The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." John 3:16, which is probably the best known Bible verse tells us, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

It never ceases to amaze me that someone loved me that much; especially a holy, sinless God. Though I fail many times, I wish to respond to Him also in a loving manner. He has bought and paid for us, therefore, we should glorify Him in our lives. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

Being born again (cf. John 3:3, 16) does not mean getting a renovated *old* nature, it is a *new* birth by the Holy Spirit. We can now "walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4).

In summary, before we were saved, the law showed us that we were sinners and needed the Savior. When we believed in Jesus we were born again. We were positionally crucified with Christ and rose with Him from the dead. We are now *not* married to the law but as the bride of Christ, we have liberty to serve our Savior in love, by faith and not by the Mosaic law (Gal. 5:13, 16).

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

"I do not frustrate the grace of God:..." "Frustrate"¹²¹ here means to nullify or to make void. "... for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Paul adamantly refused to nullify or detract from God's grace by adding the false concept of law righteousness to the Gospel message. If we could receive the righteousness that is needed for eternal life by keeping the law, then Christ died a needless death.

Paul says in the next chapter, "... for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Gal. 3:21).

Rom. 8:3 "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:"

The law is just and cannot show mercy. The law is holy (Rom. 7:12), therefore it condemns sinful man. The law demands 100% obedience (Gal. 3:10; James 2:10), a feat which we cannot achieve (Rom. 3:10, 23). Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the law in our place so that we might have His righteousness imputed to us (2 Cor. 5:21).

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:" (Phil. 3:9).

Overview of Chapter Three:

Chapters one and two were largely **personal** in nature. Paul was defending his apostleship and the truth of his message. We are now embarking on chapters three and four which are largely **doctrinal**, presenting the mechanics of the truth. We will see in chapters five and six the **practical** applications of the doctrine in our Christian lives.

¹²¹ "Frustrate" (ἀθετέω - ath-et-eh'-o) means to "nullify," or "abrogate." Other translations have it as "set aside," "reject," "nullify," "make void."

In chapter 3 Paul continues to present arguments for the truth of the grace message, both for eternal life and for the Christian's daily life. He then launches into a powerful and decisive discourse stating the purpose for the law as it applies to us today. Paul's conclusions about the purpose of the Law are in conflict with that of many religious leaders of today. We choose to go by God's Word, not the majority.¹²²

In chapters 3 and 4 Paul presents 6 bases of arguments¹²³ for the truth of the grace message that he taught; three in chapter 3 and three in chapter 4. His argument is to prove that salvation is by grace through faith apart from the works of the law (Eph. 2:8, 9) and that we as believers are to live the same way (Col. 2:6; Gal. 2:20).

1. Personal argument- 3:1-5

Paul challenges the Galatian believers to test their experience by God's Word. They had no excuse. The OT Scriptures are replete with prophecies concerning their coming Messiah and justification by faith. He did not question their salvation but confronts them as to whether they were saved by the Spirit or by works; probably meant as a rhetorical question. He then questions the means of their sanctification. (cf. Col. 2:7). There is no provision in the law for the Holy Spirit to do the work of sanctification.

2. Scriptural argument - 3:6-14

Paul quotes or alludes to 6 OT passages (Gen.15:6; Gen. 12:3; Deut. 27:26; Hab. 2:4; Lev. 18:5; Deut. 21:23).

These verses establish several pertinent points including: that Abraham was justified by faith long before the law was given; that just as Abraham was saved by faith, so are those who claim to be his children; that the law does not save; it condemns; that the just shall live by faith, not the law; and more.

3. Logical argument - 3:15-29 - The Abrahamic Covenant was a unilateral agreement and unconditional. A contract is a contract. The law came after the covenant and cannot nullify it. The purpose of the law is to bring us unto Messiah.

4. Dispensational argument - 4:1-7 Paul highlights the distinction that can help us discern the relative place of the OT believers with those of us in this present dispensation. We are heirs of God through Christ (v. 7) and we become sons of God by belief in Jesus (John 1:12).

5. Sentimental argument - 4:8-18 - When you have liberty, why voluntarily return to bondage?

6. Allegorical argument - 4:19-31 - Abraham & law - two sons, two types of birth; of the flesh and of the spirit, two women, two covenants, two mountains, two states; children of the bondwoman and children of the free.

¹²² There is saying derived from a 1927 song and later movie entitled, "Fifty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong." I've got news for you; not only they *can* be wrong, but because humans are inherently ungodly, they usually *are* wrong.

¹²³ These 6 points were derived from Galatians MP3 study by Chuck Missler, <http://www.khouse.org>

Chapter Three Text

3:1. O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

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

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

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

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

1. Personal argument- 3:1-5

The Hebrew Scriptures, which we call the Old Testament and the Jews call the Tanach,¹²⁴ contains over 300 prophecies¹²⁵ of Yeshua's¹²⁶ first advent and much more than that amount of His second advent. These verses challenge the Galatian believers to judge their experience by God's Word and to then discard the error. In verses 1 and 2, he relates his argument to their salvation experience and in verses 3-5, to their Christian life experience. Many people today get this backwards; they judge God's Word by their experience. Basing the establishment of truth upon experience is invalid if it conflicts with the truth of God's Word.

3:1. O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched¹²⁷ you, that ye should not obey¹²⁸ the truth,..."¹²⁹ By calling the Galatians "foolish" he does not mean that they were ignorant or stupid, for they were

¹²⁴ "Tanach" is the Jewish acronym for Torah, [law], Nevi'im, [prophets], and Ketuvim [writings]). The Tanach, or Hebrew Bible contains the same books as does our OT but a few are in a different order. The Jewish religion does not accept our NT (Brit Hadashaw' - ברית החדשה - New Covenant, from Jer. 31:31) as being God's Word.

¹²⁵ See for example <http://www.bibleprobe.com/365messianicprophecies.htm> or www.present-truth.org/1-Jesus/300-PROPHECIES-FULFILLED.pdf

¹²⁶ Jesus is English for the Hebrew name, "Yeshua," which is a combination of two Hebrew words, Yahweh (יהוה), the name of the LORD (Jer. 33:2), and Yasha, (ישע) meaning "save" or "savior;" In other words, "Yahweh is Savior" or Yahweh Saves." "Jesus" is English and has no intrinsic meaning as it is transliterated from the Greek Ἰησοῦς (ee-ay-sooce') which is transliterated from the Hebrew, Yeshua.

¹²⁷ "Bewitch" (βασκαίνω - bas-kah'ee-no) to fascinate (by false representations), to charm, to bewitch. This is the only example of the word in the NT. For any who might care, this is called a "hapax legomenon" - (ἄπαξ λεγόμενον), Lit. "something said once."

¹²⁸ "Obey" (παίθω - pi'-tho) Also translated "persuade," "trust," "have confidence." This is not the only word that is translated "obey" in the NT.

¹²⁹ Some of those in the Galatian churches did not obey the truth. These churches had a problem. There is a fictitious story told of three churches in a small rural community in the South who also had a problem; they all were overrun by pesky squirrels. They were a Presbyterian church, a Methodist church, and a Roman Catholic church. The Presbyterian church held a meeting and decided after much prayer and consideration that the squirrels were predestined to be there and that they should do nothing to interfere with God's divine will. The Methodist church decided that they were not in any position to harm any of God's creation so they decided that they would humanely trap the squirrels and release them a few miles from town. However, each time they did this the squirrels would return a couple of days later. Only

well-informed. They had been led to Christ and taught by the apostle Paul. He means that they were "unthinking" or "unwise"¹³⁰ to "not obey the truth." He was not being improperly judgmental; he was speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). They had been foolish to embrace a doctrine which declared the death of Jesus unnecessary. This action is totally irrational when compared with what they knew of Scripture. They were acting as if they were under some kind of a spell. Clearly, they had lost the basic truth of what they had once adopted. There is much in the OT concerning Messiah's coming to earth to pay for our sins by His sacrificial death on the cross. Paul had reinforced that teaching while he was with them on his first missionary journey (Acts 13 and 14). Yes, in spite of some of the current liberal and tolerant ideologies, there *is* such a thing as absolute truth.¹³¹

"... Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth,¹³² crucified¹³³ among you?

"Hath been evidently set forth" is from one Greek word προγράφω (prog-raf'-o), and means, "written before;" possibly in this context implying clarity or emphasis. The crucifixion/sacrificial death of Messiah was prophesied in their Scriptures (Ps. 22; Isa. 53: et al). It was not only clearly written in the OT but Paul had also taught the truth. They were without excuse (cf. Rom. 1:20).

I have spoken with many people over the years about the truth¹³⁴ of the gospel. Many simply are not seeking truth and some are adamantly against truth if it happens to disagree with what they think or want. There are legitimate interpretation issues, but some things are quite clear. In Eph. 2:8, 9, it states that we are saved "...not of works..." I have been told by some that this phrase does not mean, "not of works," but actually means, "not of works *only*;" which is exactly opposite of what it says and is not supported by its context nor other Scripture. I have also been told, "That is *your* interpretation." When they were asked how they would interpret the phrase, "not of works," they don't come up with any better interpretation.

the Catholics were able to come up with the best and most effective solution to the problem. They baptized the squirrels and enrolled them as members of the church. Now they only see the squirrels on Christmas and Easter.

Frankly, it would be a relief if the most serious problem in our churches was just that of pesky squirrels. Are you and I any part of the bigger problems? Some pastors have indicated that they feel that they spend the majority of their ministering time "babysitting" only a small portion of the congregation. It's not a sin to be a baby. It's a sin to voluntarily remain one (1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:11-14).

¹³⁰ In contrast, Prov. 9:10 says that, "The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...."

¹³¹ Pilate asked, "What is truth?" God says: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) and, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John 17:17).

¹³² "Hath been evidently set forth" is from one Greek word προγράφω (prog-raf'-o), and means, "written before;" possibly in this context also implying clarity or emphasis.

¹³³ It was necessary that the crucifixion and resurrection take place in order for us to be eternally saved (1 Cor. 15:17, 18). Though it is helpful to explain to unbelievers what Jesus did in order for us to be saved, I can find no Biblical evidence that we have to believe in the *events* in order to be saved. John 3:16 says that whosoever believes in him (Jesus) has everlasting life. We believe in *Jesus* who was crucified and resurrected, etc..

¹³⁴ I have shared the Gospel with several who objected to God's truth and claimed that there are no absolutes. I countered with the question, "Are you absolutely sure of that?" So far I have not received an adequate response to my responding question.

I would be a millionaire **if** I had a million dollars. "If" is a mighty important word in that statement. Words mean something. Frequently, but not always, the issue in accepting Bible truth is not interpretation. It is *willful* unbelief.

In Acts 17:11, Luke speaks approvingly of the Jews of Berea,¹³⁵ who upon hearing Paul teach, diligently scrutinized the message to see if it aligned with God's Word.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."¹³⁶

A key to applying this verse in our lives is the "readiness of mind" which the Bereans displayed. They consistently and diligently searched God's Word for truth but they were *willing* to accept a teaching if it was shown to be true.¹³⁷ If God's Word speaks favorably about comparing what the apostle Paul taught them with Scripture, then it would certainly be advisable to do the same with what I say or what any other Bible teacher says (and especially what we ourselves say to others). Eph. 4:14 warns us that we should "...be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." The doctrine of many Christians is about as strong as the last exciting TV preacher that they heard. *You* are accountable for your own doctrine and Bible study¹³⁸ (2 Tim. 2:15).

Several qualities that we see to be essential for beneficial Bible study and consistent spiritual growth include: 1. **Honesty** (Rom. 12:17) - a difficult quality to achieve since "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." (Jer. 17:9). 2. **Diligence** - which is actually the message of 2 Tim. 2:15. KJV "study" is σπουδάζω (spoo-dad'-zo) and the word actually means "to be diligent." The same word is translated "diligence" in 4:9 and 4:21. We believe that some of the "gems" in the Word are reserved for those who are willing to dig for them and then use them for Yahweh's¹³⁹ glory, and 3. The willingness to be able to be proven wrong, i.e.

¹³⁵ "Berea," presently known as "Veria" or "Veroia" is 40 miles west of Thessalonica in Macedonia, just north of the northern border of Greece. Thessalonica is found on the map on page 29.

¹³⁶ It is noteworthy that the next verse begins with, "Therefore many of them believed..." This is an expected result of an unbeliever honestly seeking God's truth in His Word.

¹³⁷ I remember reading of a debate some years ago between an atheist and a Christian Bible teacher. During the debate, the Bible teacher was accused of "refusing to follow truth wherever it might lead." This likely was an undeserved accusation but it certainly should not be true of us. This would be comparable to a person saying, "Don't confuse me with the facts. My mind is already made up."

¹³⁸ 2 Tim. 3:16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" One Bible teacher's comments on this verse include: "**doctrine** - what is right; **reproof** - what is wrong; **correction** - how to get right; **instruction in righteousness** - how to stay right."

¹³⁹ If you prefer to pronounce the LORD's name "Jehovah," you are in good company as most of English speaking Christendom does so and the KJV translates it as such 7 times, including 3 compound titles. In the KJV over 6,500 instances of the Hebrew word יהוה are translated as LORD, with all uppercase letters. How did the "Jehovah" spelling come to be? According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, 1991 under the heading "Yahweh", here is how this name came into being:

"The Masoretes, who from about the 6th to the 10th century worked to reproduce the original text of the Hebrew Bible, replaced the vowels of the name YHWH with the vowel signs of the Hebrew word Adonai or Elohim. Thus the artificial name Jehovah (YeHoWaH) came into being."

A large amount of, but not all, Hebrew scholars agree that the word should be pronounced as Yahweh or similar. I choose this pronunciation due to the higher probability of it being correct.

humility (James 4:10 and context). This might be the most difficult to achieve due to our pride. Initially, it is difficult but in the long run, it is easier because you then don't have to keep trying to defend something that is indefensible and those efforts can be directed elsewhere toward growing in truth.

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

This probably is a rhetorical question as it pretty much answers itself in its context. He was not questioning their eternal salvation.¹⁴⁰ Their eyes had turned from the cross to the law. The point that he was pressing here is that just as they were saved by faith and not by the law, neither could they live the Christian life by the law. There is no provision in the law for the Holy Spirit to do the work of sanctification. Our spiritual growth has to be by faith also. The Christian life was not intended to be controlled by the commandments, but by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16). This was essentially a Gentile church. The Gentiles never even had the law. The Judaizers were promoting this legalistic teaching.

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

Paul advances another rhetorical and pointed question concerning their foolishness. Perhaps he had not read Dale Carnegie's book, "How to Win Friends and Influence People."¹⁴¹ Paul loved the Galatian believers and endeavored to influence them, but his primary goal was not to make friends (Gal. 1:10). It is foolish to think that a believer can be brought to maturity by the law. As one Bible teacher put it, "The law cannot justify the sinner nor can it sanctify the saint." We are exhorted to "grow in grace" as it says in 2 Peter 3:18:

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

Some of the false teachers who had influenced the Galatians were teaching justification by works (Gal. 2:4, 16). Here we see that some of the false teachers were accepting salvation by faith but making the law a requirement for sanctification or the means of living the Christian life. Both of these teachings are rampant today.

We see a contrast here between the Spirit and the flesh. this will be expanded upon in comments on Galatians 5:16-26. We need to live by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit.

4. Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* ye in vain.

This is the fourth question in this immediate context. Paul had suffered persecution when he ministered to the Galatians (Acts 14:2, 5, 19, 22). If the Galatians had taken a stand for Christ, they would have suffered persecution for their "grace" stand. If they then returned to the yoke of the law, they would have branded their former position as error and suffered so much for nothing.

¹⁴⁰ We as believers have the Holy Spirit indwelling us (1 Cor. 6:19, 20) and believers are baptized by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). This all comes to us by God's grace with our spiritual birth by our belief in Jesus (John 3:1-18). Believers are never told to be baptized in the Holy Spirit because this is something that God Himself does when we believe. All six Bible references to the baptism of the Holy Spirit are in the indicative mood, not imperative; statements, not commands (Matt. 3:11; Mark. 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13).

¹⁴¹ We have all met people whom we think should read and apply a book entitled, "How to Win Back the Friends You've Influenced."

2 Tim. 3:12 tells us, "... all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." If you as a believer have not suffered persecution then either you are not living godly in Christ Jesus, or, just wait awhile; it's coming. We are in enemy territory (2 Cor. 4:4) and the enemy is spiritual (Eph. 6:10-20).¹⁴² We need spiritual armor and weaponry in order to be victorious.

Though we do not look forward with glee to suffering, we have God's promise," For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:18; Please see also 1 Pet. 4:12-14).

Paul later informs us how he could have avoided persecution himself; simply to stop taking a stand for Christ by not preaching the truth¹⁴³ (Gal. 5:11). What do you suppose our Savior would think about that?

5. He therefore that ministereth¹⁴⁴ to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Another rhetorical question: Upon what basis did God through Paul accomplish the miracles among them? The one who supplied the Spirit to you (God, through Paul), and worked miracles among you (could be translated "in you" - εν υμιν), did He do it through the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? (See Acts 14:3, 10, 20, for miracles which Paul did while in Galatia during his first missionary journey). This is almost a repetition of the question that he asked in verse 2. It should be clearly apparent that these supernatural acts were not by works of the law. "...The hearing of faith:"¹⁴⁵ faith in whom, see verse one; Jesus Christ.

In verse 2 and verse 5, we see that Paul makes two similar contrasts. In verse 2 he contrasts *receiving* the Spirit "by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith," referring to their initial salvation experience. In verse 5, he contrasts the one who *ministered* the Spirit to them and worked miracles among them as to how he did it, "by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith." This has to do with their sanctification and spiritual growth.

The following shows how one Bible teacher¹⁴⁶ aptly outlines and summarizes these 5 verses:

Verses 1-5 – Five questions from their very own experience:

Question 1: Who has bewitched you? "foolish" = senseless or unthinking "bewitched" = 'to delude' or 'cast a spell on.'

Question 2: How did you receive the Holy Spirit?

¹⁴² For a helpful study on this passage, please see <http://www.freegraceresources.org/armor.html>

¹⁴³ There is a pointed story told about a young Christian man who was accepted to work during the summer at a logging camp. His father knew that there were some rough and ungodly men working there and was concerned about unnecessary persecution against his son.

After a while the father received a letter from his son stating that he didn't have to worry about him being persecuted for being a believer. No one even knew he was a Christian!

Needless to say this is a sorry and selfish way to handle our life for our Savior Who has done so much for us (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

¹⁴⁴ "Ministereth" is not the usual word translated "minister." This is ἐπιχορηγέω - (ep-ee-khor-ayg-eh'-o) and means to "supply" or "furnish."

¹⁴⁵ The phrase "of faith" is used in Galatians 3:2, 5, 7, 9, 12, 6:1. It appears that in verses 7 and 9 that it is referring to those who have faith; i.e. believers in Jesus.

¹⁴⁶ Pastor Kenny Hodges, from Galatians outline. <http://www.emmanuelmsu.org> See "Theological Topics" in menus at left, for some other good grace-related Bible studies.

- ☐ By the works of the Law? ☐ By hearing with faith?

Question 3: How is God sanctifying you?

- ☐ Perfected by the flesh? ☐ Perfected by the Spirit?

Question 4: Have your sufferings been useless?

- ☐ Suffered because of Law? ☐ Suffered because of faith?

Question 5: What is the basis of God's present work among you?

- ☐ By the works of the Law? ☐ By hearing with faith?

Text

3:6. Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Scriptural argument - 3:6-14

Paul quotes or alludes to 6 OT passages (vs. 6, 7 - Gen. 15:6; vs. 8, 9 - Gen. 12:3; v. 10 - Deut. 27:26; v. 11 - Hab. 2:4; v. 12 - Lev. 18:5; v. 13 - Deut. 21:23). These verses establish several pertinent points including: that Abraham was justified by faith long before the law was given; that just as Abraham was saved by faith, so are those who claim to be his children; that the law does not save; it condemns; that the just shall live by faith, not the law; and more.

Paul had just presented his argument by asking several questions pertaining to their experience; how were they justified and how were they sanctified; by faith or by the law. He now turns to several OT passages on order to further establish his grace message.

Let us follow a brief "rabbit trail" and look at several NT passages for a moment to establish a point that many of us frequently do not consider. In Luke 24:13-27, we read the account of Jesus walking on the road to Emmaus with two of His followers shortly after His resurrection. He informed them in verse 24, "...beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

In Acts 28:23, 31, we see the apostle Paul under house arrest for two years in Rome, where he diligently taught many about Yeshua the Savior and the Kingdom of God, "...persuading them

concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.”

In 2 Timothy 3:15, 16, Paul is speaking to Timothy and proclaims, “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Timothy was justified in God's sight *after* Jesus' crucifixion the same way that Abraham was justified about 2,000 years before; *by faith* (Gen. 15:6; cf. Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23).

What is one consistent factor¹⁴⁷ in these three passages? We see that God has revealed much of what we might call "New Testament truths" in the Old Testament. The point meant to be established here is, even though the NT expands on many OT doctrines, God's plan of salvation through Yeshua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah or Anointed) is evident throughout the OT. The Old Testament is the "Bible" that was used by Yeshua and his apostles.¹⁴⁸ In this portion of his epistle Paul uses OT passages to establish his argument for the grace gospel.

6. Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted¹⁴⁹ to him for righteousness.

Paul quotes Gen. 15:6¹⁵⁰ here. Abraham was justified in God's sight the same way that he had taught the Galatians that they could be justified; by faith. Some believers of our day, knowing that we are no longer under the Dispensation of Law, might ask the reasonable question, "How were people in the Old Testament justified; by the law?" The answer is found in this verse and others; they were justified by believing/faith,¹⁵¹ just as we are today. They believed in the Messiah to come. We believe in the same Messiah who already has come to earth and paid the death penalty for our sins (Rom. 6:23).

The Judaizers could not use the argument that the father of the Jewish nation was circumcised in order to be justified in God's sight. Abraham was accounted righteous by faith in Genesis 15. He was not circumcised until Gen. 17:9-14 (cf. Rom. 4:9, 10). This was about 13 years after the events of Genesis 15. This was also about 400 years before the Law. Abraham could not have been justified by the Law of Moses even if it was otherwise humanly possible.

Even though Abraham was considered to be the father of the Jewish nation,¹⁵² he was not a Jew. He was a Gentile and a Hebrew.¹⁵³ His son Isaac¹⁵⁴ was not a Jew.¹⁵⁵ His son Jacob,¹⁵⁶ who

¹⁴⁷ An unrelated but humorous and possibly convicting consistency issue might be to answer the question, "What is the one common factor in all of your dissatisfying relationships?"

¹⁴⁸ They also used and quoted the Septuagint translation also known as the LXX for the supposed 72 translators. It was the Hebrew scriptures (OT) translated from Hebrew to Greek, ca. 270 BC. Due to the influence of Alexander the Great three centuries earlier, Greek was the "lingua franca" or common trade language of the civilized world at that time. Many people knew both their native language and also the common (κοινή, koy-nay) Greek. God used the universal Greek language and the Roman road system to further His cause when the Messiah came to fulfill His mission here (Luke 19:10).

¹⁴⁹ "Accounted" (λογίζομαι - log-id'-zom-ahee) Also translated, impute, reckon, count. Justification does not *make* a person righteous, it *declares* him righteous. It is a forensic or legal term. Justification is something that God does for or to us, sanctification is something that He does *in* us.

¹⁵⁰ This verse is in the context of Yahweh promising Abram not only progeny, but a multitude of descendants. This is part of the Abrahamic Covenant.

¹⁵¹ "Faith/belief" (πίστις - pis'-tis) is the noun form of the verb "believe" (πιστεύω - pist-yoo'-o).

¹⁵² He is also considered to be the father of the descendants of Ishmael.

was later named Israel,¹⁵⁷ could be called an Israelite, but even he was not a Jew. He had 12 sons who were the patriarchs of the 12 tribes of Israel; Judah¹⁵⁸ was one of them. Judah's lineage technically were Jews but those from all 12 tribes of Israel are frequently called Jews today.

For an interesting side-note on the Hebrew language: When God changed the name of Abram and Sarai (Gen. 17:5, 15), He added the letter ה (hay) to each of them. The Hebrew alphabet is unique in that each of the 22 letters not only represents a sound, but also a number *and* a word or concept.

In the Hebrew pictorial language, the ה (hay) represents a window, behold, *or* breath, spirit. Could there be any reference to the Holy Spirit here and His future purpose for them? (Hebrew reads right to left).

Abram (אַבְרָם - ab-rawm') high father

Abraham (אַבְרָהָם - ab-raw-hawm') father of a multitude (Gen. 17:5)

Sarai (סָרַי - saw-rah'ee) princess

Sarah (סָרָה - saw-raw') noblewoman

The word "father" in Hebrew is אב (awb) - (abba, in the vocative case, meaning as in direct address; Gal. 4:6). Notice above that it is also the first two letters in Abram and Abraham. In paleo-Hebrew, the א (aleph) looked like an ox head and represents "strength, leader." The ב (bet) resembled and meant a house. (E.g. The word "bet" is used in Bethel which means "house of God," Bethlehem means "house of bread.") The father, אב (awb), is intended to be the head and strength of the home.

When we take the word אב (awb - father) and add ה (hay, the Holy Spirit?) to it, we get אֲהָב (aw-hab'). This is none other than the Hebrew word for "Love." Love is the essence of the Father (1 John 4:8b). This is also the end of our mini-Hebrew lesson for the day.

Back to Abraham: "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." He was justified in God's sight; not by works, not by the Mosaic Law, but by *believing God*. This same verse is quoted in James 2:23. This is the context of the well-known phrase, "faith without works is dead" (James 2:17, 21).

That statement, "faith without works is dead," is frequently used as a catch-all "proof text" by both the cults and mainline, and supposedly Bible-believing denominations, in an attempt to substantiate their doctrine of a faith-*plus*-works requirement for eternal life. It is extremely important to know what this passage is *not* saying, but, I think, also equally important to know

¹⁵³ Hebrew (עברי - ib-ree') one who crosses over or one from beyond; Has come to also means Abraham's descendants on Isaac's side and also the language.

¹⁵⁴ Isaac, יִצְחָק (yits-khaw'k) laughter, mockery.

¹⁵⁵ Jew, יְהוּדִי - yeh-hoo-dee' Technically a descendant of Judah, but frequently used for the whole nation of Israel. After the divided kingdom (shortly after Solomon's death, ca. 931 BC), the northern tribes were frequently called Israel and the southern tribes were called Judah.

¹⁵⁶ Jacob, יַעֲקֹב (yah-ak-obe') heel catcher (that is, supplanter)

¹⁵⁷ Israel, יִשְׂרָאֵל (yis-raw-ale') prince of God, he will rule as God.

¹⁵⁸ Judah, יְהוּדָה - (yeh-hoo-daw') praised, celebrated,

what it *is* saying. For those who wish to pursue it, we highly recommend several excellent Bible studies on our website¹⁵⁹ that offer a reasonable explanation for the whole context.

We are concerned here about Abraham being justified by faith. In a nutshell, the James 2 passage is *not* saying that a person who has faith without works is lost or unsaved, *nor* is it saying that to receive eternal life that there are *two* requirements; faith and some undetermined quantity of good works.

What it *is* saying is that there are *two types of justification*; one by faith before God and another by works before man. Please take time to seriously consider the recommended Bible studies along with the whole context and then make your own decision.

James also quotes Genesis 15:6 and uses Abraham as an example of being justified by faith in God's sight in 2:23 and of being justified in man's sight by works in 2:21. He specifies that *this* works-related justification occurred "when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar"¹⁶⁰ (Gen. 22). This event occurred probably at least 30 years after his justification by faith mentioned in Gen. 15.

Another quote of Genesis 15:6 is found in Romans 4:1-5, which also shows the distinction between the two types of justification:

- 1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?
- 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.
- 3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.
- 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.
- 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Using Abraham as an example, this passage identifies the difference between being justified in man's sight by works, and being justified in God's sight by belief. It clarifies the distinction between *unmerited* justification in God's sight by faith, and a *reward* that is out of debt. Abraham was not justified by faith *and* works. There were *two* types of justification, by *two* different methods, before *two* different entities. He was justified by faith before God and he was justified by works before man. These same principles also apply to us today.

Later in this same chapter (Rom. 4), we see the record of an example of Abraham's faith. Usually, when we seek a Bible *definition* of faith, we go to the "faith" chapter, Hebrews 11. Verse 1 tells us, "Now faith is the substance"¹⁶¹ of things hoped for, the evidence¹⁶² of things not seen." This is probably a shortcoming on my account, but the full impact of this verse is just not real clear to me. In Romans 4, we have what I call the *description* of faith. This is something that I can really "hang my hat on." (A colloquialism that improperly ends with a preposition ☺).

¹⁵⁹ Please see <http://www.freegraceresources.org/james214.html> for several important studies on James 2.

¹⁶⁰ Contrary to the picture that we have seen in our Sunday School quarterly, at that time, Isaac was a grown man, not a small child. Josephus has him as 25 years old and Jewish tradition has him as 38. The typology of Isaac to Yeshua is an interesting study which we recommend to any who are interested.

¹⁶¹ "Substance" ὑπόστασις - (hoop-os'-tas-is) "essence," "assurance," "confidence."

¹⁶² "Evidence" ἔλεγχος - (el'-eng-khos) "proof," "conviction," "evidence."

Abraham had been told by God that he was to be the father of many nations. Humanly speaking, both he and Sarah were much too old to have children. We see in verses 20 and 21:

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

To me, "being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" is a reasonable and understandable expectation for me in response to such an awesome and trustworthy God (Psalm. 33:8; Prov. 3:5, 6).

7. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children¹⁶³ of Abraham.

In John, chapter 8, the Jews claimed Abraham as their father (v. 53). Yeshua agreed that they were Abraham's seed (v. 37), but in the process of them seeking to kill Him, He negated the claim that they were Abraham's children (v. 39), and pronounced that their father was the devil (v. 44). Jesus went on to establish that He was greater than *their* father, Abraham. Jesus is eternal and outside of time; He is God Himself." Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." (v. 58).

As a side note: This verse as it stands is fatal to the Jehovah's Witness doctrine that denies the deity of Christ. An attempt to refute the doctrine of the deity of Christ was made with their first edition of the "New World Translation" in 1950 which was translated by a group of JW's and is their official translation. The NWT translates this verse as, "Before Abraham came into existence, I have been." This inaccurate and unsubstantiated translation eliminates any apparent allusion to Yahweh's statements in Exodus 3:14 and the "I am" passages in Isaiah. This could mean that Yeshua came into existence sometime before Abraham but was not eternal. Their first defense for translating the present tense as past tense was that they said that the verb portion of "I am" (ἐγὼ εἰμί¹⁶⁴ - eg-o' i-mee') was in the "perfect indefinite tense."

When it was exposed that this "tense" was an invention of the JW's and did not exist, they presented no defense for their assertion but then defended their translation by stating that the verb should be translated as a "historical present." However, historical presents¹⁶⁵ have nothing to do with perfect tenses nor with the present tense following an "aorist infinitive clause." The new defense in effect rejected the old defense but was no better.

Later NWT footnotes at John 8:58 were changed from using "perfect indefinite" to "perfect indicative" or just "perfect tense." There is a "perfect tense" in Greek but I can find no example

¹⁶³ This is not the usual word for children which is "τέκνον" (tek'-non) born ones - from "τίκτω" (tik'-to) to bear a child. The Greek word here is "υἱός" (hwee-os') which is the usual word for "son." It is both a physical and legal term and sometimes carries with it the implication of maturity. For some reason unknown to me, the KJV occasionally translates either of these words as the other one.

¹⁶⁴ "εἰμί (i-mee') is 1st person singular, present tense, and simply means, "I am." E.g. as in Luke 22:33, "...I am (εἰμί) ready to go with thee..." If we add the ἐγὼ (eg-o') to εἰμί (i-mee'), it adds emphasis to the "I" part of the phrase. In the above example if someone asked you and several others in your company, "Which one of you is ready to go with me?" You might reply, "**I** am (ἐγὼ εἰμί) ready to go with you."

"ἐγὼ εἰμί" does not *inherently* indicate deity but in some contexts it clearly does (e.g. John 18:5-7).

¹⁶⁵ "Historical present" is not another tense, it is simply how the present tense verb is used and interpreted. It is used in narrative to vividly portray an event and to draw the hearer into the midst of the scene as it unfolds. For example: "Yesterday I went (past tense) to the store, then I walk (historical present) up to the counter and say (historical present) to the man..."

of it being used with εἶμι. The word εἶμι is present active indicative. If it was in the perfect tense it would begin with "η" (eta) not "ε" (epsilon). The Watchtower has come up with several explanations for all this; some of them are self-contradictory.

