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Law, Grace, and Liberty in Christ: A Study in Galatians

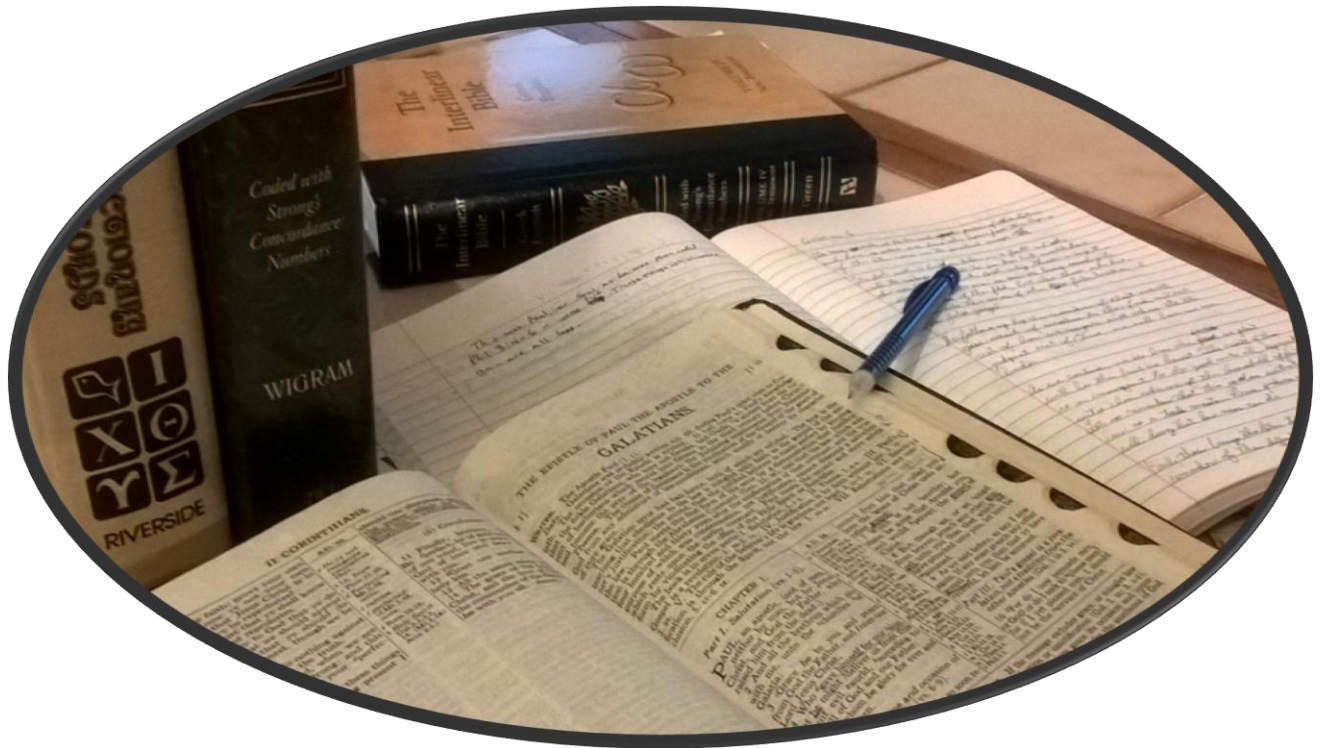


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Forward	5
Galatians Chapter 1: "Not, Neither, But"	7
Apostle By Jesus Christ: Galatians 1:1-5.....	9
A Perverted Gospel: Galatians 1:6-9	11
By Revelation of Jesus Christ: Galatians 1:10-12.....	13
Worthless Religion: Galatians 1:13-14	15
Basic Training: Galatians 1:15-19.....	18
And They Glorified God In Me: Galatians 1:20-24.....	21
Galatians Chapter 2: A Tale of Two Cities.....	23
A Meeting By Revelation: Galatians 2:1-5.....	25
An Agreement Bound on Earth and in Heaven: Galatians 2:6-10.....	29
An Apostle Rebuked: Galatians 2:11-16.....	34
The End of Ego: Galatians 2:17-21.....	37
Galatians Chapter 3: Don't Be a Fool.....	40
Rhetorical Questions: Galatians 3:1-5.....	42
Sons of Abraham: Galatians 3:6-9.....	47
Cursed by the Law, Redeemed by Christ: Galatians 3:10-14.....	50
A Covenant, A Promise: Galatians 3:15-18.....	53
A Hard Lesson: Galatians 3:19-25.....	55
In Christ: Galatians 3:26-29.....	58
Galatians Chapter 4: Children of Promise	61
From Servitude to Sonship: Galatians 4:1-7	63
Living in Poverty While Exceedingly Rich: Galatians 4:8-11.....	67
An Urgent and Gracious Plea: Galatians 4:12-20.....	70
An Allegory: Galatians 4:21-26	74
Cast Out the Bondwoman and Her Son: Galatians 4:27-31	77
Galatians Chapter 5: True Freedom.....	80
The Law or Christ: Galatians 5:1-6	81
A Little Leaven: Galatians 5:7-10	84
The Offence of the Cross: Galatians 5:11-12.....	87
Called Unto Liberty: Galatians 5:13-15.....	90