A couple of lessons that we can apply out of this are: 1. Don't believe everything you hear, even if (or especially if) it comes from a religion or a religious leader. Check it out before you depend on it as truth (Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15). And 2. It has been wisely said, "Sometimes it is easier to lie in Greek than in English."¹⁶⁶ Don't let the esoteric terms sway you. Check it out first.¹⁶⁷

Back to Galatians: Verse 7 is a deduction from verse 6 (see "therefore").¹⁶⁸ According to this verse, we as believers, due to our faith, are considered as children of Abraham. The Jews can claim Abraham in the physical sense¹⁶⁹ but *both* believing Jews and Gentiles can claim Abraham as our father in the spiritual sense. The point made here is that physical descendancy from Abraham¹⁷⁰ did not ensure or bring with it spiritual descendancy. Personal faith is a prerequisite for spiritual identity with God in any age (Heb. 11:6).

¹⁶⁶ E.g. A prominent Bible teacher known for his strong stand *for* Lordship salvation has taught that John 3:16, "whosoever believeth in him" means "whosoever keeps on believing in him." His defense for that is the claim that the verb is in the *present continuous tense*. There is no present continuous tense in Greek; just a continuous *aspect* of the present tense. That is determined by the text and context, not by preconceived doctrinal bias. (Actually, it is a present participle, but these principles still apply).

Aorist indicative means "past tense at a point in time." Several examples of aorist indicative "believe" in John: 2:23; 4:39, 41; 4:50, 53; 7:31; 8:30. Jesus said in John 6:47 ... "he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." "Hath" is present tense. That means that you have eternal life *now*, not in the future if you continue to believe for the rest of your life.

¹⁶⁷ This might be a good place to interject a suggestion which has been extremely helpful for my Bible study. For those who have access to a computer and the internet, there is an excellent and full-featured Bible research program available for free download at <http://www.e-sword.net>. After it is installed there are numerous module downloads available, both for free and to purchase. This program makes it extremely easy to look up Bible words in the original languages and it has too many other features to list here. It is one of several software applications that I use daily in my Bible study. There is little excuse today for most people not being able to seriously study God's Word.

¹⁶⁸ It's been wisely said that when you see a "therefore," check to see what it's there for.

¹⁶⁹ Of course, any Jew who believes in Yeshua HaMeshiach, their Messiah, has *both* physical and spiritual lineage to Abraham. It is interesting to note that today, some "Christians" wonder if the Jew can be saved. Almost all of the first Christians were Jewish. Many of them wondered if the Gentiles could be saved. John 3:16 says that "God so loved the world...."

¹⁷⁰ An interesting side note: In John 8:44, Jesus advised the Jewish leaders who were trying to kill Him, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Is this penetrating assessment just due to the fact that they had not been born again, or the result of their open sin against Messiah by trying to kill Him, or could it be even more literal and be a partial fulfillment of Genesis 3:15; the first prophecy of the coming Messiah (with a veiled implication of the virgin conception), where Yahweh declares war on the serpent and the *serpent's seed*? There is much more to be said on this topic if we get into a study of Genesis 6:1-4 (Cf. Jude 1:6, 7). This writer believes that a correct understanding of this passage is essential in order to more fully understand other portions of both the OT and NT, especially in eschatology (the study of last things). There are many events occurring now as we approach the last days which the Bible prophesied, but the understanding of which we may be partially in a fog unless we correctly see the facts about the "seed of the serpent" and the identity of the "sons of God" in Gen. 6:2 & 4. Many excellent Bible teachers do not hold this interpretation but if any wish to pursue it, I have further information available.

We will see shortly how the Abrahamic Covenant is of benefit to us, Jew and Gentile alike.

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

Paul quotes here from Genesis 12:3. "Heathen" here is referring Gentiles or non-Jews. They were to be saved just as Abraham was; by faith. The Judaizers reasoned that Abraham was their father, that they were chosen by Yahweh to propagate His name, and that Abraham had received the rite of circumcision as a sign of Yahweh's covenant blessing (Gen. 17:10), that therefore, the Gentiles would have to receive circumcision in order to be blessed in Abraham. What "gospel"¹⁷¹ or "good news" did scripture preach to Abraham? "In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed." It was the good news about the coming Messiah Who would be in Abraham's lineage. Notice that the blessing is not just for the Jews; it is for *all* nations; "... God would justify the heathen [Gentiles] through faith."

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

Some of these "foolish Galatians" had made an erroneous deduction due to the false teaching of the Judaizers. Paul's conclusion is that the Gentiles received the blessing of Abraham the same way that "faithful"¹⁷² Abraham had; by believing. The error is repeatedly counteracted by the OT Scripture.

For those who are interested in the typology¹⁷³ of Isaac and Jesus. we include here a chart showing some of the areas in which Isaac prefigures Yeshua:

TOPIC	ISAAC	JESUS
Only begotten Son	Genesis 22:2	John 3:16
Offered on a mountain, hill	Genesis 22:2	Matt. 21:10
Took donkey to place of sacrifice	Genesis 22:3	Matt. 21:2-11
Two men went with him.	Genesis 22:3	Mark 15:27; Luke 23:33
Three day journey. Jesus: three days in the grave	Genesis 22:4	Luke 24:13-21
Son carried wood on his back up hill	Genesis 22:6	John 19:17
God will provide for Himself the lamb	Genesis 22:8	John 1:29
Son was offered on the wood	Genesis 22:9	Luke 23:33
Ram in thicket of thorns	Genesis 22:13	John 19:2
The seed will be multiplied	Genesis 22:17	John 1:12; Isaiah 53:10
Abraham went down, Son not mentioned again, until he meets his bride	Genesis 22:19; Genesis 24	Luke 23:46
Servant gets bride for son	Genesis 24:1-4	Eph. 5:22-32; Rev. 21:2,9; 22:17
The bride was a beautiful virgin	Genesis 24:16	2 Cor. 11:2

¹⁷¹ The phrase, "preached before the gospel" is one word in the Greek (προεευαγγελίζομαι - pro-yoo-ang-ghel-id'-zom-ah-ee) and is literally "evangelized before," or "good-news-ized before."

¹⁷² "Faithful" here (πιστώ, dative, singular adjective) could also be translated as "believing" as stated in Gal. 3:6.

¹⁷³ "Type" (τύπος - too'-pos) Translated as "ensample," "figure," "pattern," "manner," and others. That which is prefigured in a type is seen in the "antitype," ἀντίτυπον, translated "like figure, (1Pet. 3:21); and "figure," (Heb. 9:24). Events, persons or statements in the Old Testament are seen as types pre-figuring or superseded by antitypes, events or aspects of Christ or his revelation described in the New Testament.

The Jews call the event in Genesis 22 "Ha Akedah" (הַעֲקִידָה), the binding, from עקד (aw-kad') to bind. Abraham knew that if he offered Isaac that God was able to raise him up. (Heb. 11:17-19). By faith, he was willing to obey God in offering Isaac. In effect he was saying, "I will obey you LORD, it's up to you to work out the details." God had promised Abraham a son who would be next in the lineage of Messiah. He was asked to believe God in a long-promised, and a long-delayed son when both of them were past child-bearing age. It is apparent that Abraham believed also in the resurrection.

Abraham was about 75 years old when he was promised a land, a seed, and a blessing; which is in a nutshell, the Abrahamic covenant. (Gen. 12:1-4). He was 86 years old when Ishmael was born. (Gen. 16:16) and 100 years old when Isaac was born Gen. (17:17; 21:5).

It is interesting to me that when the LORD promised to give Abraham virility to bear the promised son, Isaac, that God's blessing did not stop there. After Sarah died (Gen. 23:1), he remarried and continued to father children for years after and died at 175 years of age (Gen. 25:1-8). Our God has been known to bless His faithful children abundantly.

For those who are interested, we include here a more detailed explanation of the Abrahamic Covenant from the notes in the Scofield Reference Bible:

The Abrahamic Covenant as formed (Gen. 12:1-4) and confirmed (Gen. 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8) is in seven distinct parts:

- (1) "I will make of thee a great nation." Fulfilled in a threefold way:
 - (a) In a natural posterity — "as the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:16; (John 8:37), viz. the Hebrew people.
 - (b) In a spiritual posterity — "look now toward heaven...so shall thy seed be" (John 8:39; Rom. 4:16,17; 9:7,8; Gal. 3:6,7,29), viz. all men of faith, whether Jew or Gentile.
 - (c) Fulfilled also through Ishmael (Gen. 17:18-20).
- (2) "I will bless thee." Fulfilled in two ways:
 - (a) temporally (Gen. 13:14,15,17; 15:18; 24:34,35).
 - (b) spiritually (Gen. 15:6; John 8:56).
- (3) "And make thy name great." Abraham's is one of the universal names.
- (4) "And thou shalt be a blessing" (Gal. 3:13,14).
- (5) "I will bless them that bless thee." In fulfillment closely related to the next clause.
- (6) "And curse him that curseth thee." Wonderfully fulfilled in the history of the dispersion. It has invariably fared ill with the people who have persecuted the Jew—well with those who have protected him. The future will still more remarkably prove this principle (Deut. 30:7; Isa. 14:1, 2; Joel 3:1-8; Mic. 5:7-9; Hag. 2:22; Zec. 14:1-3; Mt. 25:40,45).
- (7) "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This is the great evangelic promise fulfilled in Abraham's Seed, Christ (Gal. 3:16; John 8:56-58).

It brings into greater definiteness the promise of the Adamic Covenant concerning the Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15).

NOTE.—The gift of the land is modified by prophecies of three dispossessions and restorations (Gen. 15:13, 14, 16; Jer. 25:11, 12; Deut. 28:62-65; 30:1-3). Two dispossessions and restorations have been accomplished. Israel is now in the third dispersion, from which she will be restored at the return of the Lord as King under the Davidic Covenant (Deut. 30:3; Jer. 23:5-8; Eze. 37:21-25; Luke 1:30-33; Acts 15:14-17).

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

Paul here alludes to Deut. 27:26. We will approach more about the "curse of the law" when we get to verse 13. Those who try to be justified by the works of the law are under the curse because they cannot meet the law's demands. The curse is on those who do not continue in "all things which are written in the book of the law...." "Goodness" is not the payment for sin; death is (Rom. 6:23). The law's demand is not a good life, The law demands a *perfect* life. Our Savior is the only One who was able to accomplish this superhuman task (Matt. 5:17;¹⁷⁴ 1 Pet. 2:22) Justification in God's sight is not possible by man's righteousness (Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9).

The breaking of the law in any point, even once, brings a person under the condemnation of the law (Rom. 6:23). Since everyone of us has failed at some points (Rom. 3:23), then everyone of us is brought under the curse of the law. The best that the law can do is to *not* curse you if you are perfect.¹⁷⁵ It can condemn you but cannot commend you. If you are not perfect, consider yourself "toast."

James 2:10 offers much the same message: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all." A helpful illustration: If you were to swing out off of a cliff over a deep valley hanging on to a chain with *all* of the links defective, it is obvious that you would fall to the bottom of the valley. But what if all the links were good except for one? Would you just fall two inches? Of course not. One broken link in the chain makes it defective. One sin makes you a sinner.¹⁷⁶ All of us have sinned (Rom. 3:23). Sin cannot enter a perfect heaven (Rev. 21:27). God cannot let even one person in with a little sin as it would pollute the place for everybody. That is why we need a perfect substitute to take our place (2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 53:6). We will see more about this in verse 13.

This dismal sounding pronouncement of our failure under the law will show a divine purpose when we read further in this chapter and see that the purpose of the condemnation of the law is intended to bring us to Christ, our Savior.

The proposition that a person can obtain divine approval by the law is totally destroyed. That is the point of the law. It demonstrates the utter hopelessness for us to attain God's righteousness by our efforts to obey the law. That is why the only alternative is such good news, as we see proclaimed in the next verse.

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

Verse 10 establishes that all are under the curse of the law due to the fact that *none are able to keep the law*. Therefore the logical conclusion in verse 11 is "that no man is justified by the law

¹⁷⁴ Re: Matt. 5:17: It appears from the context that when Jesus spoke of Him fulfilling the law *and* the prophets that He meant that He fulfilled *both* the requirements of the commandments of the law (all 613 of them) and also all the OT prophecies concerning Himself.

¹⁷⁵ A story is told of a preacher while trying to illustrate this Biblical point, asked his congregation if there was anyone there who was perfect. Surprisingly, a man in the back raised his hand. The pastor then questioned him. He replied, "Oh, it's not me that I'm talking about. It's someone that I hear about often; my wife's first husband." ☺

¹⁷⁶ In stark contrast to "singing one song making you a singer." ☺

in the sight of God." (cf. Rom. 3:28). It is now evident or made clear that our only viable alternative is the truth of the next phrase: "The just shall live by faith."

Here is the verse that "changed the world." The last phrase of verse 11, "The just shall live by faith" is a quote from Hab. 2:4.¹⁷⁷ Let us now review a portion of church history:

God used this verse to enlighten Martin Luther (1483-1546) to the futility of trying to obtain eternal salvation and peace with God by human works and self-sacrifice. He, as a German monk, and his well-known "95 Theses," are widely regarded as the initial catalyst in what was later to be known as the Protestant Reformation. He is credited for being the founder of the Lutheran denomination even though he insisted that "Christian" be the accepted name for individuals who professed Christ.

He was enrolled in law school in 1505 in Germany when a momentous event occurred. While riding a horse in a thunderstorm a lightning bolt struck near him.¹⁷⁸ Due to his fear of death and divine judgment, he cried out, "Help! Saint Anna, I will become a monk!"

In keeping true to his word, he left the university and enrolled in an Augustinian friary¹⁷⁹ in Erfurt where he obtained a doctorate in theology. He became obsessed with how a man could find favor with God. In a nutshell, "How could a holy God grant mercy to someone who is not holy?"

In his search for peace he devoted himself to an exceedingly pious lifestyle.¹⁸⁰ It is said that he went to confession so often that the abbot (head of the monastery) finally said, "Either go commit a sin worth confessing, or stop bothering me."

In 1509 he made a pilgrimage to Rome in hope of finding this peace that was so elusive to him. He went on foot, crossing the Alps, and nearly dying from exposure in the process. On the way he met a monk at a monastery at the foot of the Alps who nursed him back to health.

The monk wisely told him to study the book of Habakkuk, which he did. Habakkuk had struggled with similar issues: If God is good, why does he allow suffering?" The phrase that stuck in Luther's mind was, "The just shall live by faith."

He arrived at Rome and began to endure the rites that were required of him by the church. As he and others participated in the requirement to climb the 28 "Scala Sanctum" or "Holy Steps" there on their knees, uttering prayers on every step, this phrase came back to haunt him, "The just shall live by faith." This apparently was a change-point in his life; both for receiving the gift of eternal life by faith in Jesus (Rom. 6:23) *and* in the direction of his Christian service.

Over the next few years his Bible study and experience in the Roman church led him to the formulation of his well-known 95 theses which he posted on the door at All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, Saxony on October 31, 1517. Many mistakenly assume that his intent was to leave

¹⁷⁷ The verse quoted here in Gal. 3:11 is also quoted in Rom. 1:17 and Heb. 10:38. This trilogy is offered by some as evidence that the Apostle Paul also authored the Epistle to the Hebrews.

¹⁷⁸ He must have found that to be re-volting. ☹

¹⁷⁹ ☹ A humorous and fictitious story is told of a cannibal in the jungle who captured a Roman Catholic missionary and cooked him for his family. After supper the cannibal complained to one of his friends how tough and tasteless that he was. The neighbor knowingly stated, "No wonder. You boiled him. He's a friar."

¹⁸⁰ It is tragic that so many seek peace where it cannot be found. God tell us in Romans 5:1, that peace with God is through our Lord Jesus Christ.

the Roman Catholic church and begin a new church or denomination. His real goal in this proposition was to engage debate with the leaders of the Church who were actively overstepping God's Word and for them to correct their actions. He wished for the Church to be obedient to the Bible.

True to carnal human nature, the "Church" did not want any opposition from Luther nor from the truth of God's Word. Instead of objectively evaluating their position by the Bible, they chose to excommunicate him from the Church and eventually sought to kill him.¹⁸¹ Just as the early Jewish leaders responded to the early believers in Yeshua, they resorted to the actions of those mentioned in Matt. 7:6:

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

We have seen repeated examples of this tendency, both recounted in the Word and encountered in our own ministry experience over the years. Many people are not really seeking truth; they are seeking whatever makes them feel good at the moment. When they are approached with truth that is uncomfortable or that demands accountability, they first attack (ignore, deny, or attempt to change) the message, then they attack the messenger, sometimes maliciously so.

Many Christians of today assume that Luther's 95 theses¹⁸² was primarily a document defending the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith. Actually, this was only a small portion of his theses and where the doctrine was mentioned, it was not presented as clearly as we would like to see it. The major thrust of the document was against indulgences.¹⁸³ He further condemned nepotism,¹⁸⁴ simony,¹⁸⁵ usury,¹⁸⁶ and pluralism.¹⁸⁷ It challenged the authority of the Pope by teaching the priesthood of believers and that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge from God.

¹⁸¹ Luther's refusal to retract all of his writings at the demand of Pope Leo X in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, at the Diet of Worms in 1521, resulted in his excommunication by the Pope and condemnation as an outlaw by the Emperor. (A "diet" is a formal assembly of the ruling leadership of the Roman Church. "Worms" is a city in Germany.) The Church then made repeated unsuccessful efforts to have him killed. These statements are not intended to offend anyone in the Roman Church. We are simply relaying history. Please check any good encyclopedia under "Inquisition" or for a more detailed account, see <http://www.freegraceresources.org/foxesmartys.doc> to download a copy of Foxe's Book of Martyrs. We need to know what is in this book but some may not wish to finish reading it due to its unpleasant and disturbing content.

¹⁸² The English translation of this document can be found many places by an internet search.

¹⁸³ An **Indulgence** is a promise of freedom from punishment for sin that was sold by the Roman Catholic church to the people. Pope Leo needed funds to complete the building of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. At that time, purchasing an indulgence was supposed to get someone out of purgatory.

¹⁸⁴ **Nepotism** is favoritism granted in politics or business to relatives. ☺ Funny sign related to nepotism at a business: We promote family values here almost as often as we promote family members.

¹⁸⁵ **Simony** is the act of selling church offices and roles. The title is derived from Acts 8:18.

¹⁸⁶ **Usury** is the practice of making unethical or immoral monetary loans intended to unfairly enrich the lender.

¹⁸⁷ **Pluralism**, is a situation in the sense of holding multiple ecclesiastical offices.

We might tend to be critical of him for not being more discerning in the areas of doctrine in which he was in error or still a bit fuzzy, but we should realize what a gallant and remarkable job that he did do, considering the doctrinal quagmire and religious atmosphere from which he came and which prevailed in much of the known world.

To his credit, he translated the Bible into the language of German people (instead of Latin) which made a tremendous impact on the church and on the German culture." This action was influential toward Tyndale¹⁸⁸ later translating the Bible into English. He wrote a number of Christian hymns, at least one of which has become a universal favorite, "A Mighty Fortress is our God." He wisely and beneficially took advantage of the technology of the day;¹⁸⁹ the Gutenberg press with movable type, with which he printed the German Bible and many thousands of tracts.

To his detriment, later in his life he was actively anti-semitic and published an involved treatise entitled "On the Jews and their Lies." This book was on display at the Nuremburg Rallies 400 years later and many believe that it exercised a major influence on the German people and was offered as a partial excuse for the Holocaust. The sordid details of that book may be easily referenced on the internet.

What impact did this verse later have on John Wesley (1703-1791) through Martin Luther? John Wesley is credited as being the founder of the movement known as Methodism. His work, writings, and influence also played a leading role in the development of the Holiness movement and Pentecostalism.

After his formal religious education in England Wesley ministered there for a few years and then sailed to Georgia in the new world in 1736 where, for a couple of years, he engaged in a rather unsuccessful effort to spread Christianity. Wesley himself still had doubts about his eternal destiny. He had sincerely been trying to be saved by his good works and probably was teaching much the same message.¹⁹⁰

He then, discouraged, returned to England and in 1738 read Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. This apparently was a major catalyst to him believing in Jesus and becoming eternally saved.¹⁹¹ Through a number of events after that, Methodism grew both in England and in the USA and was a factor in other Bible related movements which evolved from it.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ The Tyndale Bible (ca. 1522-1535) was the first English version that was translated from the Hebrew and Greek and also that was printed with moveable type. Tyndale was executed in 1536 due to his translating of the Bible (the charge of heresy).

¹⁸⁹ We now have the advantage of radio, TV, more efficient printing capabilities, better transportation, and the computer/internet. Let us use any legitimate means to more efficiently study God's Word and to disseminate the Good News to a lost and dying world.

¹⁹⁰ A Bible teacher whom I highly respect (Bob Wilkin - www.FaithAlone.org) has humorously and poignantly relayed his version of the witness that those who claim this doctrine of faith-plus-works salvation can have with someone: "I don't know where I'm going when I die, and if you can spare a few minutes of your time, I can share with you how you can't know either."

¹⁹¹ I was first apprised of this some years ago from reading documents at the Methodist Museum at Epworth by the Sea, St. Simons Island, GA. This is where Wesley initially ministered in the new world.

¹⁹² An example that is much closer to me is concerning the man who was humanly speaking, most responsible for me being saved and who also mentored me and many thousands of others to discipleship. Without exaggeration, I believe that this man has won several hundred thousand people to Christ, one-on-one, and many more publically. He disciplined many of those. The point I wish to make is

Besides the value of learning some important church history, what practical application can be derived from this information? A challenge to me is the fact that if God can use these men to that extent, then God can also use me for His glory. He says in 1 Cor. 4:2, "Moreover it is required in stewards,¹⁹³ that a man be found faithful." I don't think that I personally have some of the natural talents of these men, but God does not require great talent, good looks, large income, etc., He requires a person to be faithful. Each of us can do that with God's power if we choose.

Early in my Christian life I wished to be used and blessed by God but was not real impressed with my own abilities. I then read in 1 Cor. 1:27-31, that "...God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. ...That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Perhaps I am weak and foolish, etc., but I saw from this passage that God uses "dedicated nobodies."

In 1 Cor. 12:12ff. Paul compares a human body and its members to the Body of Christ and its members. He encourages me with the statement in verse 22, "...much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:" You and I are not vestigial organs. God has a place for you and me in His program. What an honor and blessing that He allows us to serve Him. We just need to be faithful to Him day-by-day.

Back to the text; does the phrase, "the just shall live by faith" mean that faith is the means by which a person can be justified and receive eternal life as Luther and Wesley assumed, or does it mean that the justified person should live their life by faith?

Let us consider several factors. In the context of Galatians 3:11, it is clear that the text is referring to how a person can be justified and receive eternal life. The word order in the Greek phrase also favors this interpretation: (ο δικαίος εκ πίστεως ζήσεται - Lit. "the righteous one out of faith he shall live").

Does this verse *also* mean that believers are to live their lives by faith? This phrase is also quoted in Heb. 10:38 which is immediately preceding the faith chapter. The "faith" described in Hebrews 11 is not referring to believing and receiving eternal life. The examples mentioned were already believers. The emphasis here is that these "believers" were living their lives by faith and as we see as the text continues in chapter 12, they were an example (v. 1- witness (μάρτυς - mar'-toos) = testimony) to us and we are exhorted to do the same.

The word "faith" is mentioned in Galatians 22 times; exceeded only by Romans; 39, and Hebrews; 32 (There are more instances *per chapter* in Galatians than any other Bible book). There is an emphasis in Galatians that faith is the means of justification in God's sight (e.g. 2:16;

that another man repeatedly and lovingly worked toward getting him to a Bible study where he could hear the clear Gospel message and get saved. Who was this faithful "no-name?" Are you and I being faithful servants even if we are a no-name? God might allow us to have a small part in His great plan.

¹⁹³ "Steward" (οικονόμος - oy-kon-om'-os) Lit. a "house distributor," "manager." In that culture those with sufficient finances chose a trusted servant to manage the household and to make many crucial related decisions. He was to wisely handle the masters property in his care and to act in the masters stead as the master would. This parallels our responsibility with our Master. Nothing belongs to us. We are to use all the resources in our care to His glory.

3:24). But even in the Galatians context, Paul also tells us in 2:21, that "...the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." This is clearly speaking of how we should live our Christian life; by faith in Jesus.

The problem that I see in consigning this verse as pertaining to living the Christian life is that the verse states that the just shall live by faith. Abundant Biblical and empirical examples demonstrate that many believers *do not* live their lives by faith, even though they should. I suggest that the generally accepted interpretation, which was also that of Luther and Wesley, is the primary thrust of the phrase. The fact that believers are exhorted to live their Christian lives by faith is true but may be somewhat incidental to this verse, although I cannot be dogmatic on this. That doctrine is clearly seen elsewhere.

Paul's emphasis on the failure of the law to be able to save us in no way means that we are free to live a disobedient life. He is careful to lay this important doctrinal groundwork before he is able to effectively tell us how we are to live; which is much of the content of the last two chapters.

Since it is taking us some time to expound on the basics of being saved by faith and not by the works of the law, let us again emphasize that even though we are eternally saved by faith alone in Christ alone and we as believers have great liberty in Christ (Gal. 5:1), we are exhorted to use this liberty in order to serve out of love (Gal. 5:13). This can only be done through the Holy Spirit's power and direction (Gal. 5:16; 22-25). The sixth chapter informs us of more practical considerations for effective Christian living. We will cover all this in more detail when we get there in our study, but we mention it again now just so that our clarity on the grace and faith issues does not cloud the understanding of our responsibilities as believers. Dr. M. R. Dehaan has stated in his commentary on Galatians (p. 116) that, "Our *position* in Christ depends upon God's faithfulness. Our enjoyment, assurance, blessing, and rewards rest upon OUR faithfulness."

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

"The law is not of faith." It is not a system of faith, but people seek life by doing the law, rather than by faith. The Law demands complete obedience; it does not relate to faith; it does not require faith; it deals in other matters, and it pertains to another system than to faith. But since no one can keep the law perfectly, all are under the curse (Gal. 3:10). Law demands complete obedience and does not rest upon faith or grace.

"...But, The man that doeth them shall live in them." The quotation is from Lev. 18:5. What does this mean? One commentator suggests, "The man that does them perfectly, at all times, and in all places, he shall live in them; but if in any case he fails, he forfeits his life."¹⁹⁴ It does not make provision for faith, but it requires unwavering and perpetual obedience, if man would obtain life by it;¹⁹⁵ Jesus is the only One Who passed the test; and He did it for us (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21, 22).

Verses 11 and 12 contrast 2 types of people; justified ones who live to God on the basis of faith, and law-works types who try to live to God on the basis of performance. Since there are

¹⁹⁴ Adam Clarke Commentary, ca. 1800.

¹⁹⁵ We are reminded of those with whom we share the good news of eternal salvation who maintain that they hope to be saved by keeping the 10 commandments. There are 613 commandments and none of us have even kept all of the "top 10" let alone almost all of the rest of them.

none who perform in complete accordance to the law, there are none who are justified by it. The truth is that all are under the curse of the law. All would be hopeless if it were not for the truth of the next verse. How thankful we should be for our gracious God:

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

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:" There are several Greek words that are translated as "redeem" or "redemption. In summary, the various shades of meaning are: to set free by paying a ransom, to buy in the market, and to buy *out* of the market.

The word used here¹⁹⁶ and in Gal. 5:4, is the last definition: to buy *out* of the market. As C. I. Scofield aptly notes in his comments about redemption at Romans 3:24, that "we have been purchased *out* of the slave market of sin by Christ's substitutionary sacrifice." This word implies that we have been purchased then been set free. God has purchased us by paying a price.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23). Jesus died in our place and paid the penalty the law demands for us.

He has paid the purchase price for our redemption, now as believers we belong to Him. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19, 20)

"...For it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:¹⁹⁷ This is from Deut, 21:22, 23. It was customary at the time of this writing that when a criminal had committed a capital crime that after he was executed by being stoned to death that the body would be hung on display from a tree for a period of time as a public proclamation of the cursedness of the man's sins. Jesus took the curse of our sin upon Himself upon the cross. He exclaimed, "It is finished." (John 19:30). The law has been fulfilled as never before nor ever since The payment for man's sin has been made.(1 John 2:2).

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

"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ;" "That" (ἵνα - hin'-ah) initiates a "purpose clause" and introduces us to the *purpose* of the preceding statements; i.e. Paul's multifaceted argument concerning the failure of the law to justify ungodly people *and* faith being the *only* means of justification. Please note that this blessing is not just for the Jews, but for the Gentiles also; all the world (John 3:16). Please note also that the second purpose clause is dependent upon the first: "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

The Jews had been awaiting the promise of the Spirit of Yahweh since the time of the prophet Joel (possibly as early as the 9th century BC) as per Joel 2:28. They were reminded again at

¹⁹⁶ "Redeem" in Gal. 3:13 and 5:4 is (ἐξαγοράζω - ex-ag-or-ad'-zo). To buy *out* of the market.

¹⁹⁷ Tree - (ξύλον - xoo'-lon), not the customary word for a living tree. This word usually implies an implement made from wood, e.g. a cross, a soldiers staff, prison stocks, etc. (Acts 5:39; 10:39; 1 Pet. 2:24). The word is used 4 times in Revelation as the "tree" of life.

Pentecost¹⁹⁸ when Peter quoted the same passage and proclaimed that what they had just seen was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel concerning the pouring out of God's Spirit upon mankind (Acts 2:16, 17). Part of Peter's sermon (Acts 2:38)¹⁹⁹ to that crowd included the requirements for that particular group of Jews (those in Palestine who had a part in the crucifixion of Jesus) to "...receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Believers of this age are sealed with the Spirit (Eph. 1:13), are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19, 20) and are baptized in/by the Holy Spirit²⁰⁰ (1 Cor. 12:13). We now have the power of the Holy Spirit. Our purpose now should be to utilize this power to be witnesses (testifiers) of Jesus into all the earth (Acts 1:8).²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ The "Christian" church might be using the term "Pentecost" (fifty days) kind of recklessly. Israel was commanded in Lev. 23, to obey this and other feasts early in their wilderness wandering after their departure from Egypt (ca. 1446 BC). This is known as the feast of Weeks or Shavuot (שבועת). We tend to think of Pentecost occurring only once, at the beginning of the Church just after Jesus' ascension. The Jews have been faithfully celebrating this day (believed to be the date of the giving of the Law of Moses) for about 3,500 years. They are better "Pentecostals" than the Pentecostals.

¹⁹⁹ Acts 2:38 is *not* referring to a gift *from* the Holy Spirit, such as eternal life, but the gift *of* the Holy Spirit Himself. According to "Robertson's Word Pictures," This is a "genitive of identification." The "gift of the Holy Ghost," mentioned in Acts 2:38, is the same as described in Acts 8:17, where they "...received the Holy Ghost."

For the serious Bible student: This verse is often used by the Church of Christ and other groups as one of the main "proof" texts to establish their doctrine that one must turn from sin and be water baptized in order to receive eternal life. Needless to say, that interpretation is far from accurate as it conflicts with too many verses that clearly present belief in Jesus as the only requirement for receiving eternal life (John 3:16; 6:47; Acts 16:31; et al). A primary fact that we need to consider is that this verse is speaking of *remission* (forgiveness) *of sin, not justification*. There is much more. The best explanation that I have seen of this verse is found in a couple of paragraphs in a study entitled "Harmony With God: A Fresh Look at Repentance" by Zane Hodges. It is available for loan from this writer or to purchase from <http://www.faithalone.org/bookstore/books.html> or can be downloaded or read online at:

Part 1 http://chafer.nextmeta.com/files/v8n3_1harmony_with_god_part_1.pdf

Part 2 http://chafer.nextmeta.com/files/v8n4_3harmony_with_god_part_2.pdf

Part 3 http://chafer.nextmeta.com/files/v9n1_2harmony_with_god_part_3.pdf

²⁰⁰ Jesus promised this baptism to His disciples shortly before Pentecost (Acts 1:5). This and more was fulfilled in Acts 2. The disciples there were also "filled" with the Holy Spirit (2:4). The command for us to be *filled* with the Spirit is for us today (Eph. 5:18). The word "filled" in this context with the Holy Spirit means to be "influenced," imbued," or "controlled" by the Holy Spirit. I take this to be somewhat synonymous with the commands found later in Galatians to "walk" in the Spirit (5:16; 25; two different words). There are other Greek words used when being filled with food (John 6:12) or baskets filled to overflowing (John 6:13).

Contrary to some current religious beliefs, baptism in the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit are not synonymous. We are never told to be baptized with/in/by the Spirit because God has already done that when we believe in Jesus. There are only seven verses that mention the baptism of the Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16; I Cor. 12:13). These are all in the indicative mood (informational) not imperative (commands). The reason that we are not told to be baptized with the Holy Spirit is that when we believe in Jesus, God himself handles that process along with a number of others. This is not an experience that we must seek. It has already happened to the believer (I Cor. 12:13).