The Works of the Flesh: Galatians 5:16–21	93
The Outward Sign of an Inward Faith: Galatians 5:22–26.....	96
Galatians Chapter 6: Important Closing Comments.....	99
The Ministry of Restoration: Galatians 6:1–2	100
To Know Our Proper Place: Galatians 6:3–5	103
Sowing and Reaping: Galatians 6:6–10	106
The Cross, Our Only Glory: Galatians 6:11–15	109
A Marked Man: Galatians 6:16–18.....	112
Appendices	114
Appendix I: A Simple Solution to a Puzzling Problem	114
The Problem Outlined	114
The Promises to Abraham and His Seed	115
Moses and the Prophets	117
The Glorious Solution.....	119
Appendix II: The Meaning of "Son" in Scripture	124
Bibliography	127

FORWARD

I began this study in Galatians in the early months of 2016. It began as a small, organic Bible study between myself and two others. It is still a simple Bible study that has been converted to a readable study.

When this study began, there were several things prompting it. The first was a shake-up on the church board on which I had been serving. There was some doctrinal disagreement that led to another elder along with myself being asked to resign from the board and all teaching positions because of some positions that we held.

The root of the disagreement was due to what they determined to be “hyperdispensationalism”. Now by initially labeling this as such, it puts the position in negative light to begin with, for who holds that their own position is “hyper” anything? The real issue by which we were removed from these positions in the church was simply that I am persuaded that the epistles of Paul are the Word of God that is specifically and distinctly directed to the Church which is the Body of Christ. With that persuasion, I am also persuaded that the gospel that Paul preached, and even claimed ownership of (“my gospel”: Romans 2.16, 16.25, 2 Timothy 2.8) is to be distinguished from the Gospel of the Kingdom as found in the “4 Gospels” and which Peter and the 12 preached in the early chapters of Acts. It is not that the specific bodies of good news are contrary to each other, but that they have a distinctive message with a different purpose for a different people.

The Epistle to the Galatians seemed a natural place to start because the first two chapters contain Paul’s own defense of his apostleship. But as with any study of Scripture, we must let the Word of God speak and not force the answer to our questions on it, but let it tell us the mind of God. So the two of us who had lost our positions on the church board, along with a few others began a chapter by chapter, verse by verse, line by line, word by word study. Much of what we discussed as we did this is in this work. There is also much that is added here that was the result of further study. So the purpose of this work is simply to share this study of Paul’s epistle to the Galatians with others who are interested.

Paul wrote to Timothy to “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (2 Timothy 2.15). The work contained here is an effort to do just that. To study is to be diligent in our efforts to know the Word of Truth and to understand it. The approval is individual: I cannot study for anyone but myself. It is God, and no one else, Who does the approving. The workman is not ashamed when he has been diligent and has done the work in the way that God has commanded. When the workman has rightly divided the Word of Truth (there has been much said as to what this does not mean, most of the time to argue against dispensational understanding of Scripture, there is little to discuss what it does mean) he has done as God has commanded. God has not confused His message, and neither should we.

This study of this wonderful and forceful epistle should convince all who study it to do away with law keeping as a believer's rule of life. Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, delivered this letter as the called Apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our lives in Christ should be forcefully impacted by this wonderful message regarding grace, law, and our liberty in Christ.

All of that said, I pray that if nothing else is accomplished in this work, it will drive all who read it to their Bible to study it for themselves with a mind open to being taught by the Lord. May the same Lord richly bless you.

C.N.M. November 15, 2016

A special note of gratitude for Mrs. Kathleen Lukasiewicz for taking the time to proof read the first copy and offer help to make this a better document. Your effort is very much appreciated.

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GALATIANS CHAPTER 1: "NOT, NEITHER, BUT"

Before expanding on the first chapter of this epistle to the Galatians, let us take a look at three key words to describe it. They are three simple words: "not", "neither", and "but". The first time that we see this, it is in verse one:

GALATIANS 1.1:

"Paul, an apostle, (*NOT* of men, *NEITHER* by man, *BUT* by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead;)"

In this verse, the apostle does not waste any time getting to the point of Who appointed him as an apostle, and who did not. He is not an apostle, or "sent one" of men. He did not receive his apostleship, or sending from men. He was sent by the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father. This is a key to understanding the Scriptures. Paul was not called as a sent one of the other apostles (i.e. the twelve). They did not send him as Apostle of the Gentiles. The calling and sending was directly from the Lord Jesus and God the Father.