²⁰¹ A humorous story illustrating someone who had "power" but did not use it is the one about the hardware store salesman who was driving out in the country and noticed an old farmer friend of his near the road cutting firewood with an ax. He stopped and offered to loan him his chainsaw which he stated would make the job much easier and more efficient. At the end of the day he came back to retrieve his chainsaw but was surprised to hear the disgruntled farmer complain that the job was even harder than before. The salesman then, in an attempt to analyze the problem, turned on the switch and pulled the

We have seen the first two of several arguments that Paul offers to prove his theses: 1. a **Personal argument** (3:1-5) where Paul challenges the Galatian believers to test their experience by God's Word (not to test the Word by their experience), and 2. a **Scriptural argument** - (3:6-14) where Paul quotes or alludes to 6 OT passages (Gen.15:6; Gen. 12:3; Deut. 27:26; Hab. 2:4; Lev. 18:5; Deut. 21:23). We now approach the next argument:

3. Logical argument - (3:15-29) - The Abrahamic Covenant was a unilateral²⁰² agreement and also unconditional. A contract is a contract. The law came after the covenant and cannot nullify it. The purpose of the law is to bring us unto Messiah.

We will approach this larger section in smaller and more "digestible" portions.

15. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth,²⁰³ or addeth thereto.

Paul is drawing an illustration from something that actually occurs among people. The illustration is that when a contract or agreement is made by people involving obligations and promises, no one can add to it or take from it after it has been confirmed or agreed upon. It will remain as it was originally made. So it is with a covenant made by God as we shall see in the following verses.

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

"Now to Abraham and his seed...." To him and his posterity. "...Were the promises made." The promise here referred to was that which is recorded in Gen. 22:17-18. "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

"He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." In both Hebrew and Greek the word "seed" is sometimes used as the seed of a plant, but it can be also used as human posterity at large which could include any number of individuals or generations. In this context there is a distinction made between the singular and the plural; and for an obvious reason. The "seed" singular is a prophecy of the coming Messiah, in Whom "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (There are over 300 Old Testament²⁰⁴ prophecies that were fulfilled at the first coming of Jesus, and many more of His second coming.)

starter cord of the chainsaw to start it. At that the startled farmer exclaimed, "What's that noise?" We as believers are frequently just as foolish in our service to our Lord.

²⁰² "Covenant" is from the Hebrew word, ברית - (ber-eeth') which comes from a word meaning "to cut." This is due to the Hebrew custom of confirming a covenant by cutting an animal in two and the two covenant parties walking through the division together. This action symbolically confirmed the sacredness of the oath and the responsibilities of both parties. In this case (see Genesis 15), per God's instruction, Abraham prepared the animals but later fell into a deep sleep. It appears from verse 17 that God passed between the two animals, thus confirming the fact that the covenant was unconditional. The fulfillment did not depend upon what Abraham did. It depended only upon the faithfulness of God Himself.

The Mosaic covenant was conditional. Both God and Israel had responsibilities. Israel failed.

²⁰³ "Disannulleth" (ἀθετέω - ath-et-eh'-o) - "nullify." The same word as is translated "frustrate" in Gal. 2:21. It is also translated as "despise," "reject," "bring to nothing," and "cast off."

²⁰⁴ See for example <http://www.bibleprobe.com/365messianicprophecies.htm> or www.present-truth.org/1-Jesus/300-PROPHECIES-FULFILLED.pdf

17. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul,²⁰⁵ that it should make the promise of none effect.

The Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional. God will fulfill His agreement no matter what anyone else does. The Mosaic Covenant was conditional upon Israel's obedience. A covenant made 430 years after the unconditional covenant in no way nullifies or modifies the first one. The conditions of the contract had already been agreed upon. The fact that Israel failed under the law does not annul God's covenant of grace made before with Abraham.

God had made a unilateral agreement with Abraham. That promise pertained to his posterity. The blessing was connected with that promise, and it was of the nature of a compact with Abraham. But if so, then this could not be effected by the Law which was four hundred-plus years after, and the Law must have been given to secure some different object from that designed by the promise made to Abraham.

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

If justification is by faith alone, then why did God give the law? What purpose does the law serve? We have seen several examples of evidence offered to demonstrate what the law *cannot* do; that is, to justify us in God's sight. But just what is the purpose of the law? If we cannot be justified by the law as many had proclaimed, why did God give the law? In verse 19, Paul begins to answer this question.

Before we wade into this important issue, let us briefly review how we got to this point and where we are going with this. In this chapter Paul is giving us six proofs that justification is by faith.

1. The example of the Galatians (3:1-5). How were they saved? By faith, How did they grow? By faith. How did they serve? by faith.

2. How was Abraham saved? By faith just like everyone else who was saved. (3:6-9).

3. The law cannot save you because the law brings a curse. (Gal. 3:10-13).

4. Salvation was based upon promise (3:14-20).

5. The law's purpose is not eternal salvation (3:21-25).

a. The law shows sin and was temporary in its initial purpose.

b. The law points to Jesus for salvation.

6. Salvation is by our union with Christ (3:26-29).

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

If the law cannot justify the unsaved nor sanctify the believer, the obvious question is proposed, Wherefore then *serveth* the law? Or more clearly, Wherefore then the law? ("*Serveth*")

We highly recommend a free downloadable booklet, "The Messiah in Both Testaments" found on our website at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/booksbibst.html> There are other helpful Bible study books and shorter studies to be found at the same web address.

²⁰⁵ "Disannul," This is a different word than is used in verse 15. It is used here and only in Matt. 15:6 and Mark 7:13 where it is translated as "of none effect."

is in italics and is added). Why was the law given? "It was added because of transgressions,..." but its purpose had a time limit, "... till the seed should come to whom the promise was made;..." The seed is Christ²⁰⁶ (v. 16), the promised Messiah.

We see at least 3 things in this verse:

1. The law had a beginning: "It was added...."
2. The law had a definite purpose: "because of transgressions." Mankind could not overstep the *law* until it existed (Rom. 4:15; 5:13). They violated God's Holy moral standards. Sin was always morally wrong and offensive to the Holy God, but with the addition of the law, it became *legally* wrong.²⁰⁷ The law exposed man's sinfulness and revealed the need for a Savior.
3. The law also, in reference to this purpose, came to an end.²⁰⁸ "It was added...till the seed shall come."

In other words we see:

1. The beginning of the law.
2. The purpose of the law.
3. The end of the law.

Angels are associated with the giving of the law. (Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Acts 7:53). Though the law was glorious, it was administered by secondary agencies (angels and Moses) and was inferior in some ways to the Abrahamic Covenant which was administered by God Himself. (cf. 2 Cor. 3:9).

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

²⁰⁶ "Please see footnote 126 for the meaning of "Jesus." "Christ" is from the Greek word Χριστός (khris-tos'). "Messiah" is from the Hebrew word מָשִׁיחַ (maw-shee'-akh). Both of these words mean "anointed" or "anointed one." When we use the term, "Jesus Christ" or the Hebrew "Yeshua HaMashiach," we are technically saying, "Yahweh, Savior, the Anointed One."

Anointing with oil was a rite of inauguration into each of the three typical offices of the Jewish commonwealth; prophet, priest, and king. Jesus is the fulfillment of all three of these roles. (He was of the tribe of Judah, not Levi, and therefore could not be a Levitical priest. He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4).

When sharing the good news of salvation by grace through faith with a Jewish person, I choose to stay away from what is generally portrayed as the "Christian" Jesus, but to emphasize what Yeshua, their Messiah, had done for them. This is found in their Bible, the OT or Tanach. The Jews have suffered much persecution from those who claim to be of Christ. They understandably do not wish to become "Christian." From what I see of much of what claims to be Christian, I don't wish to be part of that either. We need to abide by the Word of God.

²⁰⁷ An example of this principle is the fact that in the United States, up until 150 years ago, it was legal to own slaves. It then became illegal. It was *always* morally wrong to own slaves even if legal. We do not have to go far to find similar examples in our legal system of today where something is legal to do but is still morally wrong.

²⁰⁸ The Law itself will not end as in being annihilated. It is part of God's eternal Word (Matt. 5:18). Later in this chapter we will approach an explanation of Eph. 2:15 from which some infer that the law will end as in being destroyed. Rom. 10:4 states, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "End" (τέλος - tel'-os) "goal," "fulfillment." Jesus said in Matt. 5:17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." He perfectly fulfilled the Mosaic Law and also all the prophecies of His first advent. Please see footnote 204.

The idea of a mediator supposes that there are two parties between whom the mediator comes either to reconcile them or to bear some message from the one to the other. Though there are 3 forms or manifestations of the Godhead (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), The Bible affirms that there is but one God, and that God is One. Deut.6:4, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:" In this verse LORD (יהוה - Yahweh) in both instances is singular and God (אלהים - el-o-heem') is plural; 3 or more. The unity of the Godhead assumes that there will not be a need for a mediator between these three.

Moses was the mediator between God and Israel. The law required a mediator because there were two parties involved, God and Israel. However a mediator is not necessary when the covenant is unilateral, as when God made the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant. The ultimate mediator between God and man is Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5).

Comparison and Contrast of the Law Covenant and the Promise Covenant²⁰⁹

The Law Covenant	The Promise Covenant
a. was given to point out transgression and thus highlight personal sin, v. 19a	a. is given to save men by the grace provision of Christ (the seed) v. 16, 19,24
b. was temporary and could not annul the promise, v. 17, 19b	b. is final and permanent, v. 17, 18
c. was given through the agency of angels, v. 19c	c. is administered by God Himself, v. 20
d. was received by a human mediator (Moses), v. 19a, 29	d. is received directly by individual men by personal faith (no need for human mediation), v. 22, 24
e. required fulfillment by both parties, v. 20	e. is absolutely dependent upon God for fulfillment: Hence the Giver is everything and the receiver is dependent upon grace provision, v. 20

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

" *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid:*" Emphatically not!²¹⁰ The law fulfills the promises of God. The law was never meant to save a person. It was meant to show the need for the promised Messiah who could and would save them if they would believe in Him.

"...For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."²¹¹ We can conjecture that theoretically it would be possible for a man to obtain righteousness by keeping the law (Rom. 2:12, 13), but when viewed in the light of harsh reality, even if it were possible for a man to keep the law perfectly, we all have inherited a sin

²⁰⁹ This chart is from the excellent study, "Galatians: God's Antidote to Legalism" by Ron Merryman, <http://www.merrymanministries.com> or loan from this writer.

²¹⁰ For "God forbid," please see comments on Gal. 2:17 and footnote 106.

²¹¹ The law was intended to show the *need* of a Savior, not to take the place of a Savior. A humorous illustration of this principle is that of a shaving mirror. It shows that a man *needs* to shave. It does not shave him. We are shaved by grace. ☺

nature from Adam (Rom. 5:12, 19). With the exception of Adam and Eve, we are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners (born with a sin nature). In addition, we also choose to sin (James 1:13, 14).

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

"But the scripture hath concluded²¹² all under sin,..."²¹³ Rom. 3:23 tells us that ...all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" 1 John 1:8 states, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." In other words, if a person says he has not sinned, he is lying. That in itself is sin. 2 Cor. 3: 7, 9, calls the law "the ministration of death" and "the ministration of condemnation." Our failure to be able to keep the law either seals our fate or presents the only viable alternative. This we see in the next phrase which is a purpose clause.

"...That²¹⁴ the promise by faith might be given to them that believe." The scripture has concluded all under sin, *for the purpose that* "...the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Praise God for His marvelous grace! When I share the good news message with others, I frequently state that I know for absolute certain that when I die, whether it be tomorrow or 30 years from now, that I am going to heaven (1 John 5:13). I also quickly add that this assurance does not come from any of my own efforts or good works. It is entirely due to the grace of God (Eph. 2:8, 9). Due to my upbringing in church I had always known that Jesus' payment for my sin on the cross was necessary for my eternal salvation, The problem was that I had not known that it was *sufficient*. I, like many others, had tried to add my own imperfect works to Jesus' perfect and completed work.

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

"But before faith came, we were kept²¹⁵ under the law,..." In a sense, Israel was imprisoned under the law but in another sense, the Jews were, as it were, in "protective custody," effectually preventing their uniting with the rest of mankind,²¹⁶ until their object of faith, which is Christ, should come in the fullness of time.

²¹² Please see the same Greek word in the next verse; verse 23, translated "shut up."

²¹³ "Sin" (noun - ἁμαρτία - ham-ar-tee'-ah; verb - ἁμαρτάνω - ham-ar-tan'-o). Means "to miss the mark." Some people act better than others but all have missed the mark of God's perfection and need the Savior. The word is used in Galatians only here and in 2:17. The noun and verb are used in Romans 45 times.

²¹⁴ "That" (ὅτι - hin'-ah) "in order that," introduces a purpose clause. "There are at least 7 different words in Greek that are translated "that." We see this similarity demonstrated in English by the following sentence. "A sample of that is to see that that is the definition of that word."

²¹⁵ "Kept" (φρουρέω - froo-reh'-o) "to be a watcher in advance, that is, to mount guard as a sentinel (post spies at gates); figuratively to hem in, protect. It is used only here, 2 Cor. 11:32, "garrison," Php. 4:7, "keep your hearts," and 1 Pet. 1:5, "kept by the power of God."

²¹⁶ The "isolation" of the Jews also helped to keep the lineage of Messiah from becoming polluted. This is evident from the time of the declaration of war by God upon the serpent and his seed in Gen. 3:15, the untimely death of Abel in Gen. 4:8, the sinful genetic pollution caused by the giants (nephilim) in Gen. 6. 1-9 which caused the cataclysm of the worldwide flood, forward through the ages to the many attempts of Satan to thwart the coming of Messiah; both to save mankind and to judge Satan.

"...Shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." "Shut up"²¹⁷ (or shut together) furthers the theme of being "kept" under the law. "...The faith which should afterwards be revealed" is the faith which is mentioned in verse 22 and 24; belief in Jesus which justifies us.

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

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster"²¹⁸ *to bring us* unto Christ,..." Please note the past tense of "was." The schoolmaster's job is completed when we are brought to Christ. The pedagogue is dismissed. We are now in the school of the Master.

Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments"(John 14:15). Some translations have it as "If ye love me, you will keep my commandments."²¹⁹ Either translation agrees with other Scripture. Notice that *neither* interpretation says that *you as a believer* will necessarily keep His commandments, or remain faithful to the end. If this obedience happened automatically, then many commands in the Bible for us would be unnecessary and redundant. The Bible is clear that many believers are disobedient in how they live. Our eternal destiny is based upon *God's* faithfulness, not ours. Our joy, fruitfulness, rewards, etc. are based largely upon our faithfulness. This grace principle will be developed more in chapter 5.

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

"But after that faith is come,..." Literally, *the* faith; the faith mentioned in verses 22 and 24. This was true historically for the Jew who was under the law and for us practically today in the church age. "...We are no longer under a schoolmaster." After we believe in Christ, the law has served its purpose, "*to bring us* unto Christ,..." (v. 24).

The third chapter of 2 Corinthians shows an insightful contrast of being under the Mosaic Law and under grace. Paul calls the law "the ministration of death" (v. 7) and "the ministration of condemnation" (v. 9), and partially sums up the contrast between law and grace with, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"²²⁰ (v. 17). This is not license to sin, but liberty to serve.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." (Gal. 5:13).

We are not under the law but grace.

²¹⁷ "Shut up" (συγκλείω - soong-kli'-o) "to shut together," that is, "include." Used only here, in Luke 5:6, "inclosed a great multitude of fishes," Rom. 11:2, "concluded them all in unbelief," and Gal. 3:22, "concluded all under sin."

²¹⁸ "Schoolmaster" (παιδαγωγός - pahee-dag-o-gos') used here in Gal. 3:24, 25 and in 1 Cor.4:15 (instructor). From two root words meaning "to bring a child." usually a servant whose office it was to take the children to school; (by implication [figuratively] a tutor ["paedagogue"]): - instructor, schoolmaster.

²¹⁹ The KJV and NKJV use the first translation and most modern versions use the second. This is due to a minor textual variation in the manuscripts used for translation (one letter in the verb which would make it indicative or imperative). There is debate among scholars about which is the most accurate textual foundation. For many sound reasons I believe that the text used by the KJV is almost always the better one. I know of no significant doctrinal issues which either text would change. More textual-related information is available for anyone who is interested. Please see footnote 44 for more details.

²²⁰ When I read this verse I cannot help but wonder about some legalistic churches and Bible colleges of which I have been associated. As legalism instead of liberty prevails, is not the Holy Spirit's work and influence hindered there? (1 Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30).

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."
(Rom. 6:14). We are now taught how to live by the grace of God (Titus 2:11, 12).

The law has done its job. The old covenant ended at the cross. Jesus' parting statement on the cross, "It is finished" was a victorious proclamation.

Some have quoted Eph. 2:15, in an effort to establish that the law is terminated or done away with.

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;"

This verse is in the context of Paul telling how the believing Gentiles and Jews of this dispensation, though still distinct, are merged into one entity, which is the Church, or the Body of Christ. There are 3 words in this verse pertaining to the law: "law," "commandments," and "ordinances." The important thing to note is that the word "abolished" in this verse does not mean "annihilated." It is "καταργέω" (kat-arg-eh'-o) and means more "to be rendered inactive" or "of none effect." It comes from a word that means "to make idle."²²¹

The law has not been annihilated. It is part of God's holy Word and is eternal. Since the sacrificial payment that Jesus had made for us, its purpose for this age has been fulfilled by showing us the need for the Savior.

The question arises, "Is this just speaking historically about Israel and the arrival of their Messiah 2,000 years ago, or is it speaking of us personally now as each of us are convicted of our need for a Savior?"

The answer I believe is yes; — to both options. We notice that in verses 23-25 that the recipients are "we" and "us;" the Jews. In verses 26-29, the pronoun changes to "ye" and "you," and includes the Galatian Gentile believers of that day also. Verses 23-25 seem to imply an emphasis on the historical aspect of Israel and their coming Messiah. The personal and universal aspect seems to be included in verses 26-29. "Us" is also personal, Jesus died for sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Each of "us" individually needs to believe in Jesus in order to receive eternal life (John 3:16).

Even if the personal application was not to be found in Galatians, Romans 3 says much the same in different words. After quoting a number of OT verses in 3:9-18 establishing that all of mankind, both Jew and Gentile, are sinners, Paul continues his argument in verse 19:

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

20 "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

24 "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"

28 "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Please note that in verse 19 we are told that the law is speaking to those "who are under the law;" the unbelievers. Romans 6:14 tells us that believers are not under law, but under grace. The law is speaking to the unbeliever, not to get him to keep the law for justification, but "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (v. 19). This is so that

²²¹ Some commentators have suggested that the "abolishing of enmity" is referring back to "wall of partition" of the previous verse.

the lost person will see the need to be "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (v24). This is essentially the same message of Galatians 3.

1Tim. 1:8 tells us that, "...we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;" What we have just seen in Galatians 3 and Romans 3 is the lawful use of the law.

26. For ye are all the children²²² of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Contrary to popular opinion, all of mankind are not the children of God. All are the *creation* of God. but we must be born spiritually of Him to be His child (John 3:5).

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

This is one of the "proof" texts that some use to promote their teaching that a person needs to be baptized in water in order to be eternally saved. Yet this interpretation conflicts with the context and many other clear verses. According to the preceding verse (v. 26), the sole condition of sonship is "faith in Christ Jesus." Verse 27 further explains verse 26. (Note the explanatory "for" [γάρ - gar] at the beginning of the sentence.)

Since this verse is an explanation of the previous one and there is no mention of water in this context, it is highly unlikely that it is referring to the believer's water baptism. It seems much more likely to be speaking of Spirit baptism. This interpretation fits the context and agrees with other Scripture. We are placed into the body of Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and are clothed with Christ and His righteousness.

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. 12:13).

28. There is neither Jew nor Greek (no ethnic status nor division), there is neither bond nor free (no socio-economic-political status), there is neither male nor female (no gender status): for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

There have been at least of couple of false doctrinal persuasions which use this verse to support their doctrinal stance. One propounds that the Church has taken Israel's place in God's economy ("There is neither Jew nor Greek..."), and that since the Pentecost of Acts 2, that the term "Israel" as found in the Bible now refers to the Church. The core issue is that supposedly all the promised blessings for Israel now are for the Church.

This teaching is called "Replacement Theology" or "Supersessionism" as in the Church "superseding" Israel. Romans 9 through 11 clarifies the fact that God is not finished with Israel. God's promises will all be fulfilled; their fulfillment has just been delayed due to Israel's disobedience. One of the more prominent problems with this doctrine is that its proponents want all the blessings for Israel for themselves, but want none of its curses and disciplinary actions. It is alarming how many denominations which claim to be Biblical choose to adhere to this doctrine today.

A second doctrinal error whose proponents claim support from this verse is the currently popular feminist movement. This is due to the phrase that "there is neither male nor female...." Besides the obvious absurdity of the assumption that there is no difference between a Jew or

²²² "Children" here is "sons" (υἱός - hwee-os').

Gentile, a slave and a free citizen, or a male and a female, the context is very clearly speaking of our *position* in Christ, not our inherent quality, roles, or functions (cf. verses 26 and 29).

Paul was not saying that all distinctions between people have ceased. Obviously people are still either Jews or Gentiles,²²³ slaves or free, and male or female. His point was that within the body of Christ all have the same relationship to God. All are of equal value. We all share the same privilege and position in Christ.

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

"And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed,..." Those of us who believe in and belong to Christ are not only Abraham's spiritual seed, but since the seed (singular) of Abraham was referring to Christ (3:16), we are also members of Jesus' body (Eph. 1:22, 23; 1 Cor. 12:12).

"...And heirs according to the promise." We as believers in Jesus are Abraham's spiritual seed and we also inherit the spiritual promises to Abraham and his seed. The doctrine of inheritance is frequently neglected in Bible teaching. For the believer, there are two types of inheritance; eternal life which is wholly of grace and cannot be lost, and temporal inheritance that has to do with obedience and faithfulness. This inheritance can be lost.

Romans 8:16-18 gives us some explanation of the two. Verse 18 is one that we often quote and that gives us great assurance in times of trial:

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:18).

Let us check the context to see to whom this blessed promise is directed.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Rom. 8:16, 17).

A casual reading of these verses might give us the impression that the promise of verse 18 is to every child of God. It potentially is, but not necessarily is. Please note that we are children of God by faith, and therefore are heirs of God. We are only *joint-heirs* with Christ if we suffer with Him. There is a distinction here between every believer and those who suffer for Him. (cf. Php. 1:29)

This is only a brief sample of a doctrine that greatly affects our fruitfulness, joy, and reward. I highly recommend a book that goes into much greater detail on this subject and those related to it, "The Reign of the Servant Kings."²²⁴ I have read this book several times and it was among the greatest motivators to my Christian service that I had experienced in many years.

²²³ Eph. 2:11-22 elaborates on both the distinction and the newly initiated oneness of the Jew and Gentile (i.e. the breaking down of the middle wall of partition. v. 14).

²²⁴ "The Reign of the Servant Kings" by Joseph C. (Jody) Dillow. It is available from <http://www.schoettlepublishing.com/bookpreviews/dillow/preview.htm> Please download and read the two sample chapters at no charge from the bottom of that webpage.

Overview of Chapter Four:

In chapter 3 we have seen 3 bases of arguments for the truth of the grace message that Paul taught.

1. **Personal argument**- 3:1-5 - Paul challenged the Galatian believers to test their experience by God's Word. They were not initially saved nor matured by the law.

2. **Scriptural argument** - 3:6-14 - Paul quoted or alluded to 6 OT verses to establish that the purpose of the law was not to justify the unbeliever. Justification is by faith.

3. **Logical argument** - 3:15-29 - The Abrahamic Covenant was not nullified by the later Mosaic Covenant. The purpose of the law was to bring us to Christ.

In chapter 4 we will see 3 more bases of argument for the grace message which Paul promotes:

4. **Dispensational argument** - 4:1-7 Paul highlights the distinction that can help us discern the relative place of the OT believers with those of us in this present dispensation. We are heirs of God through Christ (v. 7) and we become sons of God by belief in Jesus (John 1:12).

5. **Sentimental argument** - 4:8-18 - When you have liberty, why voluntarily return to bondage?

6. **Allegorical argument** - 4:19-31- Abraham & law - two sons, two types of birth; of the flesh and of the spirit, two women, two covenants, two mountains, two states; children of the bondwoman and children of the free.

Chapter Four Text

4:1. Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

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

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

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

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

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

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

We have seen in the latter part of the third chapter, five blessings that every one of us as believers receives at the time we believe in Jesus:

1. 3:25 - We are no longer under the schoolmaster; the law. The law could restrain the flesh but could not give the new birth. It could condemn but could not justify or give life.

2. 3:26 - We become sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

3. 3:27 - We have put on Christ; spiritually baptized into union with Him by the Holy Spirit. Water baptism illustrates this undertaking but it cannot accomplish it.

4. 3:28 - We have equal position and oneness with other believers in Christ.
5. 3:29 - We become spiritual heirs. Chapter 4 gives us more details about our heirship. The law could provide none of these blessings. God does it all by His grace.

According to Gal. 3:25, "...after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." We now have another teacher, the Spirit of Truth." Jesus said of Him, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." (John 16:12, 13). We are told in Eph. 5:18, to "be filled with the Spirit." This concept will be further explained later in Galatians where we are told to "walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:16, 25).²²⁵ We will see that chapter 4 continues with the heirship theme mentioned in the previous verse; Gal. 3:29.

In many cultures there is a ritual or event that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. In the Jewish culture this is called "Bar Mitzvah"²²⁶ or "son of commandments." This occurs around age 13 and implies that they are now accountable to the law. Prior to reaching Bar Mitzvah, the child's parents hold the responsibility for the child's actions. After this age, the boys and girls bear their own responsibility for Jewish ritual law, tradition, and ethics, and are able to participate in all areas of Jewish community life.

Other cultures had similar rituals. The Roman law involved the ceremonial donning of the white "toga virilis" (toga of manhood), symbolizing their new status as full citizen at ages 14-19, at a time chosen by his father. Since both Jews and Gentiles were recipients of Paul's epistle, both groups would be familiar with the illustration. Even in today's culture of the USA we have a symbolic coming of age where teenagers *think* that they are adults. What is this? The driver's license! They seem to want the keys to the car but not the expense of the gas, maintenance, and insurance. Some young people want the freedom and privileges of adulthood but not the accompanying responsibilities. We see this concept among us also in the spiritual realm.

Paul uses this analogy in the first 7 verses to show that as a child they were slaves and under the law, and now that they were adults, that they were free in grace and not under the law.

²²⁵ Dr. M. R. DeHaan has some very helpful comments on the first few verses of chapter 4:

"The Holy Spirit came to reveal truth which the apostles were not ready to receive before Pentecost. This was reserved for the special revelation given to the apostles, Paul in particular. Before Christ came, revelation was in type and shadow. The Old Testament saints could not see what we see. The Old Testament saints since Moses were under the bondage of the law—the New Testament saint is in the liberty of the grace of God. In the Old Testament, the believer though an heir was an infant, while today we have received the standing as adult sons. This Paul asserts in Gal. 4:1-3.

The Old Testament saint was a babe, immature, not realizing the glory and fullness of his future inheritance, He was like a little child who, although an heir to millions, by virtue of his relationship to his father, is totally ignorant of the great wealth he is heir to, and would be made happier with a nickel than the promise of millions. A child cannot comprehend the meaning of a "million." From "Galatians" by Dr. M. R. DeHaan, Pages 138, 9. Zondervan.

²²⁶ The comparable ceremony for a girl is called "bat mitzvah." These rituals are mentioned in the Jewish Talmud and Mishnah. The Talmud is a commentary on the Torah along with oral tradition. The Mishnah is a systematically arranged summary of the Torah categorized into topics.

1. Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child,²²⁷ differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

The two major errors that Paul approaches in this epistle are 1. that an unbeliever could be justified in God's sight and is eternally saved partially or completely by the law, and 2. That a believer is to live the Christian life by obeying the Mosaic Law. We believe that Paul is proclaiming not only that we are justified by faith in Jesus alone but that the Christian life is not to be lived under some law system. The Christian life is intended to be a walk of faith in the power of the Holy Spirit based on the Word of God. Some people seem to be comfortable with legalism. This is not God's plan.

Paul's analogy here is that the child is still under the law and he is a slave. He is functionally the same as a slave. The full-grown son is not under law but under grace and he has freedom. The child under law is the *potential* heir of the whole package but he cannot take possession until he becomes an adult son. The Galatian believers were positionally full-grown sons, why would they want to become children be in bondage again?²²⁸

2. But is under tutors²²⁹ and governors²³⁰ until the time appointed of the father.

The child needs the direction of the tutors and governors until the time that he is granted the privileges and responsibilities of adulthood. In the Roman culture, the timing of this event was up to the father. Our heavenly Father also determined the timing of this spiritual event for us. Please see comments on verse 5 about "the fulness of the time."

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

When we were children we were in bondage (lit. enslaved ones) under the elements or rudiments of the world²³¹ or world system. In Gal. 4:9 Paul refers to these principles as "weak and beggarly elements" which bring us back into bondage or enslavement.

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

"But when the fulness of the time was come,..." What were some of the factors that contributed to this being the "fulness of the time" for the entrance of the Messiah into the world? Humanly speaking, it seems that the Pax Romanus or the time period of the peace of Rome (ca 27 BC-AD 180) was an important aspect of this timing. Alexander's military conquests had arranged 300 years before for the lingua franca or trade language of the world to be Greek.

²²⁷ "Child" (νήπιος - nay'-pee-os), an infant, as in verse 3 also. The root of the word implies not being able to speak. The word is used 14 times in the NT; 6 times translated as "babes." The more common word for "child" or "children" in the NT is τέκνον (tek'-non), meaning "born one" or "offspring." It is used 99 times.

²²⁸ A humorous story is told demonstrating the hopelessness and frustration of a man who decided to try to be good enough to be justified. He cut out drinking, he cut out smoking, he cut out partying, etc. Now he's cutting out paper dolls. ☺

²²⁹ "Tutor" ἐπίτροπος (ep-it'-rop-os), a commissioner, house manager. Used here, in Matt. 20:8 and Luke 8:3, both times translated as "steward."

²³⁰ "Governor" οἰκονόμος (oy-kon-om'-os), a house manager or overseer. Used 9 other times and usually translated as "steward" and once as "chamberlain." This is the same word used for the "stewards" who were exhorted to faithful in 1 Cor. 4:2.

²³¹ This phrase also occurs in Col. 2:8 and 2:20.

Common Greek was understood as a first or second language in almost the whole known world. The Roman road and bridge system had made efficient travel and communication available throughout their empire. The world was providentially prepared for the arrival of the Savior and for the dissemination of His message.

Prophetically speaking, there could be no other time for the incarnation of Christ. Over 300 prophecies concerning Jesus' first advent were coming to pass just as God had said. (Please see footnote 204. These are too numerous to elaborate here.)

Many are unaware of the prophetic significance of the feasts of the LORD which were commanded to Israel in Leviticus 23. They are commemorative but they also prophesy of various events in the life of Messiah from His birth to His sacrificial death and resurrection and then to His return and His future kingdom. An understanding of these feasts has important application for us today. We highly recommend to any who are interested to listen to the four messages on the feasts at http://www.elshaddaiministries.us/feasts/feasts_of_the_lord.html or even better, to purchase the DVDs and view them.

It is likely that there were no other two people in history who could have taken the place of Joseph and Mary as Jesus' earthly parents. Among other requirements, Messiah had to be of the tribe of Judah and of the royal lineage of David. The genealogies of both Joseph and Mary are recorded in Scripture; that of Joseph in Matt. 1:1-16 and Mary in Luke 3:23-38. Joseph's genealogy records the royal line through David and Solomon. A problem in this lineage arose with Jeconiah, (also called Coniah). He was so evil that God pronounced a curse on his seed that none should sit on the throne of David (Jer. 22:28-30).

Mary's genealogy was the same until David, where instead of going through Solomon, the lineage of the blood curse, it takes a turn and goes through David's second living son, Nathan, thus avoiding the blood curse in Joseph's lineage. The virgin conception and birth of Yeshua took care of both the blood curse in the royal line and the necessity of the blood line through Mary's lineage.

"...God sent forth his Son,..." This shows us not only the obvious, that God sent forth His Son, but also that His Son, Jesus, was pre-existent. One OT prophecy that clearly distinguishes both the deity and humanity of Jesus is Isaiah 9:6, where it states, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:..."²³² The humanity of Jesus was born of Mary, but the Son, Who was not born, but given, is God Himself and is eternal. God created the universe and then entered it as a man.