The next time that these words are used is when Paul is talking about the gospel that he is preaching:

GALATIANS 1.11-12:

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is *NOT* after man. For I *NEITHER* received it of man, *NEITHER* was I taught it, *BUT* by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

If anyone were to raise the question, as to where Paul received his message from, it is

right here. If they were to check with Peter, James, or John to find out if he received his message from them, the answer would be "no". One might even state that the Lord called Paul to go to the Gentiles with the same gospel message that He had given to the twelve because they were not able to do it. Maybe it was because he was better suited to reach the Gentiles. Scripture, however, never makes either of these claims. The twelve were also commissioned by the Lord Himself and sent to teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. They were commanded that they were to be teaching them to observe all things whatsoever that the Lord Jesus commanded them (Matthew 28.19-20). They received power, after that the Holy Ghost came upon them: and they became witnesses unto the Lord Jesus both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria (Acts 1.8). That their witness did not go beyond Jerusalem in the early chapters of Acts is not because of bigotry or failure on their part. It is because as the Lord Himself came unto His own, and His own received Him not (John 1.11), His own also rejected the messengers that He sent after Him. Stephen, when he was filled with the Holy Ghost, summed it up perfectly:

ACTS 7.51-53:

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now

the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

As it was said about Israel in the days of the Babylonian captivity, so it could be said now:

2 CHRONICLES 36.16:

"But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy."

So there was nothing left but wrath. But instead, God answered their rejection with a period of GRACE.

God would now display His grace. He would conclude them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all (Romans 11.32). And His messenger would be "the chief of sinners" (1 Timothy 1.15).

The next time that the words "not", "neither", and "but" would come up would be

regarding Paul's "basic training" and "first mission field":

GALATIANS 1.15–17:

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred *NOT* with flesh and blood: *NEITHER* went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; *BUT* I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."

As we embark on our journey through this epistle, let us keep these things in mind. Paul was not just one of the apostles. He was not just better suited to reach the Gentiles, for he was a Pharisee, and by man's standards, he would be better suited to reach the Jews. But the Lord had other plans. Paul was the distinct apostle of the Gentiles, the evangelist of the gospel of the grace of God, and the steward of the mysteries of God. And this calling: by GRACE.

APOSTLE BY JESUS CHRIST: GALATIANS 1:1-5

Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 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: To Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Paul begins this letter to the churches, or assemblies, in Galatia with an introduction as to who this letter is from. It is from Paul the apostle. Notice that Paul states clearly where that apostleship comes from. His apostleship is not "of men". He is not going with the delegated authority of men. That is what an apostle is. He is a person who is sent with the delegated authority of another. Paul makes it clear that he is not an apostle of men. He also makes it clear that he is not an apostle "by men". No man called Paul into apostleship. This is true excepting that one Man, the Man Christ Jesus.

The Lord Jesus told Saul (Paul) of His intention as related in Acts 26. It seems that the Lord told him this immediately after the "arrest":

ACTS 26.15-18:

"And [Jesus] said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to

light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith which is in Me."

The Lord Jesus spoke of His intents to Ananias before Saul even reached him:

ACTS 9.15-16:

"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear my Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great many things he must suffer for My Name's sake."

Paul also knew that his position was only by grace:

EPHESIANS 3.9-10:

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ."

Paul has the full authority of the Father and Son backing him up. Jesus Christ and God

the Father who raised Him from the dead sent him.

Paul also includes brethren who are with him. He does not include them to add to the weight of his authority, for what could one man, or whole world of men, add to the authority of Jesus Christ and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead? He adds these brethren so that the Galatians may know that the brethren with him have indeed accepted his authority. He also lets them know that the brethren that are with him are speaking the same thing.

Although this epistle is very corrective and at times scathing in its rebuke of the Galatian assemblies, Paul begins with a greeting of grace and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. This is not just a kind, casual, and formal greeting. It is the content of the message that God is speaking today:

2 CORINTHIANS 5.18–6.2:

"And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

"We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

It is said here that our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from this present evil world, or age. Notice that there is no indication that He gave Himself for us so that we could make this age better. Notice also that Paul calls this age the present evil age and not the "church age". The will of God the Father is not to change this present evil world or age, nor is it to reduce the sin in this age. It is not for the church to take dominion of the world and the world's enterprises. It is rather to save men out of this present evil age. This is not to say that God will not judge sin. He has, at the cross. He will, when the day of salvation closes and the day of wrath begins. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ. He is now delaying His judgment, acting in grace. He is dealing with mankind in a time of amnesty. He is graciously allowing that time to continue so that sinners can be saved from this present evil world before His righteous judgment, indignation, and wrath fall. How we should redeem that time—for we know not how much more there is!