²³² This verse continues with a number of important attributes of the promised Messiah; one of them being the enigmatic term, "The everlasting Father." This is the only place in the KJV where this phrase is found. There is only one true God, (Deut. 6:4) and Jesus, the Son of God the Father, also claims repeatedly to be God (John 10:30). Scripture also repeatedly differentiates between the Father and the Son (John 1:1, 2, 14; Mark 13:32; Php. 2:5-11). I can somewhat grasp how one God can manifest Himself in three forms (i.e. Father, Son, Holy Spirit), but how can the Son of the Father also be called His own Father? Perhaps this is not what the verse is saying. I cannot be dogmatic on this but one possible explanation is offered by this partial quote from Barnes Commentary: "...The Chaldee renders this expression, 'The man abiding forever.' The Vulgate, 'The Father of the future age.' Lowth, 'The Father of the everlasting age.' Literally, it is the Father of eternity, (אב עד - awb ad)." "...The term Father is not applied to the Messiah here with any reference to the distinction in the divine nature, for that word is uniformly, in the Scriptures, applied to the first, not to the second person of the Trinity. But it is used in reference to durations, as a Hebraism involving high poetic beauty. He is not merely represented as

"God sent forth his Son, made of a woman,..." This phrase expresses both the deity and humanity of Jesus. "...Made under the law...." Jesus in His humanity was not only born of a woman but was "made under the law." The Son not only became a man but He was born a Jew, part of the nation to whom the law was given. He perfectly kept the law (1 Pet. 2:21, 22), even fulfilling all of its prophecies about Himself (Matt. 5:17, 18). He took his place under the Law that he might accomplish an important purpose for those who were under it. He made himself subject to it that He might become one of them, and then secure their redemption (2 Cor. 5:21).

It is noteworthy that "...when the fulness of the time was come,..." that "...God sent forth his Son,..." He did not send a politician because the great need was not political reform. He did not send a doctor because the great need was not physical health. He did not send a philosopher because the great need was not education. He sent a Savior because that was the great need of the world (Luke 2:11; 19:10).

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

What made the difference? It was the coming of Christ (God sent forth his Son). What was the purpose of His coming? "To redeem²³³ them that were under the law," The Jews were under the law but all unbelievers are under its curse (Gal. 3:10). Believers are not under the law, but under grace. (Rom. 6:16).

We see also in verse 5 *two* purpose clauses. The first word in each of the two phrases ("to" and "that") are the same word in the Greek which we have mentioned before; "ἵνα" (hin'-ah), which means "in order to" or "for the purpose of."

In other words, this verse is telling us that "...God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To (in order to, for the purpose to) redeem them that were under the law, that (for the result that) we might receive the adoption of sons."²³⁴

As a side-note, let us think of how a person can get to be in a physical family and then observe the parallel to God's spiritual family. We see above that adoption is one way. Another obvious one is by birth; the spiritual aspect being presented in John 3:5. A third way is by marriage. Believers will be the bride of Christ. (Rev. 21:9; 22:17). It looks as though we as believers are solidly in the family of God (Eph. 3:15).

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

OT saints did not have Holy Spirit indwelling them. The Holy Spirit came and went at His own will. This blessing is a Church age phenomenon. Believers today have been baptized by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13) and have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

" Abba,²³⁵ Father." Abba is Hebrew/Chaldee for "father" and is most usually used when speaking to God in prayer. It is in the vocative case, meaning as when a person is directly

everlasting, but he is introduced, by a strong figure, as even the Father of eternity, as if even everlasting duration owed itself to his paternity."

²³³ "Redeem" Please see footnote and comments at Gal. 3:13.

²³⁴ "Adoption of sons," is one word in the Greek, υἱοθεσία (hwee-oth-es-ee'-ah). Placing as a son. It is used elsewhere only in Rom. 8:15; 23; 9:4; Eph. 1:5.

²³⁵ Ἀββᾶ (ab-bah') "Father" of Chaldee origin (אב - ab). "Barne's Notes" comments, "It is said in the Babylonian Gemara, a Jewish work, that it was not permitted slaves to use the title of Abba in addressing the master of the family to which they belonged. If so, then the language which Christians are here

addressed. Some have said that Abba is a very endearing term such as our term "Daddy," but I am unable to document this for certain.

7. Wherefore thou²³⁶ art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

If we are now adult sons and heirs of God through Christ, why would we want to renege on this privilege and go back to childhood on the level of a slave? Is it even possible for a believer to do this? Yes, that was occurring with some of the Galatian believers and that is why Paul is warning them about that dangerous error. This warning has important application to us today.

Text

4:8. Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Howbeit²³⁷ then, when ye knew not God..." Before they were believers and saved by grace,... "..."ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods." They "did service"²³⁸ or literally, were enslaved to idols which are not really gods.

represented as using is the language of freemen, and denotes that they are not under the servitude of sin."

Why the repetition of the word in Greek? Some have suggested that it was just to clarify the term in both languages which were commonly understood. "Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament" comments, "It is possible that the repetition here and in Rom. 8:15 may be "a sort of affectionate fondness for the very term that Jesus himself used" (Burton) in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark14:36)."

²³⁶ Paul changes from plural (ye) in verse 6 to singular (thou) in verse 7; perhaps to make the exhortation more personal in application.

This statement may be primarily aimed toward the Gentile believers who had believed in idols. The Israelites had some serious idolatry problems up until the time of their captivity by Assyria and Babylon, which seemed to cure the nation of idolatry (ca 722 BC and ca 600 BC).

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

"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God,..." They had believed in Jesus and knew Him (cf. John 17:3), and God had a personal knowledge of them in a redeeming way. "...how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements,²³⁹ whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" How could they now *desire* to return to something so inferior? This legalism is described as "weak and beggarly elements." It was weak due to the weakness of the flesh and poor in contrast to the riches of grace. It amounts to nothing of value. It leads to spiritual enslavement.

The recipients of this exhortation had been enslaved to idols but now know God and have been set free. Why would they want to now become enslaved to the law? Why turn from liberty to bondage? The unbelieving Gentiles were not free. They were enslaved to imagined deities of their own creation. The objects were imaginary but their servitude was real. In addition, believers who are saved by grace but choose to go back under the Mosaic law are also in bondage or enslaved to the requirements of the law. Paul uses the same descriptive word in verse 3, "bondage" (enslavement) when referring to the Jews who were under the law as he does here referring to the Gentiles who were enslaved to idols.²⁴⁰

As a side-note; Some biblically uninformed people have stated that there is little use sending missionaries to the heathen deep in the jungles. Why bother them because they are content in their simple religions? Not so! According to this text, they are enslaved. They also are lost without Christ. I heard of this argument being brought up in a church ladies meeting while a missionary, who had seen the despair and superstition that prevailed among these people, was speaking to the group. The missionary assertively informed the lady that she had seen too many Tarzan movies.

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

The other 5 uses of the Greek word translated "observe" imply a scrupulous and conscientious observing. It is likely that Paul was reiterating some areas of their previous enslavement. This might refer both to pagan holidays which the Gentiles had celebrated and possibly to the Jewish holidays which the Jews celebrated. We remember that the Judaizers had been trying to impose the Mosaic Law on the Gentile believers. Shortly after their release from slavery to the Egyptians (ca 1446 BC), the children of Israel received specific instructions through Moses concerning

²³⁷ "Howbeit" ἀλλά (al-lah'), A commonly used Greek word found 637 times in the NT. It is usually translated as "but" (573 times), and "howbeit" only 9 times. "ἀλλά" is a stronger adversative and shows a greater contrast than the more frequently found "δέ" (deh) which is found 2556 times and is translated "but" 1237 times, "and" 934 times, "now" 166 times, and "then" 132 times.

²³⁸ "...Ye did service" δουλεύω (dool-yoo'-o) Lit. "You were enslaved." This is the same Greek word which is translated as "to be in bondage" in verse 9. It is from δοῦλος (doo'-los), a bond servant.

²³⁹ "Beggarly elements," Poor, as in a beggar, and rudiments or fundamentals. This phrase likely ties in with the "elements of the world" in verse 3.

²⁴⁰ Paul makes some comments concerning idols also in 1 Cor. 8:4 and 1 Cor. 10:19, 20. In the latter passage we see the bold statement that the Gentiles' sacrifices were actually to *demons*.

some feast days which they were to honor (Lev. 23).²⁴¹ Subsequently, they have added more of their own choosing. It would be wrong to make these holidays a requirement for receiving eternal life. It certainly is not inherently wrong to celebrate holidays as God has allowed us freedom and liberty in this area and we are not to judge others in this either.²⁴² Please see Romans 14:4-6.

If our suggested interpretation is correct, this passage is *not* speaking of keeping or honoring a holiday, but of being *enslaved* to it. We are to be servants (δοῦλος - doo'-los - bondsman) of Jesus Christ just as Paul had claimed of himself (Rom. 1:1; et al), not slaves to legal rituals.

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

"I am afraid of you,..." Paul proclaims that he has fears concerning them, which shows that he realized the danger that they were in while pursuing the course of legalism.²⁴³ Any who have

²⁴¹ These comments are not intended in any way to denigrate the importance of the Jewish calendar or the commemorative and prophetic significance of the feasts of the LORD mentioned in Lev. 23. We maintain that believers of today, even though not under the Mosaic law (Rom. 6:14), could benefit greatly by knowing more of the feasts of the LORD and the Hebrew calendar. Our study in these two areas has helped us to "connect the dots" in some areas of Bible study which were previously lacking.

²⁴² Many Christians choose not to celebrate Halloween due to its pagan and occultic origin and the influence that it wields. Have you considered that the two most revered holidays in contemporary "Christianity," Christmas and Easter, both have at least 3 things in common with each other: **1. We are not told in the Bible to celebrate either one.** We are told to celebrate Jesus' death (1 Cor. 11:24-26), but not His birth. Concerning the resurrection; even though it was important and essential (1 Cor. 15), we are *not* told to celebrate the event. (The closest tie-in that I see to any requested celebration of the resurrection is the feast of firstfruits given to Israel, which in most years would not even fall on the correct day, i.e. 3 days after Passover) **2. Both of them are celebrated on the wrong date.** Jesus was *not* born on December 25th. The shepherds were not out tending their sheep in the snow. He most likely was born sometime in the fall, probably during the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkoth); about September/October. The resurrection was on Nisan 17. The modern "Easter" date was proclaimed by Constantine in the 4th century for the purpose of distancing his brand of "Christianity" from the Jews whom he despised. This date is in conflict with the Hebrew calendar which God uses. **3. Both are of them are of Pagan origin.** Easter is even named after a pagan Goddess whose followers claimed a heathen account of the death and resurrection of her son somewhat similar to that of our Savior. Christmas was chosen for the birth of Christ due to its closeness to the Winter Solstice which was a revered time of pagan reveling. Constantine apparently was attempting to achieve peace among his constituents of varied religious backgrounds. He simply merged pagan and Christian customs together in an effort to please everyone. God was not pleased. What Satan could not achieve in several hundred years of persecution of believers, he was able to more fully achieve through religious compromise with ungodly principles. Remember again, Romans 14:4-6, We have liberty in this area. We are not to judge each other on which holidays that you or I keep or do not keep. In reference to the pagan origin of much of today's "Christianity" please download and read the classic study "Two Babylons" by Alexander Hislop) from <http://www.freegraceresources.org/twobablonstoc.html> .

²⁴³ "Legalism" There are various and even conflicting definitions of legalism. This is one that I like. Legalism: The mental attitude which seeks to earn or merit the blessings of God by religious rituals or good works for either salvation (justification) or sanctification.

Legalism is big on external; doing or not doing certain things. God is primarily concerned about the inside. As He changes your inside, He then can transform also your outside. Legalism sometimes tends to result in people living a divided life because it is not the genuine article. True character is shown by what a person does when no one is around. Legalism also encourages pride and self-righteousness and often ends in despair; pride in people thinking that they are measuring up or despair in realizing that they really are not. Many times legalistic people have a hard time admitting that they are wrong because they

been loving parents can reasonably liken this to your concern when you see your offspring whom you love, willfully pursuing a path which, according to your wisdom and experience, promises to injure them. It is almost like seeing someone whom you love sitting on a railroad track when you see the train coming. We try to warn them to get off of the railroad track or they will be hurt. Paul was speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). Our labor in the Lord is *not* in vain (I Cor. 15:58).

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

"Brethren, I beseech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are*:" Paul now shifts his argument to a personal appeal. In other words, he exhorts the Gentile believers, "Become like me for I became like you, that is, I became free from the law as I now am. After my conversion I became like the Gentiles, no longer living under the law." This is Paul speaking, who has been a rigid law-keeping Pharisee, saying that he became as the Gentiles had been in that he was no longer living under the law.²⁴⁴ Paul had left the bondage of the law and some his converts were putting themselves under the law after their conversion. There is something wrong with this picture.

One commentator²⁴⁵ simply states his comments on this verse with the following:

The KJV translators supply three verbs in v. 12. I suggest the following:

"...become as I myself (am)," i.e. free in the gospel;

"because I (was) as you (are), in bondage in legalism;

"in nothing have you wronged me, "i.e., "I have no personal grievance with you in this matter," I am not striking back at someone as though I was wronged."

Since Paul became like the believers in Galatia had been, he can now urge them to become like him. When Paul was in Galatia, he ate with them and ate their foods. Now he is urging them to live like Gentiles once again! If anyone had a right to be bound by the Law of Moses, it was Paul. Yet he chose not to in order to advance his ministry among Gentiles (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

"...Ye have not injured me at all." This phrase may be in reference to the next three verses speaking of how amiably the Galatians had received him, or, possibly that they were not injuring him in not keeping the law.

13. Ye know how through²⁴⁶ infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

so desperately want to be right. It frequently results in competition or a critical spirit; having to keep up with the Jones's religiously.

Being critical is different than being discerning. We are to recognize what is false or is sin so that we can know how to react or respond (1 Cor. 2:15; Rom. 16:17). Jesus was full of grace and truth (John 1:14). This is a worthy goal for us to seek also.

²⁴⁴ Paul's philosophy concerning the law and his ministry to the Jews is explained in 1Cor. 9:19-23: "19. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21. To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. 22. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 23. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

²⁴⁵"Galatians: God's Antidote to Legalism" by Ron Merryman, <http://www.merrymanministries.com> .

²⁴⁶"Through" διὰ (dee-ah) "Through," "because of" or "on account of."

At the time that Paul had preached to them (his first missionary journey, Acts 13 and 14), he was laboring under some sort of physical handicap. Some suspect that his physical ailment was ophthalmia, an eye problem which not only affected his eyesight but also was unsightly. Please see related verse 15 comments.

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

"And my²⁴⁷ temptation²⁴⁸ which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected;..." Whatever Paul's physical problem²⁴⁹ was, the Galatians did not treat him with contempt or scorn but received him with great hospitality. They overlooked his physical appearance and accepted him and his message. "...But received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." Some commentators feel that due to context of the high respect that was offered, that "angel" here is referring to the created celestial angels of God. Grammatically and contextually it could also mean simply a "messenger of God."

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

"Where [or what] is then the blessedness ye spake of?" This statement seems a bit ambiguous on the surface. There is nothing in the Greek text directly corresponding to "ye spake of." It comes from the phrase "ὁ μακαρισμός ὑμῶν," (ho mak-ar-is-mos' hoo-mone') which literally is "the blessedness of you," or would usually be translated "your blessedness." "Of you," or "ὑμῶν," is in the genitive case which frequently refers to possession of the noun it describes.

A suggested interpretation of this sentence is, "Where is the hospitality and kindness that you had previously shown to me, especially in light of the way that you presently treat me as mentioned in verse 16, now that the Judaizers have persuaded you with their false doctrine?"

"...For I bear you record [or "I testify to you], that, if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

Their initial response to Paul was loving and sacrificial. "...if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." This might be just a figure of speech showing their earlier love and respect for him, but it may also contain a hint that he was suffering from a severe eye ailment. This supposition is supported by Galatians 6:11, where Paul states that he is writing in "how large a letter."

16. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?²⁵⁰

Now in contrast to his initial reception, has he now become their enemy? He still loved them. He had not become their enemy but they had begun to treat him as such. Why? Because he had told them the truth. Telling the truth can become alienating, especially among the immature.

²⁴⁷ The Critical Text has "your" temptation instead of "my" temptation.

²⁴⁸ "Temptation," πειρασμός (pi-ras-mos') The word could mean either a trial or testing, or solicitation to evil, depending upon the context.

²⁴⁹ Paul healed others but did not heal his own infirmity even though he "besought the Lord thrice," (2 Cor. 12:7-10). That's bad news for some of the TV faith healers. They tell you that if you are sick that it is due to *your* lack of faith. It does not seem from the text that this was Paul's problem.

²⁵⁰ "Truth," ἀληθεύω (al-ayth-yoo'-o). To be true. Used only here and in Eph. 4:15; "speaking the truth in love."

Paul had not changed; *they* had changed because they had accepted a false message. He loved the Galatians enough to tell them the truth; not necessarily what they wanted to hear but what they needed for their own welfare. Do we love God and people enough to do the same and risk losing some approbation or acceptance with them? Paul tells us in Gal. 1:10 that his goal was not to "please men," but to be the "servant of Christ." This principle is well stated in 1 Thess. 2:4:

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

God has entrusted us with his good news message, Are we going to try to please men (which is almost impossible) or please God? I choose to try to please the One Who has done so much for me.

17. They zealously affect you, *but* not well; yea,²⁵¹ they would exclude you, that ye might affect²⁵² them.

"They zealously affect you, *but* not well;" To whom is "they" referring? I can find no close antecedent. It apparently refers to the Judaizers, the false teachers²⁵³ who had been the underlying factor in the epistle toward undermining the Galatian's correct doctrine. It appears that the false teachers were zealous in their passionate display of a professed concern for their welfare in order to gain them as proselytes. "...*but* not well;" This displayed enthusiasm was not really for the benefit and welfare of the Galatians believers. "...Yea, they would exclude you,..." In contrast, they were trying to exclude them from the love and affection of Paul. They would shut them out from that, in order that they might secure them for their own purposes. All this for the purpose "that ye might affect them." or so that the Galatians would be zealous toward the false teachers.

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

"But *it is* good to be zealously affected always in a good *thing*," This almost sounds redundant; "It is good to be zealous in good always." Paul presents a basic and simple truth. He loved them and did not want them to wrongly be zealous for the false teachers, but to be zealous for that which is right. Are we zealous in our love of our Savior? Are we zealous in learning and applying God's Word so that we may more effectively share the good news of salvation by grace through faith with others? Is our zeal and passion aimed toward something that will be of eternal value? (Matt. 6:19, 20; 19:29, 30).

"...And not only when I am present with you." This good zeal for a good thing should not have abated in his absence, but should have remained strong.

Paul was very concerned about their doctrinal defection from grace teaching to legalism. He was afraid for them (but not of them), and urged them to return to the teachings of grace that they

²⁵¹ "Yea" is the same Greek word translated "howbeit" in verse 8, ἀλλά (al-lah'), which is usually translated "but."

²⁵² "Zealously affect" and "affect" are the same root word, ζηλόω - (dzay-lo'-o) as is also in verse 18. The word can mean to be zealous in either a good or a bad way.

²⁵³ "They" is likely speaking about the legalistic false teachers who were troubling the Galatian believers. They are mentioned several times; in 1:7, "some that trouble you." They must have had a leader of some kind, in 5:7, "who" (singular) did hinder you?" 5:10, "he that troubleth you." 6:12, 13, "They" 4 times.

had earlier learned from the apostle. They had lovingly received him and God's message. But later it was if Paul had become their enemy.

What happened? The false teachers had stolen their affection of Paul and shifted it to themselves. They had viewed him as a messenger from God but now viewed him as an enemy. Who changed? It was not Paul who changed his love and concern for these believers nor had he changed his doctrine. Due to the influence of these legalistic false teachers they were drifting away from the *teaching* of grace and in doing so, their hearts also grew cold toward the *teacher* of grace.

Paul, just as some pastors who wish to have a congregation who is well-fed on God's Word, realized that in honestly teaching the Bible that he was taking the risk of offending someone or "stepping on toes;" saying things that challenge people.²⁵⁴ The Word of God is like a two-edged sword (Heb. 4:12), it can encourage us and it can convict us. Many churches teach *about* the Bible, but not many really *teach* the Bible. By that I mean to consistently and honestly study from verse one through to the end of a book of the Bible,²⁵⁵ and when teaching on various Bible topics to honestly and diligently teach *and* believe the text. I have heard many sermons that I call "Texas Longhorn" sermons: a point here, and a point there, and a lot of bull in between. I have even heard a few sermons about which I could find nothing to disagree; because they really did not say anything of importance.

If the God's Word can do all that 2 Tim. 3:15-17 says that it can, then let us not spend our time listening to feel-good sermons which may be only so much "fluff." May we heed the admonition of 2 Tim. 2:15, and become serious about studying the Bible.²⁵⁶

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The word "study" here literally is "to be diligent" (as it is translated in 4:9 and 4:21). We cannot have right living without right doctrine. I believe that the real "gems" in the Word are reserved for those who are willing to dig in the Bible for them and then to honestly accept and

²⁵⁴ I know of one Bible-teaching pastor who jokingly stated at the end of an admonitory type of sermon that, "If I didn't offend you this week, come back next week and I'll try again."

²⁵⁵ One of several churches that we know who abides by this principle is Pastor J.B. Bond at Stillwater Bible Church. Audio Bible studies may be downloaded for many important topics and most of the books of the Bible from <http://www.stillwaterbible.org/wordpress/resources/audio-library>. My wife and I download the studies and put them on an inexpensive MP3 player. We frequently listen to them through a pair of computer speakers while we eat. We have listened to several hundred hours of these and recommend them highly. This pattern has been a tremendous blessing for us.

²⁵⁶ In reference to how we spend our time, Eph. 5:15, 16 exhorts us that in our Christian "walk" that we should be "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (cf. Col. 4:5). One area of liberty which is a prevalent subject of enormous time consumption today is watching television. There is nothing inherently wrong with TV but like almost anything else, it has the potential to be misused. Many years ago our family chose to not even own a TV and to spend a certain corresponding consistent amount of time in God's Word. This also has been a tremendous blessing to us. These hours add up over time.

According to a survey that I read, the average American watches TV a little over 4 hours per day. That is 28 hours per week and 1460 hours per year. (At \$10 per hour, that would be over \$14,000). At that rate of hours, every 6 years, we have spent the equivalent of 1 full year, 24/7, day and night, watching television (8760 hours). What would happen in our lives and for God's glory if we disciplined ourselves to spend even half of that time in prayer and study of God's Word?

apply them when they are found. Part of the purpose of this study is to challenge those reading it to be "Acts 17:11" believers:

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (Acts 17:11).

Very roughly transliterated: "Don't believe what this writer says; check it out in God's Word on your own." I am not threatened if you come up with something in your study better than I did. We are *not* in competition with each other and we can all learn from each other.

One way that believers can be defeated is to cut off their spiritual food supply. That's how the Russians eventually defeated the German army in Leningrad during World War II. As the Germans tried to go to Leningrad, they stretched themselves out so far that the Russians just came behind the line, cut off their food supply and let the Russian winter do the rest.

Satan works that way with the believer. If he can cut off the believer from the nourishment of hearing or studying the Word of God, the flesh can do the rest. This end can be accomplished through distraction or deception. Believers struggle in this spiritual warfare even when they are well fed on the Word of God, but face almost certain daily defeat when they are in starvation mode. We would not be very strong physically if we had only one meal per week. Likewise, we would not do so well spiritually if we only received a half-hour spiritual food each Sunday morning. In some churches this may be only some occasional baby food and in some others it might even be considered junk-food. God tells us to be diligent in our study of His Word (2 Tim. 2:15).

Believers are not exempt from being courted and captured by legalistic teaching as these pointed warnings to the Galatian believers demonstrate. Sometimes the cults put us to shame in their zeal and willingness to sacrifice in order to promote their cause. Even though some are in major error in significant and basic Bible doctrines, some also know the Bible better than many believers who claim to be believers.

Text

- 4:19. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,
20. I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.
21. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?
22. For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.
23. But he *who* was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.
24. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.
25. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.
26. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
27. For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

28. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.
29. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now.
30. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.
31. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

We now begin the last of six arguments in chapters 3 and 4 in which Paul offers to support the grace doctrine. This argument we call, as per verse 24; the allegorical argument. What is an allegory? One dictionary defines it as "a work in which the characters and events are to be understood as representing other things and symbolically expressing a deeper, often spiritual, moral, or political meaning."

We will see a number of parallels or contrasts in these verses: The Law and Abraham, two sons with two types of birth; of the flesh and of the spirit, two mothers, one a slave and one free, two covenants from two mountains with two resulting states, two cities, two *types* of sons; those of the bondwoman and those of the free. This section sums up how we are to handle the bondage of the law and our state of freedom which we now have as believers.

This then leads us into chapter five where we see the theme of the believer's liberty expanded; the need to stand fast in the liberty (5:1) and how to use our liberty; to serve in love (5:13).

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

The term, "My little children,"²⁵⁷ might encompass several ideas; 1. The Galatians had been born again. Paul is not speaking about how to be eternally saved but of how to grow. 2. That they were *his* spiritual children; those whom he had led to Christ during his first missionary journey, and 3. That they were still immature in their zeal for legalism and needed to grow to maturity. Their spiritual growth was being arrested by poor doctrine. They needed to move on to maturity,²⁵⁸

"...Of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you," Paul was experiencing the equivalent of childbirth pains for them; first when he led them to belief in Jesus for eternal life and now again while he encouraged them to grow in grace (cf. 2 Pet. 3:18). He is not addressing unbelievers to show them how to be saved, but is telling believers that they need to grow. The new birth (John 3:3-7, 16) and conformity²⁵⁹ to Christ are not to be confused. We, as believers are already *in* Christ (2 Cor. 5:21; Php. 3:9) and Christ is in us (Col. 1:27). Paul had already told them:

²⁵⁷ "Little children" τέκνιον (tek-nee'-on) from a word meaning "born ones." It has less of an emphasis on "little" and more as "dear" children. It is used only as Jesus lovingly addressing His disciples (John 13:33), and as a loving Christian teacher addressing his spiritual children (Gal. 4:19; I John 2:1; 2:12; 2:28; 3:7; 3:18; 4:4; 5:21).

²⁵⁸ Dr. Earl Radmacher has appropriately stated concerning baby believers who tend to stay spiritual babies when they should be growing and getting into the spiritual battle, that "They need to move from infancy to the infantry." (cf. Heb. 5:11-14; Eph. 6:12-20). He is also quoted as correctly saying that we as believers should "be training to be reigning."

²⁵⁹ All believers will eventually be conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29), but God wants us to be obedient in this life which will bring glory to Him here and bring rewards for us now and in the future (Matt. 6:19-21; Mark 10:29, 30).

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20).

Christ lived in him and now Paul was living in the flesh by faith of the Son of God..." He wanted that same fruitfulness and joy for the Galatian believers, instead of them being drawn away into bondage by the false teachers.

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

"I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice;..." Paul would rather speak with them in person. He could put his heart into his voice, but in writing, perhaps he found it necessary to speak with more severity.

"...For I stand in doubt of you." Paul's doubts had nothing to do with their *position* in Christ. He had already affirmed that they were believers (Gal. 1:2, brethren, to the churches; 1:6-9; 3:1-5; my little children, 4:19).

His doubts concerned whether they would overcome this threat to their faith and spiritual well-being that was instigated by the Judaizers. He fears that they would continue in their descent into this dangerous legalistic doctrine which brings God's anathema on them (Gal. 1:6-9).

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

The law demands complete obedience. James 2:10 tells us, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." *One* sin makes us a sinner and condemns us. The question that Paul answers in Galatians is that of law OR grace, not law AND grace. It cannot be both. Rom. 11:6 lays down an essential "grace" principle,

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

This verse might seem to be unnecessarily redundant but it is actually quite clear. It is like saying that a barefoot boy does not have shoes on because he is barefoot. If he had shoes on he would not be barefoot because he had shoes on. It cannot be both.

The desire to be saved by the law or even to be *kept* saved by the law is a result of a misunderstanding of what the law really is and does. If the Galatians really understood the purpose of the law, how could they desire to be placed under it again?

"Perhaps the phrase, "...do ye not hear the law?" pertains not just to the 10 commandments or even to the rest of the 613 commandments to Israel, but also to the balance of the Torah (the first five books of our OT, the Pentateuch), which contained information about both the Abrahamic covenant and the Mosaic covenant. He then continues his argument to establish the incompatibility of mixing law and grace by relaying a Biblical and historical OT account which was familiar to the Jews, including the Judaizers.

This narrative concerns itself with a family problem that developed due to a fleshly scheme on the part of Abraham and Sarah, the parents of Ishmael and Isaac. The historical facts can be briefly summarized by the following chart:

Abraham's age	75	86	100	103
Occurrence	God's promise of Seed	Child of flesh scheme with Hagar, Ishmael	Miracle child of promise, Isaac	Weaning of Isaac, Casting out of Ishmael
Scripture Reference	Gen. 12:1-3	Gen. 16	Gen. 17, 18, 21	Gen. 21:8-14

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

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

Paul speaks only of Abraham's first two sons: Ishmael, who was born of Abraham and Hagar, Sarah's handmaiden (i.e. a slave) and Isaac, who was born of Sarah (i.e. a freewoman), Abraham's wife.

"But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after (or "according to") the flesh;"

God promised Abraham seed but after 10 years of waiting Sarah still had not conceived. She and Abraham then chose to take matters into their own hands. They decided to conceive a child through Hagar, Sarah's maid (a custom that was apparently acceptable in that culture).

"...After the flesh" - Ishmael was the fleshly way around the problem. God's way is by faith, not human wisdom. Adam and Eve did the same with the fig leaves after they had sinned. They tried to cover sin by human efforts. God's way was by the death (shedding of blood) of an innocent substitute (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:27; Matt. 26:28; 2 Cor. 5:21); in this case, animal skins. Man's way; fig leaves, just did not solve the problem.

"...But he of the freewoman was by promise." Isaac²⁶⁰ was the son of promise. As opposed to Ishmael who was begotten through a lack of faith, man's way, Isaac's birth was the result of God working and man's faith (Rom. 4:17-21). This was about 25 years after the promise to Abraham and well after the normal child-bearing years of Sarah. This clearly was a miracle from God.

24. Which things are an allegory:²⁶¹ for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth²⁶² to bondage, which is Agar.

²⁶⁰ It appears that Isaac also was a "type" of Christ. Please see the chart in the comments about Galatians 3:9.

²⁶¹ "Allegory" ἀλληγορέω (al-lay-gor-eh'-o). The NKJV renders the phrase as "which things are symbolic." This "allegory" is not to be confused with what is frequently called "allegorical interpretation" of the Bible which was promoted by Origen and later by Augustine and which remains prevalent today. This is in contrast with the grammatical-historical method, which first determines a passage's meaning by reference to its language, context, and background. Until we determine what the original author intended to convey to his original audience we have no basis for asking other questions, such as, "What does this mean to me today?"

The allegorical method of interpretation, to some degree, ignores the context but then is interpreted by the feelings of the interpreter. It seeks hidden meanings frequently at the expense of obvious literal truth. Since each allegorical interpreter may "see" or "feel" something different in the text, allegorical interpretations can never be verified by others working with the same text (unlike real biblical exegesis, where the work of generations of scholars verifies and re-verifies the conclusions already reached). The result of this fatal flaw in the system is that no allegorical interpretation can claim the authority of the

"Which things are an allegory:" "Allegory" here is a passive verb, not a noun. Literally it is "Which things are allegorized." Though the account is literally true, the facts also were being given an allegorical interpretation. The two women and their children were types. "Gendereth," meaning here to bear or beget, is in the present tense. The covenant from Mt. Sinai, *still* brings bondage or enslavement.

25. For this Agar²⁶³ is mount Sinai in Arabia,²⁶⁴ and answereth²⁶⁵ to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

"For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia,..." In our allegory, Hagar is Mt. Sinai (the geographical source of the Mosaic law). "... and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." Hagar/Mt. Sinai represents, or corresponds with Jerusalem at the time of this writing. Why does Paul refer to their present-day Jerusalem? Jerusalem was the home of the Jewish temple where all of the Levitical sacrifices took place. Without Jerusalem and the Temple, the Jews could not properly fulfill the ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic law.

Since AD 70, when the temple was destroyed, the Jews and the Jewish priests have been unable to offer sacrifices that were required under the law. Since Jesus fulfilled the law and gave us His righteousness, we no longer need to offer the temple sacrifices (Heb. 10:10-14; Rom. 6:14).

One Bible teacher²⁶⁶ appropriately comments:

"Paul identifies Hagar with Mount Sinai ("for this Hagar is Mount Sinai").... How ironic this is. Surely the Jews of Paul's day were outraged by this comparison. Hagar was the mother of Ishmael and the Arab nations, not of the Jews! Yet Paul says that Hagar the

original text. This is because the source of the interpretation is not the text itself but the mind of the interpreter who "sees" things in it.

²⁶² "Gendereth," γεννάω (ghen-nah'-o) Usually translated "begat," "bear," or "born," as it is in Galatians 4:23 and 29.

²⁶³ "Agar," Greek spelling of Hagar, mother of Ishmael.

²⁶⁴ "Mount Sinai in Arabia." This is one example of how we falsely assume some Bible-related claims to be true just because of consensus opinion. Most back-of-the-bible maps show Mt. Sinai to be in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula. The Bible says that it is in Arabia. Archeological research during the past 25 years has proven, at least to my satisfaction, that the site of Mt. Sinai (AKA Jabal al-Lawz), the rock at Horeb, the altar of the golden calf, Moses' sacrificial altar, and more are located in the Midian portion of Arabia about 30 miles east of the Gulf of Aqaba, the northeastern portion of the Red Sea. Some of these can be seen even today from Google Maps. The Arabian government has presently sealed the site off from public access although the mountain and the altar of the golden calf can be seen from through the fence. Detailed information and video proof can be obtained from a DVD which we recommend entitled, "Discovered, The Exodus" at <http://www.wyattmuseum.com/red-sea-crossing.htm> or much information can be gained from the internet search engines and from www.youtube.com. If it is practical the DVD is available on loan from this writer.

²⁶⁵ "Answereth" συστοιχέω (soos-toy-kheh'-o) Is used only here. It means "corresponds with," "represents" or Lit. "to walk in step with."

²⁶⁶ This comment is from the "Grace New Testament Commentary," "Galatians," by Bob Wilkin. If a person could only have one NT commentary, we would recommend this one. It is available for purchase from <http://faithalone.org/bookstore/ntc.html>. We believe that this website is among the best for scholarly and accurate grace related Bible studies. For shorter studies - <http://faithalone.org/magazine.html> and for more in-depth studies - <http://faithalone.org/journal.html>.

bondwoman foreshadowed **Mount Sinai in Arabia, and** that she **corresponds to Jerusalem which now is. Mount Sinai in Arabia** is where the Law was given to Moses. The misuse of the Mosaic Law led the Jerusalem of Paul's day to be **in bondage with her children** (i.e., the unbelieving inhabitants of Jerusalem, which was the great majority). Hagar was in bondage to Abraham and Sarah. So too Jerusalem and all Israel was in bondage to the Law and legalism. Anyone who chooses legalism as a way to live chooses bondage, not freedom."

The Jews at that time who were under the law were in bondage as were the children of Hagar in this allegory.

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

"But Jerusalem which is above is free," We have not yet seen the Jerusalem which is above (Rev. 21:2; Heb. 12:22). This Jerusalem of the believer, in contrast to the bondage of the law, is free. "...Which is the mother of us all." Why the term "mother of us all?" According to Galatians 3:7 and 8, Abraham is our spiritual father. In this allegory, Sarah, Abraham's legal wife, is the mother of Isaac, who represents the promise by faith. Believers are represented by Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac, not Hagar and Ishmael.

Let us notice carefully the allegory: we have:

1. Two women (mothers) - Hagar (begets bondage, v. 24), and Sarah (representing God's promise by grace).
2. Two sons - Ishmael (born after the flesh) and Isaac (by promise, v. 23, 28).
3. Two covenants - law (Mosaic covenant, conditional - begets bondage, v. 24) and grace (Abrahamic covenant, unconditional).
4. Two mountains - Sinai (begets bondage, v. 24) and by implication, Mt. Calvary (freedom by faith).
5. Two cities - earthly Jerusalem (under law and bondage) and heavenly Jerusalem (where believers will be, by grace through faith).

THE ALLEGORIZED ITEMS, v. 24-31²⁶⁷

Hagar/Ishmael	Sarah/Isaac
a. Represents the Sinaitic Covenant that produces bondage, v. 24	a. Represents the Grace-Promise Covenant that produces liberty, v. 28, 31
LAW VERSUS GRACE-PROMISE	
b. Represents Mount Sinai which corresponds to earthly Jerusalem and its inhabitants (the Jews) who are under bondage to the Sinaitic Law. v. 25	b. Represents the heavenly Jerusalem (the ideal) which produces children that are free from fleshly and cosmic controls, v. 26, 31
EARTHLY VERSUS HEAVENLY	
c. Represents production of the flesh with its schemes and struggles relative to what is	c. Represents production of the Spirit, v. 23, 29, note especially v. 29: Ishmael "born after

²⁶⁷ This chart illustrating the Allegoration of the Historical Facts is from "Galatians: God's Antidote to Legalism" by Ron Merryman, <http://www.merrymanministries.com> or loan from this writer. Also, please see the booklet, "The Believer & The Mosaic Law" by the same author.

right, v. 23, 29	(κατά - in accord with) the flesh" and Isaac "born after (κατά) the Spirit" the Holy Spirit!
- FLESH VERSUS SPIRIT - WORKS VERSUS FAITH	

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

This is quoted from Isaiah 54:1. Notice that this is immediately following Isaiah 53, which is a detailed prophecy of the Messiah and His vicarious and sacrificial payment that He made for our sins. This context seems to refer to Jerusalem in their unproductive time during exile and then bearing more children after their return to the land, or possibly looking forward to the future and their millennial blessings.

Commentators are divided on how Paul applies this to the Galatians. It might be in this allegory that Paul is likening the experience of Israel's barrenness and later productivity to that of Sarah, who initially was also barren but is now the mother of believers.

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

Believers in Jesus today are as Isaac was, the children of promise. This is a faith proposition (Rom. 4:17-22).

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

"...After (or "according to") the flesh" (Also verse 23). Ishmael persecuted Isaac (cf. Gen. 21:9). This persecution continues in both of their descendants to this day. In the allegory we see this as the persecution of the legalistic Jews against the Christian believers. Jesus, Paul, and the other apostles received most of their persecution from the Jewish religious leaders.

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

This is quoted from Genesis 21:10. What are *we* to do about all this? This quote from a historical event is used to admonish us; "Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." We are to separate from legalism and legalistic teachers, reject man's way of legalism as shown in this allegory and as Galatians 2:20 exhorts, we are to "...live by the faith of the Son of God...."

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

The summation of all this is that we should not be living under bondage of the law as is represented by Hagar/Mt. Sinai/Ishmael, because we are free.

The next verse, beginning in chapter 5, summarizes chapter 4 where the theme is contrasting bondage and freedom, and expands on how believers should live with this marvelous freedom. We will now be getting into the "practical" portion of the epistle, or how to apply the doctrine that has been presented. I call it also the "fun" portion.

Since we are embarking on the last major section of the epistle, let us briefly recapitulate what we have seen so far:

Galatians is the defense of the Gospel of grace; not only for the grace message of salvation by grace through faith, but also for the liberty that we have in Christ for service. (Matt. 5:16). Grace has done what the Mosaic Law could not do. Romans *defines* the gospel and Galatians *defends* it.

The epistle is roughly divided into 3 sections,

Chapters 1 & 2 are Personal, They defend Paul's apostleship and authority.

Chapters 3 & 4 are Doctrinal. They defend the grace message.

Chapters 5 & 6 are Practical. We will see how to apply these doctrinal truths in our lives.

In chapters 3 & 4 Paul presented 6 arguments mainly from OT Scripture to prove the purpose of the Mosaic Law; primarily to show us our sinful condition and bring us to Christ in faith. His argument is to establish that salvation is by grace through faith apart from the works of the law (Eph. 2:8, 9) and that we as believers are to live the same way; by faith (Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:6).

We have seen the arguments that Paul offered to illustrate the dismal failure of the law to accomplish what some people *thought* that it was intended to do (i.e. to justify us and sanctify us). We have also seen what *God* intended the law to accomplish; to show us our need for a Savior and to bring us to faith in Christ. The law was not a failure; mankind was. Belief in Jesus is the only means of justification (Gal. 3:21; Acts 4:12; John 14:6).

Paul, the writer of the epistle, spent much care in presenting the purpose of the law and the fact that the believer is not under the law. For example, the believer of this age is: dead to the law (Gal. 2:19); not under the law but under grace; (Rom. 6:14), loosed from the law; (Rom. 7:2) and delivered from the law; (Rom. 7:6). "For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Rom. 10:4).

In light of all this, we do not wish that the clarity of the freeness of eternal life and the liberty of the believer to confuse or negate the need for the believer to live a Spirit-controlled life. Some have mislabeled this doctrine as "cheap grace;" a term which is not only pejorative, but is untrue. The payment that my Savior made for me to have eternal life was anything but cheap. A correct terminology would be "free grace."²⁶⁸ Jesus paid an awesome price so that you and I could be freely saved by grace through faith (Rom. 3:24).

"Grace" for eternal salvation or for the believer's life is *not* a dangerous doctrine which encourages ungodly living. God's Word tells us:

¹¹ For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, ¹² Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; ¹⁴ ...Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Titus 2:11-14).

We will see in chapters 5 and 6 some very practical applications for victory, fruitfulness, and joy in our Christian lives. Let us again emphasize that even though we are eternally saved by faith alone in Christ alone and we as believers have great liberty in Christ (Gal. 5:1), we are exhorted to use this liberty in order to serve out of love (Gal. 5:13). This goal of an effective Christian life cannot be achieved by the Mosaic law but can only be accomplished through the Holy Spirit's power and direction (Gal. 5:16; 22-25). The sixth chapter informs us of more practical considerations for effective Christian living. We will cover all this in more detail when

²⁶⁸ This term is somewhat redundant but seems to be necessary to use for clarity due to the misunderstanding of grace that seems to prevail among many churches and Bible teachers today.

we approach it in our study, but we mention it again now just so that our clarity on the grace and faith issues does not cloud the understanding of our responsibilities as believers.

A good balance is presented in Titus 3:5, 8:

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us,... *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

The Judaizers did not try to get the Galatians to believe in Mohamed or Confucius. They promoted belief in Jesus PLUS the law. This same error is prevalent in "Christian" churches today. Whenever we add "plus" to faith, besides it being unbiblical, where do we stop adding?

Overview of Chapter Five:

In chapter 5 we will see more how to *apply* the doctrine that has been presented in the previous chapters. This includes how to properly utilize this freedom which we have in Christ along with practical doctrine concerning the battle the Christian has between his old and new nature. There is victory available if we choose to employ God's principles.

We will see at least four contrasts²⁶⁹ in chapters 5 and 6:

1. Liberty, not bondage 5:1-15.
2. The Spirit, not the flesh 5:16-26.
3. Others, not ourselves 6:1-10.
4. God's glory, not man's approval 6:11-18.

Chapter Five Text

- 5:1. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.
2. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.
3. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.
4. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.
5. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.
6. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.
7. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?
8. This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you.
9. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.
10. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.
11. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.
12. I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

²⁶⁹ This brief outline was gleaned from the excellent audio Galatians study by Dr. Chuck Missler, http://www.khouse.org/6640_cat/biblestudy/galatians.

Paul had aptly vindicated his authority as an apostle, he then authoritatively defended the doctrine of justification by faith. He now declares the life of Christian freedom and service. Would this teaching lead the Galatians into Godliness or into lawlessness? The Christian life is described as not being under the law, but certainly it is not with license to sin. It is meant to be a life of service in love under control of the Holy Spirit.

We have seen that the believer of this age has been set free from the Mosaic Law (Gal. 2:19); Rom. 6:14; Rom. 7:6; Rom. 10:4).²⁷⁰ "Law" in the NT is νόμος (nom'-os) and could mean a prescribed regulation or simply a principle.²⁷¹ There are laws or principles that are in force for the believer today: "...The law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2); "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8:2); "...the perfect law of liberty," (James 1:25); and James 2:12 where it is mentioned that believers conduct themselves "as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep"²⁷² my commandments. (John 14:15).

Chapter 5 later tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is love. Instead of "laws," our focus should be more on a life of faith in Jesus (Gal. 2:2; Heb. 12:2) and being yielded to the Holy Spirit so that our faith will work through love in *His* power (Gal. 5:7). "Love" is mentioned 4 times in Galatians and only in the 5th chapter. Only by walking by faith in Jesus can the believer live as a free person and thereby please God. (Gal. 2:20; Heb. 11:6; Rom. 14:25b).

We are now going to see how to experience the true liberty of the Gospel; how love-service ends the law bondage (5:1-15) and how being yielded to the Holy Spirit ends the flesh bondage (5:16-26).

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

The NASB²⁷³ translates this verse as, "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."²⁷⁴ Christ has set the

²⁷⁰ Gal. 2:19 "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."

Rom. 6:14 "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

Rom. 7:6 "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

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

²⁷¹ "Law" in the OT is תורה (to-raw') A precept, statute, or instruction. Please see footnote 3 for its usage in the Bible.

²⁷² "Keep." There is a textual variation here; τηρήσθε (indicative mood) or τηρήσατε (imperative mood). In other words, Jesus could be saying, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." or exhorting them that if they love Him to keep His commandments. We favor the latter, which is the KJV/Majority Text rendering. It seems from other scripture that both statements are biblical concepts.

²⁷³ The New American Standard Bible. Among the modern translations which used the Critical text for its NT basis, we believe the NASB to be one of the more literal and accurate. We also believe, for reasons too complex to offer here, the Majority text family of manuscripts (the basis of the KJV NT) to be more accurate than the Critical text in some places. This is not the conviction of all Bible scholars.

²⁷⁴ A quite literal translation for any who might be interested is, "For the freedom (dative case) us Christ has freed you stand fast (or persevere) (imperative mood) therefore and not again yoke of slavery you be enslaved (imperative)." Wilkin in "Grace NT Commentary" notes, "The word order here is significant. The last word is *eleutheras* (free). It is placed last for emphasis [in Gal. 4:31]. It is also the first

believer free to enjoy freedom. This verse opens the "practical" segment of the epistle. This verse also summarizes the previous chapter where the theme is the contrast between bondage and freedom.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,"

What do we know about this liberty or freedom? We see at least 5 features²⁷⁵ from verse one:

1. It is a specific freedom, not freedom generally. The word "liberty" has the definite article "the" before it. This is *the* liberty which has just been discussed; liberty from the bondage of the law along with adult son-ship privileges in Christ. We are under grace and have great liberty to serve. Whenever we see the word "therefore," we should check to see what it is "there for." This verse is a summary of the previous context and an introduction into how to use this liberty.

2. This liberty is received only by Christ (wherewith Christ hath made us free). This liberty does not come from the works of the law, our religion, our church, etc. It is only by faith in Jesus Christ. Please see Galatians 2:16.

3. This liberty is *obtained at the time* of our eternal salvation or justification. "...Christ hath made us free." "Hath"²⁷⁶ indicates the past tense. At the point in time in which they believed in Jesus their destination was changed from hell to heaven. They were set free at that moment.

4. It is a fact to be believed. The verb in the phrase, "hath made [us] free" is in the indicative mood; the mood of stated fact. This is not something "iffy" or that just *might* occur. It is not probable, it is actual. It *did* occur. We are to know this fact, believe it, and live our lives according to the fact.

5. This freedom is true of *all* believers. "...Christ hath made us free." This includes Paul, the Galatian believers and any who believe in Jesus.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty..." This not a suggestion nor a recommendation. It is a command! How does this work out in real life? In reference to the message that we share with the unsaved, we hope that it has been made clear that if someone is adding man's works in any way to Christ's completed work in order to be eternally saved, that there is no compromise (Gal. 1:6-10). We are saved by grace through faith, not of works, period! (Eph. 2:8, 9). For this we "draw a line in the sand." This fundamental truth is worth living for and dying for.

But what about areas in my life in which the Bible grants me liberty, but in which some believer is being caused to stumble by my actions. Do I continue in this action around that person because I have liberty? Most would argue; "Absolutely not." If not, do I then go to the other extreme to change my doctrine and believe that this area of my liberty is inherent sin for me? Again, I say, "Absolutely not." That would be compromising God's truth. My opinion on this is no better than the next person's, so we need to seek more of what Scripture says on the subject. What would be the Biblical and loving alternative in this situation? Verse 13 presents the basic principle; In a nutshell, we are to stand fast in the liberty but also in our actions to be motivated

word in the next sentence [in Gal. 5:1]. This back-to-back arrangement is a powerful way of emphasizing words, especially in a letter that was to be read publicly."

²⁷⁵ This general 5 point outline was derived from the audio Galatians study, by Pastor Dennis Rokser, <http://www.DuluthBible.org> .

²⁷⁶ The specific word "hath" is not in the original. The past tense is in the verb which contains both the action and the tense, or the time of the action. The verb ἡλευθέρωσε (translated "hath made [us] free") is in the aorist tense which means that the action occurred at point in time in the past.

by love and use this liberty to serve. We will go into more depth on this subject and attempt to answer the question in more detail from God's Word when we comment on verse 13.

"...And be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Paul's appeal here is to stand firm in that liberty and the stern warning to not become re-entangled in the enslavement of legalism. This "entanglement" seems to be where most Christian leaders are today and, as a result, it is so easy to slip into this error. Standing for this liberty can become costly. We will approach this subject more when we comment on verse 11.

He further explains....

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

"Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised,..." "Circumcision" here is not referring specifically to the physical Jewish rite on male children. Paul obviously is not saying that Christ is of no profit to every Jewish male. He is speaking of the entire Mosaic law system. People who put themselves under this system become debtors to the *whole* law. (cf. the next verse; 1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 6:15; James 2:10).

"...Christ shall profit you nothing." Physical circumcision of itself is not wrong. God told Abraham to be circumcised as a token of the covenant (Gen. 17:11). *Belief* in circumcision as a saving or sanctifying object *is* wrong. If a person places himself under this law system, they are out of the grace system and Christ profits them nothing.

Remember that Paul did not allow Titus, a Gentile, to be circumcised so that the truth of the Gospel would not be compromised with the Galatians (see comments on Gal. 2:3) But he *did* circumcise Timothy, whose mother was a Jew (Acts 16:1, 3), in order to better minister to the Jews. (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23).

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

The legalistic teachers insisted that the Galatians, in order to be eternally saved, submit to the rite of circumcision. Paul vigorously opposes this doctrine and proclaims that if they submitted to circumcision (adopting the Mosaic law system) that they would become a debtor to do the *whole* law and would be under its curse and condemnation. To look to the law for justification is to miss the grace of God as we see in the next verse.

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

"Christ is become of no effect ²⁷⁷unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law;..." This phrase relays a message similar to that of verse 2; the utter futility of trying to be justified by the law. If a person is seeking justification by the law, then Christ is become of no effect to them. Why would Christ become of no effect to that person? Because he would be rejecting Christ's efficacious payment for his sins and be required to keep the law *completely* (v3). This superhuman feat has been accomplished only by Jesus Himself (Matt. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:21, 22). Romans 11:6 emphasizes the fact that grace and works are antithetical. It has to be by one *or* the other, not by a combination of both. If by works, then Christ's payment on the cross becomes of no effect to them. In addition, our works could never be perfect and serve as a satisfactory payment for our sin.

²⁷⁷ "Become of no effect" is the passive form of one word, καταργέω (kat-arg-eh'-o) and means, "to be rendered ineffectual or inoperative." This is the same Greek word which is translated "of none effect" in 3:17, and "ceased" in 5:11.

"...Ye are fallen from grace." "Fallen"²⁷⁸ means "to be driven off course." In the account in Acts 27 of Paul's shipwreck while on the way to Rome, this same Greek word is used twice: In verse 17, "...fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands," and verse 29, "...fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks." In both cases "fall" is in reference to being driven off course.

If a person thinks that they can be justified by the works of the law, they have been driven out of course and have missed the grace of God. This is a serious and appropriate warning for us as justification by law/works is commonly taught by "Christian" teachers today and is generally accepted in our religious community as being God's way both of eternal salvation and of sanctification.

This verse, and specifically the phrase, "ye are fallen from grace," has often been misused to support the teaching that one could lose their salvation if they did not remain faithful in some sort of continued obedience to God.

First of all, "grace" is not salvation, it is the *means* of salvation. Eph. 2:8 states, "For by grace are ye saved through faith...." (Eph. 2:8). We cannot fall from eternal life.

Yeshua Himself said in John 6:47, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." "Hath" is in the present tense. This means that the one who believes in Jesus *right now has eternal life*. If eternal life could be lost, then it is misnamed; it would not be eternal.

1 John 5:13 states, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life,..." We can know right now that we have eternal life because it does not depend upon what we will do or not do in the future. It depends upon what Jesus has already done. It's a "done deal."

"Falling from grace is simply the result of choosing to adopt the law system of justification instead of the grace system. If a person chooses the law system (which could be called the endless treadmill of performance) instead of the grace system, then Christ will be of no profit or benefit to them (v.2), Christ has "become of no effect" to them, and they have "fallen from grace." (v. 5).

This is not a happy situation in which to be. I like God's way of grace much better. Eternal life is received by faith in Christ. The obedient Christian life is a walk of faith in the power of the Holy Spirit.

5. For we through the Spirit²⁷⁹ wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

In contrast to those just mentioned who try to be justified by keeping the law, we, as believers, receive undeserved and imputed righteousness by faith in Jesus. The Greek word translated, "wait for," (ἀπεκδέχομαι - ap-ek-dekh'-om-ahee) meaning "to expect fully," is used only 7 times in the NT and each time in reference to the return of Christ, the consummation of our salvation.

²⁷⁸ "Fallen" (ἐκπίπτω - ek-pip'-to) to drop away; specifically be driven out of one's course; figuratively to lose, become inefficient: - be cast, fail, fall (away, off), take none effect. The KJV translates the phrase, "You have become estranged from Christ...." This same Greek word is translated as "hath taken none effect" in Rom. 9:6.

²⁷⁹ "...Through the Spirit" or "by the Spirit" (dative case). In contrast to "by the flesh."

The noun "hope" in the NT is (ἐλπίς - el-pece') and means, "a joyful anticipation." The Greek word does not carry the element of doubt that we sometimes see in the English word; e.g. "I hope that it will rain tomorrow."

Paul was not waiting for justification by faith as believers already have this imputed righteousness (John 6:47). We are presently at this time are *positionally* righteous (2 Cor. 5:21). He may have been referring to the final culmination of righteousness when we see Jesus as mentioned in 1 John 3:2.

God's righteousness is required in order for us to enter a perfect heaven (Rev. 21:27). We could never achieve this righteousness by our efforts (Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8, 9). This is why it was necessary for Jesus to have made the substitutionary payment for our sin in order for us to obtain this positional righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21).

6. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth²⁸⁰ any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

The issue here is not whether or not a person submits to a religious ritual or whether he is Jew or Gentile, but in this context the dominant concern is "faith which worketh by love." Faith in Jesus alone will save us (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; et al) but we are progressing into the portion of Galatians which tells us *how* our faith should work, or express itself; by love.²⁸¹

If a person keeps the law of the land, he fulfills his duty. If he *loves* his land, he will go way beyond the demands of the law. He will seek to promote its welfare, support worthy projects, etc.. He willingly sacrifices for the benefit of that which is loved.

2 Cor. 5:14 tells us that the "love of Christ constrains us...." Is this verse referring to Christ's love for us or of our love for Him? Expositors are divided on this. The Greek scholar, A.T. Robertson, claims that this is grammatically a subjective genitive, meaning Christ's love for Paul. Some claim that it probably means both. The genitive case in the Greek could be either and is usually clearly determined by the context. Verse 15 may indicate that both meanings are in view here. In any case, either interpretation seems to be in agreement with other Scripture.

"We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19). Although not all believers are obedient to God, the love mentioned here leads to service. In my own personal life I have performed sacrificial acts for my wife and children for both motivations; because I love them and also because they love me. This should also be true in our service to our Savior.

In Matt. 22:35-40, when Jesus was asked by the Jewish leaders, "Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law? He answered by quoting OT Scripture. He first quoted part of Deut.

²⁸⁰ "Avaieth," (ἰσχύω - is-khoo'-o) to have or exercise force, from a Greek root word meaning, "strength," "power," or "might."

²⁸¹ "Love" ἀγάπη (ag-ah'-pay). Sometimes referred to as divine love because it is sacrificial and works for the benefit of the one who is loved. This is the same love that God shows the world (John 3:16), that a husband is commanded to show to his wife (Eph. 5:25), and that we are to show others when we speak God's truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

"Love" is mentioned 4 times in Galatians and only in this chapter: Here in 5:6; 5:13, 14; and 5:22.

6:4, 5; a passage which was familiar to every Jew. This portion of Scripture is known as the Shemah (שמע),²⁸² which is the first word of Deut. 6:4.

He replied that the first and great commandment was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." He then includes, "And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."²⁸³ This is quoted from Lev. 19:18. In summation, he adds, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

This seems to coincide nicely with the message of Rom. 13:8-10, which is summed up by the phrase, "...love is the fulfilling of the law." We will soon see a similar claim in Gal. 5:14. I infer from all this that if I am truly yielded to the Holy Spirit Who produces the genuine fruit of love in our lives (Gal. 5:22), that I am not bound by legalistic constraints but have great freedom to serve out of love under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This principle will be approached in more detail later in the chapter (5:16-26).

In 2 Cor. 3:6-18, Paul presents a short discourse concerning the Mosaic law and Israel, then in summation states in verse 17, "...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Among other important points, I infer from this that in a church, Bible college, or any other "Christian" institution, that if legalism prevails, that the Holy Spirit is being quenched and/or grieved (1 Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30). We have seen many tragic examples of this practice in our ministry over the years. Mankind frequently seems to be more comfortable trying to obey a set of rules instead of following the Holy Spirit Who wants to lead us into His holiness.

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

"Ye did run well;" This is one of the few commendations which Paul offers in the epistle (See also v. 10). He describes the Galatians' Christian experience by employing a metaphor that he uses elsewhere of being in a race (1 Cor. 9:24-26; 2 Tim. 4:7). They had begun well while heeding Paul's message but were being led astray or off course by the Judaizers (cf. Jer. 50:6). He is encouraging them to get back on course immediately. We see examples both in Scripture and in our own experience of those who got off to a good start but then failed miserably as they progressed in their Christian journey.

There are added blessings for those who finish well (Gal. 6:9). Jesus promised His disciples in Luke 18:28, 29. "...Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

There are blessings along with the trials in our service here and now, but there are many future and greater blessings for the believer who is faithful and finishes the course well (Gal. 6:9). One Bible teacher illustrates this concept by recounting that one of the fast food chains maintained a two-part advertising campaign. On each large drink cup was a tab that you could

²⁸² Deut. 6:4, 5, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The word "Hear" (Shemah - שמע) means more than just to *hear* the words, but also carries with it the implication to heed or obey them.

²⁸³ Have you ever wondered about the exhortation that Jesus gave His disciples on the night before His crucifixion in John 13:34? "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." What is so new about this when compared to Lev. 19:18? I think that the difference is that under the law we were to love others as we love ourselves. Jesus amplified this concept by commanding that we love others as He loves us.

pull off in order to obtain a free small drink or small order of fries. This made you an "instant winner." It also had a number that was part of a periodical drawing for a grand prize of a larger amount of money. Our daily service for our Savior is replete with "instant winners" but there will be a "grand prize" for those who remain faithful through the trials when we hear "Well done, good and faithful servant;(Matt. 25:23).

I was challenged by hearing a true account of a missionary who had faithfully served many years in a difficult foreign mission field and was returning to the USA. As he was arriving on a ship he was pleasantly surprised to see a large crowd awaiting at the dock, some holding up large "Welcome Home" banners.

As events progressed he was disheartened to realize that the gala celebration was for the benefit of some well-known celebrity who was also on the ship. As he was greeted by another faithful minister who was to meet him there, the missionary was encouraged by his appropriate statement, "Don't be disheartened. You aren't home yet." There are blessings here and now in our service but if we faithfully finish the course we cannot imagine the blessings that we will see when we finally arrive home. (1 Cor. 2:9; cf. 2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

"...Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

"Who" is singular in the Greek. There apparently was a leader of those who had been attempting to sidetrack the Galatians into legalism. The result of the Galatian believers not obeying the truth was that some were unsuccessfully trying to complete the race by legalistic self-effort rather than by faith.

8. This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you.

This persuasion did not originate with God, Who called them into the truth of the grace Gospel (Gal. 1:6; cf. Gal. 5:13). Its ultimate source was from Satan, the deceiver (cf. Rev. 12:9; 1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Cor. 4:3, 4).

9. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Leaven in the Bible frequently symbolizes evil or evil doctrine along with its penetrating and diffusive power. (cf. Matt. 16:6, 12; Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:8).

This is contextually speaking of adding a little bit of man's works to Jesus' perfect and complete payment for our sins which then corrupts the whole package. The slightest bit of works added to grace spoils it all (Rom. 11:6).

What does leaven do in the baking of bread when compared to a little bit of man's works being added to Christ's finished work?²⁸⁴

1. It puffs up the bread.(Engenders pride; **I** have a part in my imputed righteousness).
2. Sours the bread. (Makes message distasteful to God who will save us by faith alone).
3. It makes it full of holes. (Is a message that is ineffectual and does not save).
4. It raises the dough. (Is the way to make money because the message is popular).

²⁸⁴ This 4 point list is from the teaching of Dr. A. Ray Stanford who finished the race well as discussed in comments on 5:7. I am indebted to this man and his faithfulness as he was the first to present the plan of salvation to me in a clear and accurate manner that I could understand. He was a faithful witness to many thousands and also discipled me and many others to service to our Savior. Indirectly he contributed much to this Galatians study. His website, <http://www.Eph289.com> is still being maintained by some who loved him and whom his ministry had blessed.

In this illustration we see the parallel that just as leaven does all this to bread, adding law-works to grace does much the same to the grace message of salvation. Some form of this "faith-plus-works" message for eternal life is the teaching that is heard from most "Christian" churches and evangelists. Because it is a close counterfeit to the truth it is appealing to many. It therefore confuses many. No matter how great this erroneous teaching may sound nor how many influential people proclaim it, it is still contrary to God's Word and brings His judgment upon those who promote it. This we will see in the next verse.

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

"I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded:" Paul had confidence in them and believed they would yet return and embrace the truth; that is, what he had previously taught them in their presence and in this epistle.

"... But he that troubleth²⁸⁵ you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. The "trouble-maker" here is referring back to verse 7; the one who hindered them that they "should not obey the truth." There is serious judgment awaiting those who pollute the grace gospel that God gave to them through the Apostle Paul. Please see comments on Gal. 1:6-10.

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

" And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?" Perhaps some of the Jews thought that Paul was teaching circumcision as a means of justification because he circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3). He discounts this assumption by the logic that if he was teaching circumcision as a requirement for eternal salvation that he would not continue to be under persecution. He would then be in agreement with the Judaizers. The way to relieve persecution from the enemy is to join them. This option was not to be considered by Paul and should not be considered by us.

"...Then is the offence of the cross ceased." If he preached circumcision instead of Jesus crucified then the offense would cease. The doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ, was an offence and a stumblingblock to the Jews. Paul says in 1 Cor. 1:23, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock...."

For the most part, the Jews were looking for a king; a liberator from the yoke of Rome. They wanted "Rambo," not a suffering servant. Many of them had missed the OT prophecies concerning *two* advents of their Messiah, not just one. He came to earth the first time to pay for our sins (Luke 19:10). He asked to be their King and was rejected. He will return again soon but this time He will not bother asking anyone if He can reign as King.

The plain case then is, that the apostle did not preach circumcision, but only a crucified Christ, as necessary to salvation. He received much persecution and endured many trials for his clear and bold stand for the truth of God's Word (2 Cor. 11:23-30).

What about persecution as it relates to *our* Christian walk? We as believers are in a battle. (2 Tim. 2:3, 4). Eph. 6:10-20²⁸⁶ warns us that this is a *spiritual* battle and that we must be prepared

²⁸⁵ The verbs here referring to the trouble-maker are 3rd person singular. Apparently one person was the leader of the dissension.

²⁸⁶ Please download and read a helpful study on this passage and the important topic of the believer's armor from <http://www.freegraceresources.org/armor.html>

with spiritual armor in order to be victorious. We are in Satan's territory (2 Cor. 4:3, 4) and we will get shot at, especially if we are posing a threat to the enemy. We can see from the Ephesians passage that the Christian warfare is not a life of merrily "tip-toeing through the tulips" but can be likened more to running through a minefield with invisible snipers shooting at us. I thank God that this battle is not fought and won by our human wisdom and physical armament, but "...in the power of his might;" (Eph. 6:10) by heeding the exhortations of Ephesians 6.

The same man who gave us the 4 point leaven gem of verse 9 also encouraged me in this area with a true personal anecdote: He was a B-24 bomber pilot during World War Two and flew many life-threatening bombing missions in defense of our country. He relayed to me that he seldom experienced any problem during the earlier part of these flights, but later on he could tell from the tremendous amount of flak that he encountered that he was getting close to the target. If you are encountering a large amount of flak in your Christian service, perhaps the enemy realizes that you are getting close to the target and are a threat to his satanic dominion.

On the other hand, many believers are sitting on the sidelines and some even choose to consort with the enemy. This causes damage to the cause of Christ and persecution for the faithful believers. Friendly fire is not friendly.

II Tim. 3:12. tells us, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

John 15:18, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you."

12. I would they were even cut off²⁸⁷ which trouble you.

Here Paul appears to be engaging in some "sanctimonious sarcasm." It is justified because of the seriousness of the warning about the Judaizers and the result of their doctrine.

Though some commentators see this "cutting off" as meaning either to physically die or to be cut off from fellowship of the church, it appears that the preponderance of evidence indicates that he is saying that he wished for those endorsing circumcision for justification to castrate themselves!²⁸⁸ In other words, just keep on cutting. Perhaps their implied physical impotence also mirrored Paul's desire that the Judaizers not be able to reproduce themselves spiritually either. This was a dramatic way to get the point across about the seriousness of wrong doctrine. Perverting the Gospel is not a trivial matter with God (Gal. 1:6-10).

Text

5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

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

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

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

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

²⁸⁷ "Cut off," (ἀποκόπτω - ap-ok-op'-to) From 2 Greek words that literally mean "chop off" or amputate.

²⁸⁸ As did the pagan priests of the cult of Cybele in Asia Minor.

- 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.
- 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
- 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
- 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
- 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
- 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
- 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
- 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
- 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Verses 1-12 have shown us the need to "stand fast in the liberty" that we have through faith in Christ. Verses 13-26 will now demonstrate the need to "stand firm in liberty against license" and offers the means by which this can be accomplished.

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

This verse begins the second and last paragraph in this chapter. It also seems to me to be the other side of the balance for verse one; the command to, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...." In verse one Paul is warning the Galatian believers that they should not lapse from their liberty back into the bondage of the law. In this verse he warns them not to allow this liberty to deteriorate into license to sin.

Liberty, like so many neutral or even good things, can be abused or misused. Peter exhorts believers, "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God." (1 Pet. 2:16). If we allow this freedom that we have to be misused, it can lead us into one of two wrong directions; either into legalism or into sin.²⁸⁹ We can choose to walk selflessly in love or to walk selfishly in meeting our own desires (cf. Joshua 24:15). As believers we are not free to sin, but by the power of the Holy Spirit we have become free *not* to sin as we choose to yield to Him! The liberty of grace is true of every believer but that does not mean that every believer lives in this liberty.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty;" The Galatian believers had been freed from the bondage of sin but now they were not only in danger of unnecessarily being brought under bondage to the law of Moses, but if not that, of now misusing this liberty for sinful purposes. "...Only *use* not liberty for an occasion²⁹⁰ to the flesh, but by love serve one another;"²⁹¹ The

²⁸⁹ Another example is found in Jude 1:3, 4 where we are exhorted that we, "...should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." We are warned of "...ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the same "lasciviousness" as mentioned in the list of "the works of the flesh" in 5:19.

²⁹⁰ "Occasion" (ἄφορμή - af-or-may) "opportunity," Lit. "a starting point."

²⁹¹ "One another." We encourage diligent Bible students to look up all the "one anothers" in the NT. Most of the 43 examples are exhortations for us and many are directly related to loving one another. There are also some other important applications to be found in this study.

negative and the positive: They were *not* to misuse this liberty to fulfill their fleshly desires, but they *were* to use it to serve one another by love. "Flesh"²⁹² here is referring to man's sinful nature with which he was born. Proper application of this liberty does not lead to sin but to loving service. "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." (Rom 6:15). If you have liberty without love, it is license and you serve yourself. If you have liberty *with* love; you love God and others. This equals service to God and others.

"By love serve one another." "Serve" here is from the same word as in Gal. 4:8, where they did service to idols, from the Greek word meaning "bondslave" (δοῦλος - doo'-los). This presents a paradox. They had been in bondage to sin and idols, set free, then some voluntarily went into bondage of the law (Gal. 2:4; 4:3; 4:9). Now Paul is exhorting them to forsake that kind of bondage and to adopt a *beneficial* kind of bondage, to by love, serve others. Paul often introduced himself as a servant or bondslave of Christ. (cf. Rom. 1:1, et al). "Service," "bondage," and "servant" are all from the same root word.

We will see later in this chapter that this love is not something that we can manufacture from our flesh (Rom. 7:18). It is the fruit of the *Spirit* (Gal. 5:22). This is something that God produces in our life as we are yielded to Him.

The question was posited earlier about how we are to handle the situation if someone is offended due to the exercising of our liberty. Let us now examine some Biblical examples of liberty and love in action in order to glean some Biblical principles which we can apply in our lives.

In chapters 7 through 14 of 1 Corinthians Paul answers various questions that the church there had asked of him in a previous letter. These questions pertained to marriage and divorce, Christian liberty, church order, spiritual gifts, and more. In chapters 8 and 9²⁹³ he discusses the area of Christian liberty.

Chapter 8 approaches a teaching about liberty that *directly* affects few today but relays principles that are applicable to all of us who wish to honor our Lord, live a victorious life, and enjoy the fruit of the spirit mentioned later in chapter five. It concerns eating meat that has been offered to idols and how this affects both those who participate in this action and the believers who could be adversely influenced by this action.

We again recommend an excellent free Bible study computer program to any who have access to a computer. Please see footnote 167 for more information. This tool makes many types of Biblical research not only possible, but efficient, easy, and even fun.

²⁹² "Flesh" (σάρξ - sarx) is found 18 times in Galatians. It can refer to "mankind," "humanity" or the "body;" "meat as opposed to bones of man or animal;" or "our carnal human nature," "the old man," "our bent to sin." This is determined by the context. Most of the time in Galatians it refers to the latter as it does here. Interestingly enough, Paul uses the word 118 times (add 5 if you count Hebrews), and it is found only 31 times in the rest of the NT. (It is translated "carnal" in Rom 8:6, 7).

This old nature is not renovated upon believing in Jesus. There is a *new* birth of God from above. (John 3:3-7, 1 Pet. 1:23). This new birth of God is completely righteous and cannot sin (1 John 3:9). There will be conflict between these two natures until we leave this sinful body. (Gal. 5:17). "Turning over a new leaf" will not save anyone. Both sides of the leaf are rotten. We will see more on this subject in Gal. 5:16 and following.

²⁹³ We suggest that the serious student read the whole context of the passages mentioned that we summarize on this topic.

In summary, the first few verses advise us that we have knowledge that an idol is nothing, there is only one true God, and that the act of eating or not eating meat offered to idols neither helps us nor hurts us. "Love," not knowledge, is that which edifies or builds up. (vs. 1-8).

The "caution" warning begins in verse 9, "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak." This is due to the fact that, "Howbeit *there* is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled." (v. 7). In this case, our actions could injure a weaker brother (vs. 8-12). His conclusion to handling this dilemma is, "Wherefore, if meat²⁹⁴ make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." (v. 13).

This kind of sounds like a "catch-all" verse for a believer permanently giving up eating meat for the rest of his life. This verse, as is so with any other, needs to be interpreted in agreement with its context.

First of all, let us define some important terms which are used here and in other related passages. We will see these words again in our study on liberty.

"Stumblingblock" in verse 9. (πρόσκομμα - pros'-kom-mah) is also translated "stumblingstone," "stumbling," and "offence," meaning "that which trips up," an occasion for sin or apostasy."

"Offend" in verse 13. (σκανδαλίζω - skan-dal-id'-zo). The noun form is σκάνδαλον - (skan'-dal-on), meaning to entrap, trip up. or entice to sin or apostasy.

The issue in this passage is whether our actions will be a factor in causing someone to sin. If we love, then we will not unnecessarily injure another person. We see from the definition of these words, which are key factors in determining our responsibilities, that our liberty should not necessarily be curtailed just because someone does not like either what we do nor the message that we proclaim. Paul just got through saying in verse 11 that he was being persecuted for a message that some did not like. If Jesus or the apostles had restricted their message or their ministry to others because they might be offended in *that* sense, then they rarely would have been obedient to God's Word. Whenever we teach God's Word in Satan's domain, there will be people who don't like it. Obedience to God brings persecution (2 Tim. 3:12).

Is Paul telling us in verse 13 that, if someone is offended when he eats meat, that he would never eat meat again? How does he handle his liberty here and in anticipated future encounters? Let us look now at the circumstances surrounding the situation.

We are not talking about someone who simply has a critical or legalistic spirit not liking some action of the strong believer. The meaning of the key deciding words have to do with entrapping or enticing someone into sin; i.e. injuring a brother in Christ.

²⁹⁴ "Meat" here and in 8:8 is βρωμα (bro'-mah), i.e. meat or solid food in contrast to drink (cf. 1 Cor. 3:2). "Flesh," used later in this verse is not the usual word translated as "flesh (σάρξ - sarx)," but is κρέας (kreh'-as), meaning "flesh" from a sacrificed animal or as in a butchers meat." It is used only here and in Rom. 14:21.

Another important factor in determining how this applies to us is that the context is speaking about two believers of different persuasions concerning their liberty. One believer realizes that he has the freedom to eat meat offered to idols. The other believer does not believe that he has the freedom to partake of this meat. His conviction is not due to simply not eating meat in general as in vegetarianism²⁹⁵ for health reasons or for his aversion to contributing to animals being killed. His religious beliefs are that he is displeasing to God if he does eat.

The believer who realizes his liberty, in this case, is not *just* eating meat offered to idols, but is actually going *into the idol's temple to eat meat offered to idols* (v. 10).

I suggest that the implication here is that if Paul's actions of going into an idol's temple and eating meat that had been offered to idols caused someone at that time and in that locale to stumble, or be enticed to sin, then he would not *in those same circumstances* repeat those same actions. I infer that since this action is not inherently sin, that he may have freedom to handle a similar situation in a different manner while in a different location or with different observers.

Am I taking improper liberties with the text? If Paul was saying that this one situation dictates that he should lovingly relinquish his liberty the same way in every situation which he would encounter in the future, then it seems to be in conflict with his teaching and actions presented elsewhere. Let us look further in the text:

In the first part of 1 Cor. 9, Paul gives examples of his freedom to do certain things, including being paid for his Bible teaching, but also how he voluntarily limits his freedom under certain circumstances for the furtherance of the Gospel. His "modus operandi" in these situations is as follows:

1 Cor. 9:19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

In various audiences and different circumstances Paul did certain things and restrained from doing certain things for the ministry's sake. He displayed loving discernment and sacrifice. It should be apparent that, in his effort to minister to different types of people, that he could not go both ways at the same time nor do the same thing permanently in all situations (e.g. he could not in every circumstance be as a Jew²⁹⁶ and in every situation be as a Gentile, especially at the same time. cf. v. 20). He did not compromise his stand for Christian liberty but he exercised it

²⁹⁵ It has been humorously said by someone who was opposed to being a vegetarian, "If God wanted me to be a vegetarian, then why did he make animals out of meat? In addition, I saw a sign advertising a restaurant which also served some local wild animal meat. It showed a picture of a full plate of food and the caption, "There is a place for every animal; right next to the mashed potatoes."

²⁹⁶ An example of this concept may be how handled circumcision with Timothy and with Titus. He circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:1-3) but did not allow the circumcision of Titus (Gal. 2:3). In different circumstances at different locations he handled his liberty in different manners, but in both circumstances in love for the ministry's sake.

judiciously in love where it was appropriate. Without endorsing or participating in sin, he adapted his actions and methods to facilitate his ministry to various types of people.²⁹⁷ It is important to note, as with the theme of this epistle, that he did *not* change the content of his message in order to please others (Gal. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:4).

Paul adds more on the same subject in the following chapter, chapter 10: The first part of the chapter speaks about Israel's failures in their wilderness wanderings, including idolatry. He then approaches how we are to apply this information:

1 Cor. 10:23. All things are lawful for me,²⁹⁸ but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. 24. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*.²⁹⁹ 25. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles [meat market], *that* eat, asking no question for conscience sake:... 27. If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. 28. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: 29. Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conscience?... 31. Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32. Give none offence,³⁰⁰ neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: 33. Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

In summary, Paul seems to be telling us that all things are permissible to him (I believe that he is limiting "all" to the context, the areas of liberty discussed; certainly not to sin), but some things are not expedient (beneficial, profitable) nor do they edify (build up), (v. 23). If you are presented food that might have been offered to idols, go ahead and eat it unless someone mentions that fact and might be injured by your actions (vs. 25-29). Whatever we eat or drink, do

²⁹⁷ One practical example of this which we have encountered is the time that we ministered in a church which we saw as being somewhat legalistic. It was taught there that it was wrong for a woman to wear slacks. This was not just a voluntary personal conviction for some individuals, but supposedly a Biblical mandate for all women. My wife and I do not see this as a Biblical requirement but out of love and good judgment my wife wore dresses to the church-related functions, but not necessarily at other times and places. As a result of this and other actions we were able to minister to some there.

My wife always dresses modestly per Biblical admonition even if wearing slacks. It was noteworthy that, in spite of these man-made rules for spirituality, while attending this church I encountered more than a few instances of women wearing what I would consider as not very modest dresses.

If any who are reading this are of the same persuasion that this church was, I suggest that it might be right for you but, per the verses that we are studying, that you should not impose a man-made rule or personal conviction upon another believer.

²⁹⁸ "Lawful." (ἐξέσται - ex'-es-tee) Though this word is usually translated "lawful," it is not a form of the word "law" (νόμος - nom'-os). Another good translation is "permissible."

²⁹⁹ "Wealth," In the KJV, italicized words are added for the purpose of clarity and sometimes not actually in the original but are implied. There is no word resembling "wealth" in the original text. The verse probably implies that we should not seek primarily our own "welfare" but that of others. Other Bible versions translate it similar to that.

³⁰⁰ "Non offense" The negative form of προσκόπτω (pros-kop'-to) meaning to "stumble" or "trip up."

all to the glory of God (v. 31). Seek to not let our actions, even those in which we have liberty, trip up another person. Our goal is that others will be saved³⁰¹ (vs. 32, 33).

It seems apparent that Paul is urging us to judge each situation with loving discernment, but not necessarily for us to be making all of our own future liberty restrictions based upon one particular situation. We are always to stand for our liberty (Gal. 5:1), but not to exercise that liberty indiscriminately. (Gal. 5:13).

Another passage in which this subject is discussed is Romans, chapter 14. I used to think that this chapter was a passage concerning "borderline" actions of the believer; the "gray areas"³⁰² in which only carnal believers tended to dabble. My further study has convinced me that it is an important treatise on areas of liberty in our Christian life; how to handle them and how not to mishandle them.

Each of us as believers are at different levels of maturity in various areas of our lives. We all come from different backgrounds and have experienced unique trials which have helped to mold and influence us. Each one of us is weaker or stronger in some area than the next believer. In spite of our differences we need to learn to live harmoniously with each other.³⁰³ This passage emphasizes the necessity of not improperly judging each other. The principles presented in this chapter could go a long way toward achieving that goal of harmony if they were implemented.³⁰⁴

I urge all to further study the chapter but we will try to hit some highlights which pertain to this issue. Let us see some similar concepts evident in the chapter. The following is the Bible text with some added brief comments.

³⁰¹ "Save" or "salvation" in the NT frequently is not speaking of "eternal life" as many assume, but of some sort of temporal salvation such as saving from death (e.g. Acts 27:20, 31,43) or saving from an unfruitful Christian life (e.g. 1 Tim. 4:16 - i.e. sanctification). I would not be surprised if in this context that it is speaking of both eternal life and how a Christian should live.

In the OT, "Save" or "salvation" is almost always speaking of some sort of physical salvation such as from destruction by enemies, famine, and the like.

³⁰² How do we respond to so-called "grey areas" of our Christian liberty? First of all, if God's Word says it is sin, it is sin. This is true no matter what our culture or the majority of people think. There are also areas of our lives which some would judge as sin but the Bible does not state them necessarily as such.

Several principles that are helpful in making decisions in these areas (not a complete list):

1. Be discerning, (1 Thess. 5:21, 22; 1 Cor. 10:23; 6:12).
2. Not cause the weaker brother to stumble. (1 Cor. 8:9; Rom. 14:21).
3. Don't judge others for exercising their liberties. (Rom. 14:10). This does not mean that we should not admonish a brother who is in sin. (2 Thess. 3:15; et al).
4. Glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31).

There should be no debate about whether or not a believer has liberty in Christ. The real concern should be about how we exercise this freedom.

³⁰³ Some thoughts about unity: **Union** is not unity. You can tie two cats' tails together and throw them over a clothesline. You have union, but certainly not unity. **Uniformity** is not unity. Some churches try to fit everyone into one mold (usually the pastor's). This is not God's plan. He made each of us differently in order to serve Him in various ways (1 Cor. 12). Unity is diversity in harmony. This requires the love that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (v. 22).

³⁰⁴ "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." (Rom 12:18). Sometimes this goal of harmony is not possible for only one of two parties to achieve. We each are individually accountable to be faithful (1 Cor. 4:2). The results are up to God.

Rom. 14:1. Him that is weak in the faith³⁰⁵ receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

2. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

In this context, the weak brother is the one who believes that he cannot eat meat (possibly to avoid the possibility that it had been offered to idols) but permits himself to only eat vegetables. The strong believer is the one who realizes that he has liberty to eat both (cf. Rom. 15:1).

The NASB translates the last phrase of verse one as, "...but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions." He is not saying that these issues should not be discussed at times but that the discussion should not be for passing judgment on their personal convictions.

3. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

What should be the response of the weak brother (14:2) and the strong brother (cf. 15:1) toward each other? In this verse we are told that the one who realizes that he has this liberty should not despise (hold at low esteem or see as contemptible) the one who chooses not to eat meat. The weaker brother is not to judge (or criticize) the one who realizes his liberty in this area. We would see more healthy spiritual growth in believers and the local church would be more effective for the cause of Christ if both of these principles were more frequently applied. God receives (welcomes) those of both persuasions, just as we are told to do in verse one. Please note also that the stronger brother is not told to change his doctrine due to the scruples of the weaker brother. He is told to stand for his own Christian liberty but also to maintain loving attitudes and actions toward the brother.

A reason given here for not improperly judging the brother is because "God hath received him." Another reason is given in verse 10; we will all "stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

A servant needs to be subservient to his own master. Neither you nor I are another believer's master. When viewed in the light of harsh reality, the other believer has the same Master as do we. We have no right to judge him in these liberty issues. In contrast, we will soon be told in verse 13 what we *are* to judge. "Standeth," "be holden up," and "stand" in this verse are all from the same root Greek word.

5. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Paul now mentions a second area of differing opinions; the significance of special days. Some of this turmoil, as with the eating of certain foods, probably was related to the Jewish customs and commands about celebrating various special days. It is also conceivable that a Gentile who had been converted out of paganism could harbor a revulsion to anything remotely connected to

³⁰⁵ "Weak in the faith." This does not mean that this believer is not believing strongly enough or has an "inferior" faith. Frequently in the NT when the definite article "the" is describing faith, it is speaking of the body of doctrine (e.g. 1 Tim. 4:1; Jude 1:3) and not the quality of one's faith. In other words, this person needs to grow more in knowledge of the truth. Don't get a big head over this. We all need to grow in our Biblical knowledge (1 Cor. 8:2). In this context being "weak" is not necessarily synonymous with being carnal and being "strong" is not necessarily synonymous with being spiritual. We will see more about the spiritual believer in Gal. 6:1.

his previous pagan practices whether it be food or celebrating special days. Please see footnote 241 and 242 for some thoughts concerning celebrating "Christian" holidays.

6. He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.
7. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.
8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.
9. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

Paul admonished the believers in Colossae: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:" (Col. 2:16). He did not advise either the forsaking or the following of such customs, but rather reminded his readers of their relative unimportance. Those were "a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Col. 2:17). Both parties were going by their own conscience and trying to honor the Lord. Both parties belong to the Lord. So therefore, verse 10:

10. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

The question about us judging our brother is related to these areas of liberty, not concerning obvious sin. Out of love for God and our brother we have some accountability to admonish those in sin (e.g. Matt. 18:15-17). The Judgment Seat³⁰⁶ of Christ is not about sin. It is a judgment of our works for reward or loss of reward (2 Cor. 5:10, 11; 1 Cor. 3: 11-17). Our sin has already been judged at the cross. Sin in our life will reap unpleasant results (Gal. 6:7; Heb. 12:6; et al), but the complete payment for sin has already been made by Jesus (Heb. 10:10-14).

11. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.
12. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

These two verses elaborate on the judgment of the works of every believer at the judgment seat of Christ mentioned in verse 10. It might also carry further ramifications for the unsaved also as in Phil. 2:10 and Rev. 20:12-15.

13. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.
14. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

We are not to be judging each other in our areas of liberty anymore but we *are* to judge not misusing our liberty to cause another brother to stumble into sin. "Stumblingblock" (pros'-kom-mah) and "occasion to fall," (skan'-dal-on) both have to do with tripping up or ensnaring a brother into sin.

³⁰⁶ "Judgment seat," βῆμα (bay'-ma). Literally "a step." By implication "a rostrum, tribunal, or official seat of a judge (cf. John 19:13; Acts 12:21). See <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1995i/Radmacher.html>

15. But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

16. Let not then your good be evil spoken of:³⁰⁷

When I first read verse 16, I wondered, "How can I control what others think about my actions?" The answer to that question is, "I can't." There have been times in my life when I lovingly sacrificed for someone else and they completely misinterpreted my motives. I can sometimes influence others but my responsibility is for me to be right before God, not to control others. Those whose goal is to control others will lead a very frustrating life due to the fact that so many others maintain the very same goal. This produces constant and unnecessary conflict.

What is the verse saying? Again, we need to consider the context. See the previous verse. If I am improperly exercising my liberty by eating meat (or by flaunting other liberties) and causing injury to a brother in Christ, then I am not walking in love and am causing "my good to be evil spoken of." Paul is telling us not to do that.

17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18. For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

19. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Our goal in using our liberty is to edify others. We need always to "stand fast in our liberty" (5:1) but that does not mean that we always need to exercise that liberty. In some instances we sin by harming the weaker brother.

20. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21. *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

It is interesting to note in this passage concerning Christian liberty, that eating meat and drinking wine³⁰⁸ are placed on the same level in regard to the potential for other believers to stumble. The issue here is not in defining an inherently "taboo" activity, but guarding against misusing our liberty and thereby injuring a weaker brother.

22. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

23. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

In summary of Romans 14, a couple of paragraphs from MacArthur's commentary on Romans are helpful:

³⁰⁷ "...Be evil spoken of," βλασφημέω (blas-fay-meh'-o). Be blasphemed or reviled.

³⁰⁸ For any who wish to see more of what the Bible says about a believer drinking wine, please see the Bible study article entitled, "Choosing a Pastor" at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/pastorindex.html>. See specifically comments and footnotes on 1 Tim. 3:3, "The bishop is to be 'not given to wine.'" Should it be a surprise to see that wine-drinking is included in areas of liberty that should be regulated by love?

"In matters that are not specifically commanded or forbidden in Scripture, it is always wrong to go against conscience, because our conscience represents what we actually believe to be right. To go against our conscience, therefore, is to do that which we believe is wrong. And although an act or practice in itself may not be sinful, it is treated as sinful for those who are convinced in their own minds that it is wrong, and produces guilt.

It is also sinful, however, to try to impose our personal convictions on others, because, in doing so, we are tempting them to go against their own consciences. Paul is therefore giving a twofold command: Do not compromise your own conscience in order to conform to the conscience of another believer and do not attempt to lead another believer to compromise his conscience to conform to yours."

There are likely some who are uncomfortable with the general direction that we are going with the believer's liberty, i.e. that in some circumstances we should forsake our liberty out of love for the brother, but specifically, that we are free to openly practice this same liberty in other circumstances. These same objectors might offer 1 Thess. 5:22 to support their belief: "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

On the surface this verse seems kind of "cut and dried" to be an admonition that if someone might think of our action as possibly looking to be wrong (i.e. to have the appearance of evil), that we simply should refrain from performing that action.

In favor of this interpretation is the fact that in many cases, that advice is prudent. Many examples could be given but one representative example which comes to mind is when a male pastor is counseling a female in his office without any other witnesses present in the same room, just leave the door open to avoid any basis for someone to create unnecessary suspicion of impropriety.

As wise as it might be to implement this advice in many situations, I do not believe that the verse is saying that. If this interpretation is to be taken as the one intended by the author, then we run into the same "roadblock" as was mentioned in our comments on not creating a stumblingblock to the weaker believer. Many times Jesus and the apostles did not adhere to the same admonition. In their obedient service to God they frequently performed actions which appeared to others to be wrong.

The correct definition of significant words is crucial. The word "appearance" is εἶδος (i'-dos) and means "form," "fashion, or "shape." In the KJV it is translated, "shape," "fashion," "sight," and "appearance." Based upon this definition it appears that the verse is warning us not necessarily to abstain from whatever might *appear* to be evil, but to abstain from every *form* or type of *actual* evil.

This interpretation also fits the context. The latter part of the chapter is replete with what I call "one-liners;" terse and varied exhortations for us as believers. Verse 21, just before the verse in question, exhorts us to, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." "Prove" here is δοκιμάζω (dok-im-ad'-zo) and means to approve, discern, or allow by testing or examination.

We are told in verse 21 to discern all things and to hold fast to that which is good. After discerning that which is good, in verse 22 we are then, in contrast, told to abstain from every form of evil. Obedience to this command is dependent upon us discriminating between good and evil as is requested in verse 21. This makes more sense to me. If you see it differently, I am open to change if shown that I am wrong.

I am aware that most of the cults and much of "Christendom" differs with what has been presented in this study on salvation by grace through faith and not of works (Eph. 2:8, 9).³⁰⁹ Many of those who claim the Bible to be their authority also differ with our stand on the liberty issue for believers due to their assumption that it leads believers to loose living (cp. Titus 2:11-13). Perhaps even some readers of this study disagree with my interpretations which have been presented. Well, guess what? You have that liberty! Let's do it in love so that believers can be edified and our Savior glorified.

We are all accountable to be diligent in our own study of the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15). God's Word is the authority. We can all learn from each other if we are teachable. Show me in the Bible where I am wrong and I will change. I take God's Word seriously and I also take the responsibility of teaching it seriously (James 3:1).

In our comments on Gal. 5:1, we offered a practical question for consideration:

"But what about areas in my life in which the Bible grants me liberty, but in which some believer is being caused to stumble by my actions. Do I continue in this action around that person because I have liberty? Most would argue; "Absolutely not." If not, do I then go to the other extreme to change my doctrine and believe that this area of my liberty is inherent sin for me?"

If our interpretation of the preceding passages is correct, then we hope that this question has answered itself. In summary: Every believer of this age has liberty in Christ. Whatever God says is sin, is sin. This liberty is not freedom to sin but is to be used for the glory of God in loving service to Him and others. If the exercising of that liberty is harming another believer or hindering someone from believing and being eternally saved, then we are to forego the exercising of that liberty in that situation. We should continue to stand for the liberty that we have in Christ but not to flaunt it in front of the weaker brother nor despise the weaker brother for his adherence to his conscience. The criterion for our actions is not the Mosaic law, but should be love.

We have spent some time on the "liberty" aspect of verse 13 because it embodies important and often neglected and misunderstood doctrine that is essential to the balanced Christian life.

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

Paul quotes here from Lev. 19:18 (see also Rom. 13:8, 10). This supplements the command of verse 13 that we are to "by love serve one another." If someone wishes to "fulfill" the law, then this verse is the answer.³¹⁰ Some have embraced an unhealthy imbalance from this principle. We have seen that love is the proper motive for our service to others but some believe that their version of love trumps sound doctrine. There is something seriously wrong when an ecumenical spirit prevails to the degree that people believe that it is loving, or even permissible, to compromise God's basic truth and just "get along with others" who are teaching heresy.

³⁰⁹ For whatever it is worth, our experience with people not accepting basic and fundamental Bible truths such as salvation by grace through faith, has frequently not been a problem of Bible interpretation, but that of willful unbelief and a lack of basic honesty.

³¹⁰ In contrast to the Bible, we are told that the Quran is the holy book for Islam and that Islam is a "peaceful" religion. The Quran has no commands in its pages to love anything. In it I have seen many commands to mutilate or kill the infidel, i.e. the non-Muslim; the Christians and Jews. I am told that there are over one hundred such examples. The Biblical posture is 180 degrees from the Quran concerning loving others. Yahweh (יהוה) gave His Son to die for us. Allah requires his followers' sons to die for him.

If we place any value on the emphasis of the first four chapters of Galatians we should realize that fundamental Bible doctrine is important. It is not loving to compromise the truth of the Gospel message and tacitly endorse people going to hell for the sake of religious "unity." How can we claim to be loving and promote a "salvation" message of faith-plus-works that will not save? Christian love entails much more than all of us holding hands and singing Kum-Ba-Yah.

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

"But" in contrast to those who love their neighbor as themselves. "...If ye bite and devour one another." This phrase is first class conditional in the Greek, meaning that the statement is assumed to be true from the standpoint of the speaker. Even if Paul did not have first-hand knowledge of the situation, it is reasonable to assume that this type of action existed in the churches there. This was far from the biblical ideal of believers dwelling together in loving unity and it hindered their testimony and effectiveness.

It is almost axiomatic that where legalism prevails, there also prevails a judgmental and critical spirit along with its corresponding lack of love. "...Take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." The result of this type of action is destructive. The Christian army seems to be the only one who shoots its own troops.

Some have called this Christian cannibalism. What an indictment. This is not the answer. What then shall we do? See the following verses for God's remedy. It is to be found by walking in alignment with the Holy Spirit.

16. This I say then, Walk³¹¹ in the Spirit,³¹² and ye shall not fulfil the lust³¹³ of the flesh.

We have seen in the first 15 verses of chapter 5, the contrast between liberty and bondage. We now embark on the balance of the chapter which illustrates the contrast between the Spirit and the flesh. The principles presented here are essential to victorious Christian living. As per Paul's pattern in his epistles, he first spends some preliminary time presenting sound doctrine, he then explains how to apply it in our lives. We cannot have right living without right doctrine.

"Walk" here is present active imperative, meaning that it is a *command* for us. In this context, the term, "Walk in the Spirit" here appears to be functionally equivalent to being "led of the Spirit" in verse 16 and the command to "walk in the Spirit" in verse 25. The Greek word for "walk" is different in verse 25 than in verse 16.

To "walk in the Spirit" also seems to be synonymous with being "filled with the Spirit," as in Eph. 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled³¹⁴ with the Spirit;"

Along the same line, Chafer aptly comments,

³¹¹ "Walk" περιπατέω (per-ee-pat-eh'-o). Literally "to walk about." In some cases, as is here, how one lives or deports himself. (e.g. Rom. 6:4; 8:1; 8:4: 13:13; 14:15; et al).

³¹² "Spirit" πνεῦμα (pnyoo'-mah) used 18 times in Galatians, 8 of which in chapter 5. It can refer to "wind" or "breath," but usually to the spirit of man or to the Holy Spirit.

³¹³ "Lust," noun in verse 16 (ἐπιθυμία - ep-ee-thoo-mee'-ah) and verb in verse 17 (ἐπιθυμέω - ep-ee-thoo-meh'-o) in verse 17. Means "lust," "covet," but is usually translated "desire." The desire could be for good or for evil depending upon the context. (e.g. Luke 22:15 contra. Matt. 5:28).

³¹⁴ "Fill" πληρόω (play-ro'-o) meaning to imbue or influence. There are other words translated "fill" in the KJV that have a slightly different meaning such as being filled with food or filling a basket, etc..

"By various terms the Bible teaches that there are two classes of Christians: those who "abide in Christ," and those who "abide not"; those who are "walking in the light," and those who "walk in darkness"; those who "walk by the Spirit," and those who "walk as men"; those who "walk in newness of life," and those who "walk after the flesh"; those who have the Spirit "in" and "upon" them, and those who have the Spirit "in" them, but not "upon" them; those who are "spiritual" and those who are "carnal"; those who are "filled with the Spirit," and those who are not."³¹⁵

Wilkin also appropriately observes in his commentary on Galatians: "To walk in the Spirit means to "live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (2:20). It is the opposite of living "under the law."

It seems safe to assume that "walk" in the Spirit is just one way of saying to be yielded to, responsive to, or obedient to God's Holy Spirit. It is important to remember that He will never lead you contrary to His Word.

"What is the result of walking in the Spirit? Ye shall not³¹⁶ fulfil the lust of the flesh." The desires of the flesh are the natural results of the nature with which we were born (See Gal. 5:19-21). The believer has the provision for victory but this victory is not necessarily guaranteed.

Some Bible teachers teach that the believer is not capable of "really bad" sins and if a person who claims to be a believer does not maintain some uncertain pattern of faithfulness, that this would indicate that he was never saved in the first place (i.e. a false professor) or that he had lost his eternal salvation; an event which is a Biblical impossibility (1 John 5:13; John 10:28). Does not this passage imply that the works of the flesh could be manifested in the believer if he does not "Walk in the Spirit?" What about the Corinthian believers spoken to in 1 Corinthians? They were involved in more sin and carnality than much of the heathen world. (e.g. 1 Cor. 5:2b).

Paul never expressed any doubt that the Corinthian believers were eternally saved.³¹⁷ He warned them that their carnality would result in them suffering great loss at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:11-17) and experiencing God's loving chastening for His children (1 Cor. 11:30-32).

Being filled with the Spirit is not to be confused with being baptized in/by/with the Spirit.³¹⁸ We are nowhere told in the Bible to be baptized in/by/with the Spirit.³¹⁹ The reason for this is

³¹⁵ Excerpt from "He That Is Spiritual," by Lewis Sperry Chafer, "Chapter 3, The filling of the Spirit or True Spirituality." This book is an extremely helpful and well balanced Bible study on the subject. We recommend any believer who wishes to honor God to read and apply its principles. It can be obtained from Bible book stores or downloaded and/or read from several websites including <http://www.freegraceresources.org/hethatisspiritual.doc>.

³¹⁶ The word "not" (οὐ μή - ou may) here is from two words in the original. It is a double negative intended for emphasis. This is the same grammatical construction that we see in John 10:28, where we are told that those who believe in Jesus have eternal life and will never (οὐ μή) perish.

³¹⁷ In contrast, Paul repeatedly affirmed that the recipients of his epistle were saved: 1 Cor. 1:2; 8; 3:1, 16; 4:10, 15; 6:11, 19, 20; 12:13:15:51-57: et al.

³¹⁸ Some may disagree with this statement due to the fact that shortly before His ascension Jesus told the apostles that they would soon be "baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 1:5), and shortly after at Pentecost we are told that they were all "filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:4). It appears from the context this was not two titles for the same event but that *both* separate events occurred at Pentecost. Some of these same disciples were later repeatedly "filled" with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 4:8; 4:31), but they were never re-baptized with the Holy Ghost.

that all believers of this dispensation are *already* baptized by the spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). Spirit baptism occurs only once in a believer's life; when he believes in Jesus. Filling of the Spirit occurs or does not occur many times as the believer chooses to obey the Holy Spirit.

Three verses which have to do with our responsibilities concerning the Holy Spirit:

Eph. 4:30, And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye were sealed until the day of redemption.

Eph. 5:18, And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

1 Thess. 5:19. Quench not the Spirit.

These are all forms of obedience or faithfulness for the believer. Our hope of victory lies not in the law, nor our good resolutions and intentions, but in complete submission and yielding to the Spirit's word of grace.

Please note that verse 16 says, "...walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust." It does *not* say, "Don't fulfill the lusts of the flesh and you will be spiritual." This is a case of our choice to be yielded to Him and His power working through us. This parallels the command in the Eph. 6:10-20 passage about putting on our spiritual armor where the command is given; you "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." The focus is not primarily to stay away from the desires of the flesh, which is wise to do, but to stay close to walking in the Spirit. Therein is the power to overcome the desires of the flesh.

Don't be discouraged if you honestly realize that you as a believer still sin. At least, you are being honest, *and* you are in good company. The Apostle John, who also had a flesh nature just as we have, had been saved about 60 years when he penned the following verse:

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:7).

If this is so, and it is, what should be the proper response to this predicament? The answer is found in the next verse:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8).

In spite of the fact that some Bible teachers falsely claim that we must confess our sins to God in order to receive eternal life, this verse is speaking about those who are already saved and the context is speaking about *fellowship* with God, not receiving eternal life. Please read the context.

When a believer sins he cannot lose his salvation but he loses joy, peace, opportunities for rewards, etc. and he is out of fellowship with God. We are told to "confess our sins" to God.

³¹⁹ There are only 6 verses that use this terminology. They are all in the indicative mood, not in the imperative mood. In other words, they all state something that has happened or will happen, but are not commands to do something:

Matt. 3:11. "...he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

Mark 1:8. "I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost."

Luke 3:16. "...he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

John 1:33. "...upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

Acts 1:5. "...but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence"

Acts 11:16. "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

Confess does not mean to beg and plead. The word "confess" here (ὁμολογέω - hom-ol-og-eh'-o) simply and literally means to "speak the same" or in other words, call sin as God does; sin.

When we sin, we should judge the sin (1 Cor. 11:31, 32) and confess the sin in order to get back in fellowship with God. Then what? If we then choose to not obey God further, we would immediately be out of fellowship with Him again. We should judge the sin, confess it, then get back into the spiritual battle along with all of our armament (Eph. 6:10-20). Please see more on the subject of confession of sin and the believer's chastisement in the helpful study entitled, "A Godly View of Sin" found at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/sinindex.html>, especially pages 7ff.

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

There is a constant battle going on within us here between the Spirit and the flesh. When we have a decision to make, there are always two opposing votes. Paul did not teach that the old man was eradicated at the time of salvation but that the new man could have victory over the old in this life. Paul said that he had "no confidence in the flesh," (Phil. 3:3). When an unsaved person believes in Jesus, his old nature is not annihilated³²⁰ nor even renovated. He is born again (1 Pet. 1:23) and he now also has a new nature. This is not a rebirth of the old but a *new* birth from above (John 3:3).³²¹

Moral determination on the part of the believer will not control the flesh nor produce the fruit of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22). The believer's efforts to please God in his own strength are destined to fail. Paul amplifies this principle in Romans 7:15-25. Part of this portion of Scripture is as follows:

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not." (Rom. 7:18).

In view of this ongoing conflict between the two natures within us, does it not make sense that if we want one of them to prevail, that we should feed and exercise that one and starve the other? We can choose to spend our time in activities that will feed and strengthen our new nature and starve the old, or we can choose to feed and exercise our old nature and quench the Spirit. This is in direct disobedience to the command of I Thess. 5:19: "Quench not the Spirit" and other similar exhortations.

We see this general principle in practice in the secular arena. In the boxing profession boxers are matched in weight class divisions in order to have a somewhat equal boxing match. If they created an unequal match between a 250 pound behemoth and a 120 pound wimp, there would not be much of a battle.

Can we apply this in our Christian life? If we choose to diligently and daily study God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15), pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17), fellowship with other believers (Heb. 10:25), share the good news of salvation with others (Acts. 1:8), etc., we would be feeding the "nature" whom we wish to win the battle. This also will work to our detriment if we choose to feed our

³²⁰ I have jokingly said that I know that I still have my old nature because my wife has told me so.

³²¹ This is the text where Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be "born again" in order to see the kingdom of God. "Again" (ἄνωθεν - an'-o-then) means both "from above" and "again." It is translated as both in the KJV.

old nature. It is natural to be under the control of our flesh nature but it is *supernatural* to be under control of the Spirit.

The lukewarm believer³²² sometimes lives with more present conflict than the one who has walked away from the battle. Perhaps he is feeding both the old and new nature which is within and therefore creating fertile ground with two strong combatants for a spectacular ongoing battle.

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

"But if ye be led of the Spirit," Contrary to what our emotions and selfish will tells us, and as noted before, the Holy Spirit will never lead us contrary to His Word. (2 Tim. 2:15); God's Word is our guide, not consensus opinion. (2:Tim. 3:16, 17; John 16:13, 14).

"...Ye are not under the law." We see the same phrase, "for ye are not under the law, but under grace." in Romans 6:14, referring to believers in general, not just to those who are "led of the Spirit." Paul is carrying the thought even further here. He is speaking of how our Christian life should be controlled; by the Holy Spirit and not by the Mosaic law. He has already established the failure of the Law to accomplish what some people had expected but which God never intended it to do. God's Word through His Holy Spirit should be our guide, not the law.

If we "be led of the Spirit," then love, the fruit of the Spirit will reign (v. 22) . Love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:10). For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Gal. 5:14).

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

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

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

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest," i.e. evident or apparent. We are now presented with a list of not so pretty works of the flesh. These are works that can become apparent in any unsaved person because he is easily guided by the flesh, *and* in any believer who also can become controlled by the flesh as he chooses not to walk in the Spirit.

This list of 17 works or sins seems to fall into 4 categories:³²³ Sexual sins, Religious sins, Personal or social relational sins, and Drunkenness sins.

Sexual sins:

Adultery,³²⁴ Generally referring to sexual relations in which at least one of the participating parties is married to a third party.

³²² Please download and read a helpful Bible study about the lukewarm believer of Rev. 3, from <http://www.freegraceresources.org/lukewarm.html>.

³²³ Ron Merryman in his excellent commentary on Galatians labels these groups: Those that "proceed from 1. Sensual passions, 2. Religious passions, 3. Destructive passions, 4. Hedonistic passions." See footnote 267.

³²⁴ The sin of adultery also includes our thought life (Matt. 5:22, 23). In addition, adultery is not always sexual in nature. It seems to carry a nuance of meaning also as the breaking of a covenant, obligation, or a trust. In Jer. 3:9 we see that Israel "committed adultery with stones and with stocks." That is, they were betraying the one true God, Yahweh, by worshiping idols.

Fornication, From πορνεία (por-ni'-ah). Any illicit sexual activity including adultery. Lev. 18 is attributed to containing a list of various forms of fornication along with their legal penalties. In this context and others, adultery and fornication are listed as separate actions although one act could be included under both terms.

Uncleanness, Moral or physical impurity or uncleanness in thought, word, or deed.

Lasciviousness, Licentiousness, filthiness, wantonness, or unbridled lust.

Religious sins:

Idolatry, Anything that is worshiped instead of the one true God.

Witchcraft, Sorcery, magic, from φαρμακεία (far-mak-i'-ah). Having to do with medication or drugs. We see drugs frequently involved with witchcraft activities today.

Personal or social relational sins:

Hatred, In the plural form, primarily enmity, hostility or ill will between groups. We often see this hostility manifested toward, classes of people, races of people, but also against individuals. Along this line, I once heard a black Bible teacher wisely state that, "Racial prejudice is not a social problem; it's a *sin* problem."

Variance, Strife, discord or quarreling.

Emulations, Jealousy, indignation, selfish ambition.

Wrath, Passion, fierceness, rage, indignation. Realize that anger is not necessarily wrong. Jesus was angry about the moneychangers in the temple Matt. 21:12, 13), but He handled His anger in a righteous manner. (See Eph. 4:26).

Strife, Intrigue, contention, strife.

Seditions, Disunion, division, sedition,

Heresies, Party spirit or sect, disunion, division.

Envyings, Ill will, jealousy, spite, envy.

Murders, Slaughter, murder.

Drunkenness sins:

Drunkenness, Alcohol intoxication

Revellings. Carousing, reveling, rioting, uncontrolled passions.

"...And such like:" In other words, this is representative and not an exhaustive list. "...Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past,..." Paul had forewarned them of these things while he was with them.

"...That they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Wow! Does this contradict all that we have seen thus far about justification by faith? If our life shows evidence of some of these works did we lose our salvation or were we never really saved even though we believed in Jesus as per John 3:16? Of course this is not so. The brief answer to this dilemma is the fact that *entering* the kingdom is not the same as *inheriting* the kingdom.³²⁵ Inheriting has to

³²⁵ This could be compared to the prodigal (wasteful) son who lived in the spiritual foreign country. He forfeited his inheritance but did not lose his sonship (Luke 15:11–32). Please see article "Lost Son, Not Lost Sonship" at <http://www.faithalone.org/magazine/y1998/98F1.html>

do with ownership and ruling there, not *entrance* into the kingdom. The Galatian believers were already saved and heaven-bound. We are simply talking rewards or loss of rewards, not how to be justified.³²⁶

We have seen the ugly results of our sinful nature, now let us see the fruit of the Spirit. This is in contrast to the works of the flesh which we saw in the previous verses.

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

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

Verses 19-21 22 shows us the works of the flesh. In these two verses we see the fruit of the Spirit. "Works" speaks of effort, toil, and labor. In contrast, fruit does not involve work,³²⁷ it is a natural production of the source.³²⁸ The fruit of the Spirit is the result of faith and yielding to the Holy Spirit. Works are plural. The fruit of the Spirit is singular and constitutes a unity; all of which should be found in a believer who lives under control of the Holy Spirit. This fruit is not produced by the believer but by the Holy Spirit through the believer who is walking in the Spirit.

This fruit seems to consist of three triads of virtues:

1. Personal fruit - love, joy, peace. These have to do with our own subjective personal life.

2. Outreaching fruit to others - longsuffering, gentleness, goodness. This is our attitude in grace toward others.

3. Up-reaching fruit - toward God. They are faith, meekness, temperance.

In summary, we have duty toward self, others, and God.

1. Personal fruit

"Love," ἀγάπη (ag-ah'-pay). Sometimes referred to as divine love because it is sacrificial and works for the benefit of the one who is loved. See 1 Cor. 13.

Joy, a deep and abiding inner rejoicing which was promised to those who abide in Christ. This is not to be confused with happiness which depend much upon happenings. Our joy does not depend upon circumstances. It rests in our confidence in God's control of all things. Joy and rejoicing are the themes of the Philippians epistle. Paul was in jail at the time but still had joy.

Peace, an inner repose and quietness even in the face of adverse circumstances. It defies human understanding. Philippians 4 expands on how we can have the peace of God.

2. Outreaching fruit to others

Longsuffering, patience, forbears under provocation, contains no thoughts of retaliation even when wrongfully treated.

³²⁶ For a more detailed study on this verse please see "Christians Who Lose Their Legacy; Galatians 5:21" <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1991b/Wilkin.html> For more on inheritance, see footnote 224 and comments.

³²⁷ This statement is not meant to portray that the obedient Christian life is not involved with obedient works; just that the fruit of the Spirit is just that; the fruit of the *Spirit*. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16); "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." (Titus 3:5).

³²⁸ I have never seen an orange tree nor an apple tree straining and struggling to produce fruit. It is a natural process of the tree.

Gentleness, kindness, a benevolence of action such as God demonstrated to us.

Goodness, virtue, uprightness of soul. action reaching out to others even when it is not deserved.

3. Up-reaching fruit - toward God

Faith, πίστις (pis'-tis), noun form of the verb "believe," πιστεύω (pist-yoo'-o). The adjectival form is πιστός (pis-tos') and is usually translated "faithful." This is not referring to God giving a person faith in order to be saved.³²⁹ The recipients of this message were already saved by grace through faith and had the indwelling Holy Spirit. How could an unsaved person manifest the fruit of the Spirit if they did not even have the Spirit? The Galatian believers needed sanctification, i.e. the Holy Spirit's control in their lives.

A number of commentaries maintain that this faith really means "faithfulness" or "trustworthiness." Even though faithfulness (acting on our faith) is acutely involved in the obedient believer's life (1 Cor. 4:2), that might not be the primary emphasis of this word in this verse. I suggest that it might at least partly refer to the ability to trust God for greater things, such as Abraham did when he believed God about the birth of Isaac (Rom. 4: 20, 21). Faithfulness might be the result of exercising this faith. God certainly could have used the word for "faithful" if He chose.

It might be logical to assume that having this faith that the Holy Spirit produces in our life would lead to application more like that expounded upon in Heb. 11, which is frequently called the "faith" chapter. Those mentioned in this "faith hall of fame" list were already believers before they accomplished their recorded acts of faith. The faith discussed was not to believe in Jesus for eternal life, but that of those who were already believers³³⁰ and were assured of eternal life. They exercised their faith in doing great things for God against great odds and sacrifice. This is faith in action and in that sense, they then became faithful. This is the same admonition that is given to believers today: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. 4:2).

Meekness, kindness, humility, strength under control.

Temperance: self-control.

And for the summary statement, "...Against such there is no law." This comment concerning the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit is a rebuke to the legalists. The law can neither prohibit these qualities nor can it produce them.

³²⁹ This is one of the tenets of Reformed Theology; that God gives the unbeliever the faith to believe in Him for eternal life. The logic progresses then that since God gave the faith, then it must be righteous. Therefore the believer must live a faithful and obedient life or he was never really saved. If all this is so, then good works are a requirement for receiving eternal life. This error conflicts with the major theme of Galatians and also with much of Scripture. Eph. 2:8 is often given to substantiate the claim that faith is the gift of God. For more on this, please see "Is Faith a Gift of God? Ephesians 2:8 Reconsidered" at www.faithalone.org/magazine/y1989/89july1.html

³³⁰ One OT saint mentioned in Heb. 11 is also used as an example of faith in Romans 4, both for justification (vs. 1-3) and in everyday living as mentioned in the balance of the chapter. Abraham was promised a son against impossible human odds but "...being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform." (Rom. 4:19-21). This is faith in action.

24. And they that are Christ's³³¹ have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

"And they that are Christ's..." We as believers belong to Christ. He has bought and paid for us (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). "...Have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." This statement is neither a question nor a command. It is a declaration of fact. Paul is saying that those who have believed in Jesus as their Savior *already have* crucified or put to death the flesh with its passions and desires.

This is saying the same thing that we see in Romans 6 and 7.³³² The moment that we believe in Jesus, we have died and rose again with Christ to a new life and we no longer from this point on have to listen to the flesh. We do not have to be controlled by the flesh because we have died to the flesh and it has been crucified to us. That does not mean that it is not active. It just means that it does not have the authority over us that it did before. Before we were saved the only power that we had was the flesh.

We are now a new creation in Christ. We were spiritually dead and now we are alive (Eph. 2:1). We now have the indwelling Holy Spirit. Those who belong to Christ have put to death the flesh with its affections and lusts. That does not mean that they are not there. It means that we do not have to obey them.

An example of this principle is that when I was employed in a large corporation I had a department manager who had authority over me. If he told me that he wanted me to complete a certain project, I would then go ahead and work on that project.

Suppose that I am now employed in a different company sitting at my desk and this same manager calls me and requests that I work on another project for him. I *could* reply that I would get right on it, but a more appropriate response would be to advise him that I don't work for him anymore and that he no longer has any authority over me.

We as believers no longer have to listen to the flesh. We can respond the same way and realize that we no longer work for that manager who has no authority over us. We can choose to "Walk in the Spirit," so that we do not "fulfil the lust of the flesh" (v. 16). We then will not display the works of the flesh (vs. 19-21), but will see the "fruit of the Spirit" produced in our lives (vs. 22, 23).

When we hear of believers who "have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" we tend to think of Gal. 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Wilkin's comments³³³ on this verse are helpful:

"In 2:20 Paul used the passive voice to say, 'I have been crucified with Christ.' Here he uses the active voice: those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Why the change?

³³¹ "Christ's" is genitive case indicating "possession of, belonging to."

³³² E.g. Rom. 6:6, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." The word "destroyed" here is καταργέω (kat-arg-eh'-o) and means "to render inactive or ineffective," not "to annihilate."

³³³ From the "Grace New Testament Commentary," "Galatians" by Robert N. Wilkin. Available for purchase from <http://www.faithalone.org/bookstore/ntc.html>. If I could only have one NT Commentary, this is the one that I would choose.

The former spoke of having been crucified with Christ, but did not mention the flesh and its passions and desires. The former is true of all believers. This latter may or may not be, depending on how one understands the words *those who are Christ's*. Does this refer to all believers? Or only to believers who are living by faith?

In light of the use of the same expression in 3:29 (the only difference being the absence of the definite article before *Christou*), it is probable that all believers are in view. Even legalistic believers have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. That, of course, looks at believers in terms of their position, not their experience.

When a person comes to faith in Christ, God crucifies his flesh with Christ. Yet in a sense the person can be said to have crucified the flesh since the act of believing in Christ is something he did and it is that act that results in co-crucifixion with Christ.

Paul knows nothing of a believer who is unable to escape the "passions and desires" of the flesh. That is the birthright of every believer. Yet what is true of all believers in their position is not necessarily true of all in their experience. Believers *should* live in light of their position. Yet as the next two verses make clear, they often do not."

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

"If we live in the Spirit," This phrase is first class conditional in the Greek, meaning that the statement is assumed to be true from the standpoint of the speaker. It could be translated "*since* we live in the Spirit...." We are born again by the Spirit (John 3:3-8). He is the source of our spiritual life. "...Let us also walk³³⁴ in the Spirit."³³⁵ Since we live by means of the Spirit we are also commanded to live our life by means of the Spirit, i.e. keeping in step with Him. This echoes the thought of Gal. 3:3, "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Our life should mirror what we are.

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

Paul now warns us about three sins which apparently plagued the Galatian church. "Let us not be desirous of vain glory," (lit. self-conceited, eager for empty glory), such as those mentioned in 6:13 who wanted the Galatian believers to be circumcised for their own glory (cf. Php. 2:3). Paul sought glory for the message of what Jesus had accomplished on the cross for the world (Gal. 6:14). "...Provoking one another (Eph. 4:31, 32), envying one another (Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; 2 Cor. 12:20; 1 Tim. 6:4)." This important request embodies the results of legalism in the church.

Let me finish out the comments on this chapter by relaying some personal experiences, for whatever they might be worth, which tie in to the message of the chapter. Over many years of varied types of ministry we have worked with numerous Christian leaders and in or with many churches; all whom claim to be Bible believing and teaching.

Most that we have seen adhere to some sort of legalism in reference to the means of receiving eternal life. This is usually in the form of "believe in Jesus but you must also (fill in the blank or blanks)." This "faith-plus-works" requirement for salvation frequently presents itself in one of

³³⁴ "Walk" here is a different Greek word than is found in Gal. 5:16. This word is στοιχέω (stoy-kheh'-o) and is defined as "to march in (military) rank (keep step), that is, (figuratively) to conform to virtue and piety: - walk (orderly)." It seems to be functionally similar to other commands to simply obey or be responsive to God's Holy Spirit.

³³⁵ "Spirit" in both instances in this verse is in the dative case, i.e. instrumental, "by means of."

two ways: by which we call "front-loading" the Gospel, i.e. you must do something more than believe in Jesus to be saved, or in "back-loading" the Gospel, i.e. if you fail in some important area after you believe, you either lose your salvation or you did not *really* believe. Both of these doctrines conflict with God's Word.

Of the few that we have seen whom we believe understand and teach the truth and clarity of the eternal salvation Gospel, a large percentage of even those seem to be legalistic in their teaching of sanctification or how a believer should live and grow in grace (2 Pet. 3:18). These few would wholeheartedly agree with the Galatians message that justification is by faith alone in Christ alone as per Gal. 2:16, but they tend to run amuck in the rules that they impose on the believer.

Much of this direction is well-intended as they lament the sad state of many believers today. Even though it might be well-intended, it is still wrong-headed. The truth of the matter is that it does not do much good to try to combat error with more error. In these legalistic churches we have experienced a distinct dampening of the freedom to serve by love and a resulting hindrance to the unsaved getting saved and believers growing in grace and becoming mature disciples. The resulting critical spirit betrays the lack of love both for the brethren and the truth of God's Word.

Overview of Chapter Six:

In chapter five we saw two contrasts:

1. Liberty, not bondage (5:1-15).
2. The Spirit, not the flesh (5:16-26).

In this chapter we will see two more:

3. Others, not ourselves (6:1-10).
4. God's glory, not man's approval (6:11-18).

In the first portion of the chapter which we have entitled "Others, not ourselves" (6:1-10), we encounter somewhat of a paradox. We have earlier been told that we possess liberty in the Spirit and are free from the *law* of Moses but we are now told in 6:2 that we are to fulfill the "*law* of Christ." This is not a contradiction and can only be accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit. This has just been explained in 5:16-26.

Such a life involves loving and sacrificial action toward;

1. Sinning Christians (6:1).
2. Burdened Christians (6:2-5).
3. Pastors/teachers who are teaching them God's Word (6:6).
4. In general, to all men, but especially to believers (6:7-10).

The second portion of the chapter which we entitled "God's glory, not man's approval." (6:11-18), contains concluding remarks and the mention that Paul personally penned at least part of this letter instead of dictating all of it to a scribe, an exposition of the motives and hypocrisy of the Judaizers, the futility of circumcision as a required ritual, his attitude about to Whom glory belongs, a repetition of his evaluation of the claim for the need to be under Jewish law, and a benediction on the readers along with more vindication of his example as a faithful apostle of Yeshua.

Chapter Six Text

1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
2. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.
3. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.
4. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.
5. For every man shall bear his own burden.
6. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.
7. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
8. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.
9. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.
10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

The first portion of the chapter could be divided into the following sections:³³⁶

- 6:1 - Restoring the overtaken.
- 6:2-5 - Relieving the over-burdened.
- 6:6 - Remunerating your Bible teacher.
- 6:7-10 - Reaping what you sow.

This portion of chapter 6 puts "shoe leather" on the truths of the last portion of chapter 5 and *how* believers need to serve others faithfully by means of the power of the Holy Spirit with an attitude of love.

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

Why is this issue even introduced here? Warren Wiersbe suggests, "Because nothing reveals the wickedness of legalism better than the way the legalist treats those who have sinned."³³⁷ It seems to fit in the context as noted by another Bible teacher,³³⁸ "Instead of exhibiting the three jealous actions of verse 26 in chapter 5, we should re-direct our energy toward those who have been overtaken in faults and seek to encourage and help those who have fallen. When seeking to help or restore a wounded or falling Christian, one should consider the qualifications for such a counselor in chapter 6, verse 1."

³³⁶ This brief outline is from Pastor Dennis Rokser's Galatians study at www.DuluthBible.org.

³³⁷ We might add to that statement, "...and the way the legalist treats those whom *he thinks have sinned* but by Bible standards really did not." This general pharisaical attitude is displayed in John 8:2-11 where the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who "was taken in adultery" to Jesus. They said to stone her. Jesus said, "...go and sin no more."

Some who wish to look "spiritual" are often condemnatory and proud when confronted with an erring brother. (e.g. John 8:5, 6, cp. v. 11; - Rom. 14:1; 15:1- 1 Cor. 11:28).

³³⁸ "Galatians From A Soulwinner's View," A. Lee Stanford.

"Brethren, if³³⁹ a man be overtaken in a fault," Notice that he is speaking to "brethren," i.e. believers, about their treatment of a fallen brother. We have a higher priority in some areas to minister to our fellow believers than to the unbelievers. Verse 10 will expand on that theme. The Greek word for "fault"³⁴⁰ is usually translated "trespass," or "offence," and sometimes "sin" or "fault." "If a man be overtaken in a fault," we are not to improperly judge, criticize, or condemn, but to "restore"³⁴¹ such an one...."

We do not know all the circumstances which resulted in his falling. He was "overtaken," implying that he was not willfully seeking the sin and might have even been conscientiously avoiding the temptation. The meaning of the word "overtaken" implies "surprise" or "not anticipated." "...In the spirit of meekness,"³⁴² considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." This is the same "meekness" that is part of the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in 5:22. This meekness is reacting humbly and mildly, yet firmly. Meekness is the proper use of power.

If we are one of the ones who fits the "spiritual" requirement, then *each* of us ("thyself" and "thou" are singular) is to ensure that we restore in the right spirit, remembering our own weakness. (1 Cor. 4:5; Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 10:13). Even the spiritual believer is not immune to the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:10-20). Therefore when he is engaged in this ministry he should consider himself lest he "also be tempted."

Perhaps we should interject here that this verse does not seem to be speaking of a believer who sins, judges, and confesses his sin for forgiveness and restoration of fellowship as per 1 John 1:9. He has not necessarily been "overtaken in a fault." Frequently in this type of situation there is no need for anyone else to become involved. In some cases, unnecessarily bringing other people into the process might even be detrimental to the believer's growth and to the cause of Christ.

The command to fulfill the task to "...restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted," is directed specifically to those who fit a certain criterion: "ye"³⁴³ which are spiritual." The number of those who qualify to this requirement *should* be much higher than actually it is. The "spiritual" believer should be the norm in the church but that unfortunately is not so. Just who are the ones referred to "which are spiritual?"³⁴⁴

³³⁹ "If a man be overtaken in a fault," This phrase is third class conditional in the Greek; meaning "hypothetical," "it may or may not occur."

³⁴⁰ "Fault" παράπτωμα (par-ap'-to-mah) Is usually translated "trespass," "offence" or "sin." Lit. to fall beside or near something, a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness. A different Greek word, ἁμαρτάνω (ham-ar-tan'-o), verb, and ἁμαρτία (ham-ar-tee'-ah), noun, are the words most frequently translated in the NT as "sin." It literally means "to miss the mark."

³⁴¹ "Restore" καταρτίζω (kat-ar-tid'-zo). Mend, repair. Used in secular Greek for setting broken bones and in the NT for mending nets (Matt. 4:21). It also carries the nuance of meaning not only to "repair," but to "prepare," and to "perfect." This shade of meaning also fits the context in the needs of the overtaken believer.

³⁴² "Meekness" πραότης (prah-ot'-ace). Gentleness; by implication humility.

³⁴³ "Ye" in "ye which are spiritual" is plural. In the KJV "thee" and "thou" are singular and "you" and "ye" are plural ("t"s are singular and "y"s are plural). In contrast to English, Greek distinguishes between second person singular and plural.

³⁴⁴ For a short study about the believer who is spiritual, please see "The Spirit Filled Christian" at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/spirifilled.html>. For the serious student who wishes to know more and to be more of what the Bible says about this subject, please study the book "He That Is Spiritual" by Dr.

Does not the previous chapter answer that question? The context is important. It would appear that those who are "spiritual" are the ones who walk in the Spirit (5:16, 25) or are led of the Spirit (5:18). These are the ones who will have the fruit of the Spirit manifested in their lives (Gal. 5:22, 23).

We might be tempted to think that this responsibility should primarily be assigned to pastors, elders, deacons, or Sunday school teachers. If the above-mentioned definition of "spiritual" is correct, then being spiritual is not limited to those to whom we sometimes look for leadership. In fact, it is likely that some in these categories do not even qualify as those who are "spiritual."

Notice also that the verse does *not* specify only the ones who are "spiritually *mature*" It is important to differentiate between the terms of being spiritual and being spiritually mature. Maturity is achieved in degrees whereas being spiritual is instantaneous and not necessarily permanent, depending upon our continued yieldedness to God's Holy Spirit.

A new believer can be spiritual, that is, walking in yieldedness and obedience to the Holy Spirit. In contrast, a new believer *cannot* be spiritually *mature* because maturity involves time plus knowledge and application of truth. Some believers take much longer to mature and some do not mature to any discernible degree because they are seldom spirit-controlled. I suggest that the definition of spiritual maturity can be summed up as the result of consistently being spirit-controlled over a substantial period of time.³⁴⁵ It is not wrong to begin life as a baby, but it is a tragedy to remain one all your life. We sometimes see this manifested in the physical realm but it holds true more so in the spiritual realm. Hebrews 5 expands on this theme:

5:12. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

13. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Those addressed here should have grown and become teachers but they chose to remain spiritual babies. As concerning spiritual maturity, they remained babies and had to be fed milk. They should have been as those who could assimilate meat and "who by reason of use [had] their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" They, as do many other believers, chose to spend their lives "at the shallow end of the pool."

These are the ones with whom Christian leaders have to spend time "spoon-feeding and changing their spiritual diapers" instead of utilizing them as co-workers for the cause of Christ. They probably are closely related to the "lukewarm" believers of Revelation 3:14-22.³⁴⁶ These

Lewis Sperry Chafer who founded Dallas Theological Seminary. It is almost 100 years old but is still in print and available for purchase. It can also be downloaded at no charge from <http://www.freegraceresources.org/hethatisspiritual.doc> and other websites.

³⁴⁵ This truth also implies that a spiritually mature believer might not be Spirit controlled or "spiritual" at times. Although we suggest a definition of the "spiritual" believer, we must not assume that any of us have somehow "attained" the ultimate level of spirituality at some point. We should continually be growing and maturing until God takes us home. He will handle it from there.

³⁴⁶ Please see footnote 322 for a study on the lukewarm believer.

are the ones mentioned who make God sick (v. 16), or by my own transliteration, they are "barf-worthy" in God's estimation.

The Bible, in some contexts, divides mankind into two groups; believers and unbelievers (e.g. 1 John 5:12). In some other passages, God further divides the believing group into those who are obedient believers and those who are disobedient believers. Let us look at 1 Cor. 2:14-3:3 which sheds some light on three categories of mankind,³⁴⁷ including the spiritual believer.

1 Cor. 2:14. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

3:1. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

2. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

3. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4. For while one saith, I *am* of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

The three categories of mankind presented in this passage are:

Natural, (ψυχικός - *psoo-khee-kos*) pertaining to the soul or life, of the senses. cf. I Corinthians 15:44, 46; ...sown a natural body.

Spiritual, (πνευματικός - *pnwoo-mat-ik-os*) pertaining to the spirit, (or wind or breath).

Carnal, (σαρκικός - *sar-kee-kos*) fleshly, belonging to or composed of flesh.

These three words encompass not only the motivating factors in a person's service to God (Gal. 5:16,17), but also the triune nature of man; body, soul, and spirit (I Thessalonians 5:23).

They are briefly defined as:

Natural = the unsaved man.

Spiritual = a believer who is Spirit-controlled.

Carnal = a believer who is obeying his fleshly desires.

We have seen in chapter 5 that the spiritual believer is the one who is walking in the Spirit or is being Spirit-controlled. The Holy Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit through him. In the first portion of this chapter we will see some of the evidences that the spiritual believer should be able to manifest:

1. The spiritual believer restores the one who is overtaken in sin (6:1).

2. The spiritual believer bears the overbearing burdens of the brother in Christ when appropriate (6:2).

3. The spiritual believer has a correct evaluation of himself and his responsibilities in Christ. (6:3).

³⁴⁷ For more on this please see "Identification of the "Natural," "Spiritual," and "Carnal" Man" at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/naturalspiritualcarnal.html>.

4. The spiritual believer can honestly and properly evaluate his own ministry efforts without having to compare himself with others (6:4).

5. The spiritual believer realizes his accountability for his own unique responsibilities of service for Christ. (6:5) At the judgment seat of Christ each believer will be rewarded according *to his own works* (2 Cor. 5:10).

6. The spiritual believer should share, financially and otherwise, with the Bible teachers who have assisted in making numbers 1-5 possible in his life and others (6:6).

In summary, the spiritual believer should be *meeting* needs, not necessarily creating needs.

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

This verse could be a continuation and expansion of the exhortation of verse one; that is, stating part of the results of restoring the fallen brother. On the other hand, the action verbs of both verses (restore and bear) are in the imperative mood so it seems to imply that verse 2 is beginning a separate exhortation or a more general one. We also consider that it could include both.

"Bear ye one another's burdens,"³⁴⁸ "Burdens" here refers to overwhelming burdens of responsibility" or "burdens of extreme weight." This could be as a result of any crisis or series of crises; sudden family death, extreme financial crisis, critical illness, etc.

We cannot bear every person's burden all the time but we need to be responsive to God's Holy Spirit as for whom, in what way, and for how long it is beneficial to do so in each situation.

In practice, I believe that there have been times that God has allowed me to bear another's burden when for example, I expended 2x amount of effort or resources in order for another believer to save 10x of their effort or resources that might have been wasted or unproductive. No doubt there are situations also where we would have to sacrifice more. Bearing one another's burdens is a valid application *and* fulfillment of the law of Christ. It is an example of love in action.

We are told here to bear one another's burdens and we can think of a number of positive results from obeying this command, but one mentioned here is that we would "so" or in this manner "fulfil the law of Christ."

Just what is the "law of Christ?" The Mosaic law commands that we love our neighbor as ourselves. (Lev. 19:18). We see in Rom. 13:8, "...he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Three verses later we are told that, "...love is the fulfilling of the law." Jesus told His disciples just hours before His crucifixion, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. (John 13:34, 35). To love as Christ loves goes beyond law and takes the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish.

This burden-bearing is not merely a legal obligation. It goes far beyond the demands of the law. It is motivated by grace and love (2 Cor. 5:14), and is in obedience to the perfect law (or principle) of liberty (James 1:25; 2:12).

This love is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (5:22) and is not manufactured by the flesh. An illustration of this is a true account that I read some time ago. Some of the details I do not recall

³⁴⁸ "Burden" (βάρος - bar'-os), a burdensome weight. "Burden" in verse five is from a different Greek word.

but the main facts are as follows: An American journalist was sent to interview some medical missionaries in a third world jungle setting. He was observing with much revulsion the missionary changing a "yucky" bandage on a person's leprous type of wound. He exclaimed to the missionary, "Wow, I wouldn't do that for a million dollars." The missionary replied without hesitation, "Oh, I wouldn't do it for a million dollars either. I love the Lord and I love these people." This is not natural human love (2 Cor. 5:14).

Two hindrances to our fulfilling the commands of verses 1 and 2 are approached in the next two verses: thinking too highly of ourselves and inaccurately evaluating our place in God's plan.

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

The introductory and explanatory "For" (γάρ - gar) refers us back to the believer spoken to in verses 1 and 2. This describes the possible cause and/or resulting condition of the believer who has this responsibility but chooses not to fulfill it. We also note that verses 4 and 5 begin with "but" and "for" respectively, also indicating a continuation of thought.

"For if a man think himself to be something," "Legalism fosters self-conceit and often sees oppressive burdens in others as deserved judgments; so, instead of 'lending a hand, the legalist turns away. Instead of reaching out, he withdraws. Instead of expressing love, he judges the oppressed brother or sister."³⁴⁹

Two operative words here are the verbs "think" and "is." They show a contrast between perception and reality. The next verb shows the result; he "deceiveth himself." Frequently he is not deceiving many others and he certainly is not deceiving God. A second contrast found here are the words, "something" and "nothing" which coincide with "think" and "is."

Self-conceit is a chief hindrance to any sense of responsibility to the overburdened brother in Christ. We have all met this type of self-centered person who was "born on third base but spends his life acting like he had hit a triple." (cf. Rom. 12:3).

James 1:22 exhorts us, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Heb. 13:3 warns us of being "...hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Self-deceit occurs when we are disobedient to God's Word. This principle also applies to the believer who should be bearing another's burden but thinks that he is too good to perform that lowly task.

How does this apply to the context? Self-conceit is a serious hindrance to ministering to others.³⁵⁰ When we think too highly of ourselves we tend to depreciate others. We also need to maintain a proper assessment of ourselves and our work for the Lord. We should evaluate ourselves accurately according to Biblical criteria and also not go to the opposite extreme and improperly devalue ourselves. We see this in the next verse.

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

³⁴⁹ Quote is from Galatians notes by Bible teacher Galyn Wiemers, www.GenerationWord.com.

³⁵⁰ All of us and perhaps even more so, those of us in Christian ministry, might tend to think more highly of ourselves than we ought (Rom. 12:3), especially when we really are doing some things right. Some examples of proper handling of this malady are the following: In Acts 14, Paul and Barnabas were in Lystra. There Paul healed a crippled man. As a result, the locals began to worship them as gods. Paul immediately set them straight. In Rev. 22:8, 9, John fell down at the angel's feet to worship and the angel immediately set John straight. John the Baptist expresses the proper viewpoint when he exclaimed, "He must increase, but I must decrease. (John 3:30).

"But let every man prove³⁵¹ his own work," We are told to examine and evaluate *our own work*, not someone else's. "There is a natural tendency to compare one's own efforts against others. Such comparisons are deceiving, however. The Lord Jesus will not judge believers on how they compare with others. Jesus will base it on what they did with the gifts and opportunities He gave them."³⁵² (1 Cor. 4:2) "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

The legalist tends to ignore his own failures and improperly judge another person's actions, which sometimes are not even wrong. Matt. 7:1-5 warns us of improperly judging others. It describes one who makes a big deal of the splinter in someone else's eye but ignores the timber in their own eye. That person is called a hypocrite in verse 5. The Pharisees should well have applied this counsel and so should we.

One Bible teacher³⁵³ offers a helpful but not necessarily complete check-list to help us to determine if we are fulfilling the command of verse 4:

"With a renewed mind, a correct understanding of God, his purpose, his overall general plan and how we are generally supposed to fit into it and behave, then examine your application of these truths. How are you doing?

This is the cure. You test yourself...

- a) What has God called you to do? Are you doing it?
- b) What has God placed in front of you? Have you turned away from it?
- c) What do you know to be right? Are you obeying it?
- d) Are there any areas in your life where you are:
 - disobedient and so unable to fulfill God's purpose
 - legalistic (pride, self-service) and so distracted from spiritual purposes"

"...And then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." Although we can benefit much from the good example of others, our work should be evaluated on the basis of God's Word and what He has for us to do. The realization that we are patterning our lives after obedience to God's Word should be the occasion for much rejoicing; not only for here and now but for future blessing also. We have grounds for rejoicing when we see God working in and through us. We can also rejoice in another's faithful service but not when we view it with the wrong spirit.

We should not compare ourselves with each other. This action frequently leads to all sorts of problems. If another believer seems to be more productive than ourselves we might tend to become unnecessarily frustrated or discouraged. This scenario could also tend to incite unhealthy jealousy and criticism.

Remember Jesus' rebuke to Peter in John 21:20-22 concerning Peter's concern over what John should be doing. Jesus set Peter straight by effectively telling him that it was not his concern what John should do but Peter's responsibility was to follow Him; Jesus. God has different ministries for different believers, but all are in accord with His Word (1 Cor. 12:4-23). This

³⁵¹ "Prove" δοκιμάζω (dok-im-ad'-zo), to discern by testing or weighing the evidence.

³⁵² Quote from Bob Wilkin, Galatians, "The Grace New Testament Commentary."

³⁵³ Quote from Galatians notes by Galyn Wiemers, www.GenerationWord.com.

thought is concluded in the next verse where we are told that we are accountable to handle our own responsibilities.

Before we approach the completion of the concept of evaluating our works, let us interject a warning concerning some related doctrine which prevails in Christianity today. There are Bible teachers who encourage believers to evaluate their works *for the purpose of determining if they are eternally saved*. This fits in with "reformed" doctrine and that of several other persuasions, but this is not what the Bible says. Assurance of salvation can only be based solely upon the objective promises of God (John 3:16; 6:47; 1 John 5:11-13, et al). We can *know* that we have eternal life based upon what Jesus has already done, not on what we might or might not achieve.

5. For every man shall bear his own burden.

"Burden"³⁵⁴ here is from a different Greek word than is used in verse 2. A number of Bible versions translate it as "load." It is used in secular Greek for the cargo loaded on a ship. It is a "load" which is designated for the believer to carry. Each of us has tasks and responsibilities which God has for us to accomplish. No one else can do this.

Perhaps a secular example here will help to illustrate this principle: Infantry foot-soldiers are expected to carry a backpack containing needed supplies, tools, and perhaps crucial extra ammunition that they are likely to need in order to carry out their assignment. It is each soldier's responsibility to carry his "own burden." If you were one of these soldiers and the one next to you expected you to carry both yours and his, you would soon realize that the result will not be beneficial toward winning the battle. The exception to this would be if your fellow soldier was wounded. At that time we revert to the exhortation of the first two verses in this chapter and assist him where needed.

I believe that this verse is saying something like that each believer is accountable to obey the Lord in areas of responsibilities that God has prepared for him. We are responsible to carry out God's instructions for each of us.³⁵⁵ The next verse offers one example of carrying our own load.

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

"Let him that is taught in the word..." This verse is an admonition for believers to share with and help support those who teach us the word. Many seem to be content to hear their pastor entertain by telling stories while avoiding controversial topics like sin, salvation by grace through faith, and serious discipleship for the believer. Many churches teach *about* the Bible, but few really teach the Bible. The teachers who are faithful to God's Word are the ones whom we should sacrificially support.

"...Communicate"³⁵⁶ unto him that teacheth..." 1 Tim. 5 tells us:

³⁵⁴ "Burden" (φορτίον - for-tee'-on), something carried, that is, the cargo of a ship: - lading.

³⁵⁵ Wilkin in his Grace NT Commentary goes in a slightly different direction on this verse than do we. This interpretation should also be seriously considered:

"A different Greek word for *load* is used here than was used in v 2 (there translated "burdens"). Paul could have used the same word. The reason he chose a different word was to show that this looks to a significantly different time than in v 2, that is, to the future at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Believers should accurately examine their own work (v 4) because **each one shall bear his own load** at the Bēma. But until then, they can and should bear one another's loads (v 2)."

³⁵⁶ "Communicate" κοινονέω (koy-no-neh'-o) to share with others, communicate, distribute, be partaker.

17. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

18. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

The word "honour" in verse 17 means not only as in "esteem" or "high value," but also as in "finances." It is translated "price" 8 times in the NT and clearly includes money in those contexts.

In spite of the fact that there is so much abuse and manipulation concerning financial giving to churches and "Christian" ministries today, we should not lose sight of the Biblical teaching. Paul affirms repeatedly in 1 Cor. 9 the principle that the faithful Bible teacher has the right to live and benefit financially from his labor of teaching. Paul voluntarily chose to forego this privilege in order to not abuse his power in the Gospel (v. 18). "Communicating" with the faithful Bible teacher includes finances *and* other areas which are helpful; here called "... in all good things."

We tend to disconnect this verse which includes financial giving from the next verse which promises that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Sowing" includes financial accountability and we will see that the sowing/reaping principle has both a positive and a negative aspect.

It is right to sacrificially give³⁵⁷ to support Bible teachers and other areas of Christian ministry but we are accountable to do this wisely. An empirical example of the need to be wise and knowledgeable in our giving is this: I am aware of a dedicated believer who was sending money to help support a Christian orphanage in the N.E. section of the USA. He had seen literature and heard testimonies of several orphans who had been helped there. This man was advised by a Christian financial counselor to request a copy of their federal income tax records which is required to be available to the public when requested for a non-profit organization of this type. They stalled and balked until this man later requested the information through his attorney.

When the paperwork finally arrived it was determined that this orphanage was completely legal. They had orphans who were being treated quite well. They cared for 7 orphans and had a yearly budget of about 5 million dollars. Several people were receiving large salaries.

³⁵⁷ Whenever financial "giving" is discussed, the subject of tithing frequently arises. Is tithing for us today? Is the believer of this age obligated to tithe? Tithing is a controversial subject and we should not part fellowship or cause dissension over disagreement related to this doctrine. No one is obligated to agree with us but all are accountable to study the Word on their own and seek the Holy Spirit's guidance on it. We will briefly present our stand on the subject and you can feel free to take or leave it. The command to tithe was given to *Israel* in the Mosaic law. Believers of today are not under the law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14). This is much the theme of the epistle to the Galatians. It certainly is not wrong to tithe if one chooses to tithe, but Galatians and other Scripture implies that it would be wrong for us to impose this requirement on another believer without Scriptural support. The Church, believers of this age, are never told to tithe but we are to give out of what we have and out of our love. 2 Cor. 9:6 tells us, "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Please see more detail in our study on NT giving found at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/ntgiving.html>.

As is evident here, "legal" is not necessarily ethical or honest.³⁵⁸ I think that I could take really good care of an orphan for \$700,000 per year. In fact, we have given a good home to several foster children for mostly what came out of our own pockets. What I am saying is to watch out even it bears the nametag of "Christian;" perhaps even *especially* if it bears the nametag of "Christian."

7. Be not deceived;³⁵⁹ God is not mocked:³⁶⁰ for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

It has been said that some people sow wild oats all week and then go to church on Sunday and pray for a crop failure. There are no crop failures with God. We are sometimes fooled by the time lapse between sowing and reaping. Eccl. 8:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." We may tend to think that there are no detrimental consequences to our ongoing disobedience to God when we are actually experiencing God's loving grace and patience. Heb. 3:13 warns us of the deceitfulness of sin: "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Is there a way to avoid much of God's discipline?³⁶¹ Yes! 1 Cor. 11:31, 32: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." Get things right before God has to step in and correct it His way. A wise believer has stated that he has learned that when God says to jump; go ahead and jump, and then on the way up, ask, "How high?"

Some general principals of sowing and reaping:³⁶²

1. You reap **what** you sow. Galatians 6:7, "...whatsoever a man soweth, **that** he will also reap." If a farmer sows corn, he will reap corn. See comments on the next verse.
2. You reap **after** you sow. There is a time lapse between sowing and reaping. Ecclesiastes 8:11, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." If a farmer sows corn, he will reap corn some time later than when he sows.
3. You reap **more** than you sow. Luke 18:29,30, "...who will not receive **manifold more** in this present time and in the world to come life everlasting." If a farmer sows a corn kernel, he will reap many times more than the amount that he had sown. (cf. Hos. 8:7a).

³⁵⁸ A humorous example of "dishonest truth" is the fictitious story of a man who did not wish to go to work one day. He went back to bed and began tossing a TV dinner into the air and catching it. He then had his wife call his boss and explain that her husband "was in bed, throwing up his dinner."

³⁵⁹ "Deceived," *πλανάω* (plan-ah'-o), Deceive is a secondary sense; the primary meaning being lead astray. (Vincent's Word Studies in the NT). Translated "err" in Mark 12:24. This is a different Greek word than is found in verse 3.

³⁶⁰ "Mocked" *μυκτηρίζω* (mook'-tay-rid'-zo) Lit. to turn up the nose. To sneer, mock, or deride.

³⁶¹ Please see <http://www.freegraceresources.org/chastening.html> for a short study on the believer's chastening.

³⁶² This is from our study entitled, "A Godly View of Sin," specifically pages 20-23, found at <http://www.freegraceresources.org/sinindex.html>. This is an informative and practical study containing information that can help us all in our Christian growth.

Even though God deals differently with His children than he does with the world (Heb. 12:5-11), we believe that the "reap what you sow" principle remains valid for both the saved and the unsaved.

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

This verse speaks of both the negative and positive aspects of sowing and reaping. "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;" This apparently is referring to a person aligning himself with the 17 works of the flesh ("and such like") mentioned in 5:19-21. The one who follows his fleshly desires will reap the results of that action, at least part of which is "corruption."³⁶³

"...But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." This apparently is referring to a person who is yielded to the Holy Spirit and manifests the 9-fold fruit of the Spirit of 5:22, 23. This verse kind of sounds like the believer's works are related to reaping "life everlasting." Well, in this context, they are. But the verse is not saying that we need to sow a certain way in order to *receive* everlasting life, or to be justified.

In John 10:10, Jesus, the good shepherd (v. 11), was speaking of His "sheep;" believers, when He said, "...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." In the same chapter (v28) he affirms that His sheep not only have eternal life but they can never lose it. The *gift* of God is eternal life (Rom. 6:23) and is received only by believing in Jesus (John 3:16). This verse is speaking about a *quality* of life that only one who has already received the *gift* of eternal life can receive. This quality of life probably refers not only to this present life but to an abundant eternal life. This comes by sowing to the Spirit.³⁶⁴

The concept of "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" is far from the good news justification message of Gal. 2:16, "...even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law...." The former is by works and for reward and the latter is a gift by faith.

For whatever it is worth, I have noticed that at least in some instances, that verses referring to us *receiving* eternal life (being eternally saved) are in the present tense, e.g. "have eternal life," (John 3:16; 3:36; 6:47; 1 John 5:13), and those referring to rewards or the more abundant quality of eternal life are in the future tense, i.e. shall receive, shall inherit, etc. Matt. 19:29; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; and the verse which we are discussing, Gal. 6:8).

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

The "reaping" spoken of here apparently will be realized both in this life and at the Judgment Seat of Christ for eternal rewards. In Luke 18:29, 30, Jesus tells his disciples that there are none who sacrifice for Him "...Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

Even though we are saved by grace through faith and not of works (Eph. 2:8, 9), it really is extremely important how we live our lives. What we do today as a believer has eternal ramifications.

³⁶³ Corruption" (φθείρω - fthi'-ro) decay, ruin, defile.

³⁶⁴ This concept is further explained in articles found at <http://www.faithalone.org/magazine/y1988/88feb1.html> and <http://www.faithalone.org/magazine/y1990/90aug2.html>

Jesus told his disciples in Matt. 6:20: "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:" Eternal life is a free gift (Rom. 6:23) but there is much more involved in our Christian life than just receiving that gift by faith and escaping eternal damnation.

In 2 Cor. 5:9-11, we are told:

9. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted [well-pleasing] of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

11 Knowing therefore the terror [fear] of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Our sins were judged and the payment settled at the cross (Heb. 10:10-14) but our works have yet to be judged for rewards or loss of rewards. This theme is further expanded upon in 1 Cor. 3:9-17.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1Co 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

We are God's "building" (v. 9); bought and paid for with a price (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). We are to take heed how we build on the foundation which is Jesus Christ (vs. 10, 11). We can build upon this foundation with two figurative classes of materials: gold, silver, and precious stones, or wood, hay, and stubble. (v. 12). These two classes are distinguished by at least two different qualities: one is quite valuable and the other is of much lesser value, and one is not damaged by fire and the other is consumed by fire, bringing us to verse 13 and following.

There will be a judgment of fire which will determine the quality of the works and the corresponding reward of loss of reward (vs. 13-15) though the believer is still eternally saved. In verses 16 and 17 we see that we are God's temple or dwelling place and that we are not to defile this temple or there will be undesirable results. ("Defile" and "destroy" in this verse are the same Greek words.) We *do* reap what we sow and there is much benefit to our obedience to God's Word in this life.

It is easy to become weary and discouraged in our daily trials. Sometimes it seems to me that the Christian life could be likened to swimming upstream. If you slack off too long you begin to drift backwards. Even when you are swimming to the best of your ability, there seems to be

plenty of folks slacking off and drifting back past you. The problem is that some of these seem to be latching on to you and actively dragging you in the wrong direction. Whatever the accuracy of this perception, we know that God knows what is best for us and that we need to stay in the battle until He calls us home. Notice that we are speaking of obedience to Christ for rewards, not the impossible task of trying to do good works to merit eternal life.

A related verse which I often claim is 1 Cor. 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Although we covered some of this in our comments on Gal. 2:20, it bears repeating as this passage, Heb. 12 encourages us to run the race to completion.

12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking³⁶⁵ unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

These verses immediately follow after Hebrews, chapter 11, which is known as the "faith" chapter and is the record of a number of OT believers who were faithful to Yahweh at great cost. The cloud of witnesses is referring to them.

Contrary to what some teach, this is not a text to use to establish that our departed relatives who died years ago are watching us. The word "witnesses"³⁶⁶ here does not mean that they are observing our actions, but that their lives as portrayed in chapter 11 are a *testimony* or example to us to endure in the race that is set before us, even in light of trials and persecution.

We see that we are to lay aside both the weights *and* the sin which can hinder us in the race in which we are engaged. It is easy to understand how sin can hamper us in our service, but "weights" are also a formidable encumbrance.

A "weight" is not necessarily a sin in itself. I suggest that frequently it is something that could be considered neutral or even seen as good, but is being misused or misapplied.³⁶⁷ Remember in the parable of the sower in Matt. 13:3-23, the fate of the one who received the word among the thorns; "the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." (v. 22).³⁶⁸

³⁶⁵ "Looking" (ἀφοράω - af-or-ah'-o) "To consider attentively." Used only here in NT.

³⁶⁶ "Witness" from μαρτυρέω (mar-too-reh'-o) meaning to testify. Our currently used word "martyr" is derived from this. We see a "martyr" as "one who suffers for the sake of a principle, or voluntarily suffers death as the penalty for refusing to renounce their religious beliefs."

From the account in Acts 7 we designate Stephen as the first Christian martyr. He was a martyr in the Biblical sense when he testified of Jesus. He was a martyr by today's definition when he was stoned as a result of his testimony.

³⁶⁷ Please see footnote 256 about a "weight" in my life which was laid aside with great corresponding blessing and fruitfulness for God's glory. Please consider if this could also be beneficial to you.

³⁶⁸ For practical comments on this parable please see <http://www.freegraceresources.org/4soils.html>

We are to then run the race, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith." As the Christian song says, "It will be worth it all when we see Jesus." I dearly want for myself, my family, and for all whom I can encourage in that direction to be able to hear from our Savior, "Well done, good and faithful servant;..." (Matt. 25:23).

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

So far in this chapter Paul has exhorted the Galatian believers to minister to the sinning believer (6:1), the burdened believer (6:2-5), the ones who are teaching us God's Word (Gal. 6:6), to maintain well-doing in general, (6:9), and here, to minister as we have opportunity³⁶⁹ to everyone, but especially "unto them who are of the household of faith," i.e. other believers (6:10).

Paul warns in 1 Tim. 5:8, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." It appears from this verse that so far as human entities are concerned, our immediate family is the highest priority. In the same context the conditions are presented concerning the church caring for widows. The first priority is that the family, if available, should provide before the church does (v. 4).

Eph. 2:19 mentions more about the spiritual household,³⁷⁰ "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" We are spiritual family members with other believers. We are "born again" into God's family and the members of the true church are also members of our spiritual family. The welfare of our spiritual family is a high priority. Shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus told the twelve "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." When we display genuine love to the brethren, it is a testimony to the world.

Text

6:11. Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

³⁶⁹ "Opportunity" (καιρός - kahee-ros') an occasion, a set or proper time. Translated "times" in 4:10, "season" in 6:9, and "opportunity" here in 6:10.

³⁷⁰ "House" and "household" in these three verses are from the same Greek word. These verses are also the only occasions that this word is used in the NT. Cognates of the word are more common.

11. Ye see³⁷¹ how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

This verse begins the last paragraph of the epistle and contains concluding remarks written by Paul himself, (instead of by his amanuensis, i.e. scribe or secretary).

In the writing of some of Paul's epistles, he would dictate the body of the letter to a scribe, then add some concluding remarks in his own handwriting at the end. (e.g. 1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17). Some commentators believe that this is what is being said here and others believe that he is saying that he departed from the norm and penned the whole epistle due to the fact the verb "have written" is in the aorist tense, i.e. simple past tense. Either way, we still have the inspired Word of God.

This also is one verse that is offered that might imply that Paul had a serious eye disorder, See also Gal. 4:13, 15.

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

Those who were desiring to put on a good display in the flesh, were pressuring the Galatian believers to be circumcised so that they would not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

They had a misdirected desire; "desire to make a fair shew in the flesh."

They used unscriptural pressure tactics; "they constrain you."

They had hidden and improper motivation; "lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."

The Judaizers were seeking accolades from men, for whatever temporal value they are worth, instead of approval from God. This was not in accord with Paul's philosophy of ministry. (Gal. 1:10). He tells us in 1 Thess. 2:4, "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."

Paul could have avoided much persecution by compromising the truth of his message. "And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. (Gal 5:11). He did not consider this option for defection, nor should we.

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

The Judaizers were desiring to require the Galatians to be circumcised under the law but they did not and could not keep the law themselves. I think that this undesirable trait is called hypocrisy. Again Paul addresses their wrong motivation, "that they may glory in your flesh." Getting Gentile believers to subscribe to the Mosaic law would be a "feather in their cap" with the Jewish leaders. It demonstrated their zeal for the Law in spite of the fact that they could not keep it themselves.

Legalism frequently majors on minor things and bypasses the major matters. It also tends to manifest itself in external, "add-ons," instead of coming from the heart. Paul now begins to contrast his ministry with that of the Judaizers.

14. But God forbid³⁷² that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified³⁷³ unto me, and I unto the world.³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ "Ye see" ("ἴδετε") should be translated as imperative instead of indicative (a command rather than a statement of fact). Paul might have been emphasizing the urgency of what he was teaching that sowing to legalism was sowing to the flesh and only corruption could result.

In contrast to the Judaizers, Paul gets the "glory" issue right here. It would be wrong for him to glory except "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." By this, he obviously did not mean that he would glory in the literal pieces of wood of which it was comprised.³⁷⁵ He was referring to Jesus and the efficacious payment that He made on the cross for our sin. John the Baptist wisely proclaimed, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30). The Judaizers were undermining Jesus' finished work on the cross. They avoided the stigma of the cross; Paul gloried in it.

Paul wraps up his argument with a picture of three crucifixions in this verse:³⁷⁶

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

Our salvation rests on the crucifixion of Christ. Our position resting on this foundation is guaranteed by the world being crucified to us, and victory comes when we are crucified unto the world. The Cross is the place of death. By the Cross of Christ, we are reckoned to be dead:

1. To the law.
2. To the world.
3. To self.

But those who died in Christ are also raised with Christ, and live in newness of life (Rom. 7:6; Gal. 2:20). Paul ends the epistle with:

15. For in Christ Jesus³⁷⁷ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

From God's viewpoint, the external rituals are insignificant compared to the new creation; the result of the new birth. The legalizers were wrong in both their doctrine and their emphasis. Misplaced priorities produce skewed results.

"New creature" or a "new creation." These are from the same Greek words that are used in 2 Cor. 5:17:

"Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is a new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17).

³⁷² "God forbid" See footnote 105.

³⁷³ "Crucified" is in the passive voice. We did not do it. It was done to us.

³⁷⁴ "World" (κόσμος - kos'-mos) here in both cases does not refer to the physical earth but to the world system or order.

³⁷⁵ Some time ago I read of a religious group in Jerusalem that was selling "authentic splinters from the cross of Jesus." It was brought to their attention after some years that they had sold enough splinters to build several crosses. Undeterred, they came up with "the miracle of the multiplication of the splinters." Beware of anything religious that does not coincide with God's Word.

³⁷⁶ This 3 point outline was derived from the "Commentary on Galatians" by Dr. M. R. DeHaan.

³⁷⁷ The phrase, "In Christ Jesus" is not in some modern translations due to its absence in their source text, the Critical Text which we believe to be in error in this instance. It is absent in the Codex Vaticanus but present in most other codices including \aleph , which is one of the major manuscripts used in compiling the Critical text.

The misuse of this verse has caused much confusion among believers. It is not saying that when we believe in Jesus and receive eternal life that we will stop sinning. The context is speaking of *positional* truth.³⁷⁸

The "all things" of this verse and the next are limited by the context. Obviously, after I believed in Jesus I still had the same color hair and eyes and no one yet has told me that I am better looking. What *is* new besides my eternal destination are the many things that God has done in, for, and to me upon being born again.³⁷⁹

16. And as many as walk³⁸⁰ according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

" And as many as walk according to this rule," What rule? The one just mentioned in verse 15; the fact that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision amount to anything of themselves. The new birth; the new creation is what is important.

"...Peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

Just who is "the Israel of God" that are to be the recipients of this peace and mercy? Various suggestions have been made by commentators. Some maintain that "the Israel of God" are the "true Christians," "the true church of God," and similar.

One Bible teacher³⁸¹ offers an interpretation which seems to fit well. These two paragraphs contain this teacher's condensed quote. "This verse is used by those who endorse "Covenant theology"³⁸² to support the view that the church is spiritual Israel or that Gentile believers become "spiritual" Jews. We maintain that all 75 references in the NT of Israel are referring to national Israel. Their tenacity to use this verse in this manner seems to be tied in with their desire to also support amillennialism; the doctrine that there will not be a future 1,000 year reign of Christ on our earth, that the Bible references are only symbolic.

Some teach that the Israel of God is the Church but the evidence does not support that conclusion. The repetition of the preposition on/upon (ἐπί -ep-ee') indicates that *two* groups are in view. This blessing is pronounced upon believing Galatians *and* upon believing Jews. In the 74 other occasions of the term Israel in the NT it refers to Jews and national Israel. It would be strange for Paul to use Israel here to mean Gentile Christians."

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

Here Paul again vindicates his loyalty as a faithful servant of Yeshua. He contrasts the legalists fleshly ministry (v. 12, 13) to that of his own. They sought a mark in the flesh, circumcision, as a sign of obedience to God. Paul's loyalty to Messiah and the truth of Messiah's cross were manifest in the scars in the flesh that he had received from those who rejected the grace message that he taught. (See 2 Cor. 11:23-28).

³⁷⁸ See article on this verse at www.faithalone.org/magazine/y1990/90jan2.html

³⁷⁹ These would include being sealed, indwelt, and baptized with the Holy Spirit, we are justified, forgiven, redeemed, become a child of God, and much more.

³⁸⁰ "Walk" here is the same Greek word as "walk" in Gal. 5:25.

³⁸¹ Chuck Missler, Galatians study, www.khouse.org.

³⁸² One tenet of Covenant Theology proposes that the Church replaces Israel as the recipient of their promises and blessings from God. A reading of Rom. 9, 10, and 11, should correct this error. The adherents of this teaching are usually silent concerning being the recipients of Israel's judgments also.

It is interesting that the word " marks" in this verse is (plural, στίγματα - stig'-mah-tah) or (singular, στίγμα - stig'-mah) which means "a punched mark."

An interesting related devotional gem is this: In Deut. 15:12-17, the Mosaic law states that when a Hebrew slave arrives at the time that he should be freed, that he has the option to voluntarily remain serving his master out love for him. The ritual which seals this decision and makes it public is in verse 17, "Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever...." This was a "stigma" or punched mark to let people know that he was now a slave of love.

Paul repeatedly saw himself as a bondsman (δοῦλος - doo'-los) of Christ. (Rom. 1:1, et al). He bore numerous "stigmata" or punched marks on his body indicating that he was a slave of love. Where do we stand in this area? We probably will not have to suffer the physical abuse that Paul did but does our life show evidence that that we are a slave out of love to Jesus?

Stigma in modern English has grown to mean a mark of shame, dishonor, or disgrace.
18. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

The epistle ends with grace (Gal. 6:18) just as it opened with grace (Gal. 1:3). Why the emphasis on grace?

We are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8, 9).

We are taught how to live by grace (Titus 2:11-14).

By the grace of God, we are dead to the law - and alive unto God (Rom. 6:11).

We are told to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. 2:1).

We are told to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus (2 Peter 3:18).

Grace is involved in all three phases of our salvation; justification, sanctification, and glorifications. The epistle to the Galatians reminds us to never forget God's marvelous grace.