To God be all glory—to the ages of the ages!

A PERVERTED GOSPEL: GALATIANS 1:6-9

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

So much for introductions. Paul here jumps right into the reason for writing this epistle. He looks on with wonder and amazement ("I marvel") at the Galatians turning from the caller to another "gospel". This "removal" is an act of treason to the grace of Christ. It is a personal betrayal, and Paul takes it that way. It could be argued as to whether "him that called you" is God Himself, or Paul. It does not matter much either way. Turning away from Paul's gospel is betrayal of God. As we saw from verse 1, Paul was made an apostle by Jesus Christ and God the Father. The Lord told His twelve apostles in John 13.20:

"Verily, verily I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me."

This principle is just as true of the apostle of the Gentiles as it is of the apostles of the Circumcision. Paul said to the believers at Corinth:

1 CORINTHIANS 4.14-16:

"I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you

through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me."

Think of any county in these United States that one can refuse to heed the authority of a sheriff's deputy and plead his case by saying that it wasn't the sheriff! The plea would never stand. When the Lord called Paul and sent him as His messenger with His message, authority was given, and we must accept the epistles of Paul as having the authority of the One who sent him.

The call was into the grace of Christ, and it is from the grace of Christ that one turns when he turns to another "gospel". If this were spoken, we could just see Paul saying the word gospel here with air quotes. What they have turned to is not good news at all! It is a "gospel" that is in complete contradiction to the good news of Jesus Christ by which they were called.

Paul goes on to explain that they did not turn to a body of good news that is an alternative to that which he preached, but to a perversion. There is no alternative to the gospel of the grace of God. There is only perversion.

An angel, or messenger from heaven heard to be preaching another gospel is said to be accursed. Paul himself would be

accursed if he were to preach another "gospel" to them. Anyone adding anything to the message that these Galatian believers received from the apostle is under the curse of God.

2 CORINTHIANS 11.13–15:

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

We must be careful to be clear and scriptural in our message. If we would

receive God's blessing and not His curse on our ministries, let us strive to be faithful to the gospel of the grace of God that Paul preached to the Gentiles that he received from our blessed Lord:

1 CORINTHIANS 15.1–4:

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

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.

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul lets the readers know that he is not going to "pull any punches" to make everyone feel good. He is the servant of Christ and stands and falls to his own master. He does not stand and fall to them—or to us.

In verse 1 we read about Paul's apostleship—that it was **"not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead."** Here we are going to learn the same about his gospel—his message of glad tidings. It is not after man. It is not man's words, and certainly not his own. He did not get his message from the twelve apostles or anyone else previously commissioned. The message came directly from the Lord of Glory.

Each one of us learns the gospel from someone. We do not receive direct revelation from Jesus Christ Himself. This is true whether we get our message from a teacher, or if we come to Christ from reading the scriptures. We are called by the message given in the scriptures. When we are saved, we are saved by this same gospel. It is the gospel that Paul was given by the Lord Himself. Whether we receive it by preaching, i.e. the word of a preacher, or by reading the scriptures, there is an intermediate agent. Paul received this directly from Christ. Paul could not and would not fall back on anyone else's *bona fides*. Because of this, Paul

devoted much ink to defense of his position because of its uniqueness.

2 CORINTHIANS 3.1–3:

"Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

2 CORINTHIANS 13.3–6:

"Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you. For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates."

A message of good news—a GOSPEL—from our Lord Jesus Himself should not be taken lightly. If we say we are Christians,

then it is imperative that we heed the message that Christ has given to us. It is this very gospel that was given to Paul.

WORTHLESS RELIGION: GALATIANS 1:13–14

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

A few things to note about this time-past conversation in the Jews' religion:

- According to Romans 3.2, **"unto them (the Jews) were committed the oracles of God."**
- Romans 9.4–5 states seven more things belonging to Israel:
 - The glory
 - The covenants
 - The giving of the Law
 - The service
 - The promises
 - The Fathers
 - Of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ
- Exodus 19.5–6: **"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."**

This is the only God-given religion that ever existed. Yet in the passage we are studying, to whom does it belong to? It is the Jews' religion! Jehovah has given it over to them. It is no longer His.

MATTHEW 23.37–38:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

It is your house, and it belongs to you, Jerusalem. It is left to you desolate. See Leviticus 14.33–45.

Notice now also the fruit that Paul (formerly Saul) bore in his conversation in the Jews' religion:

- "I persecuted the church of God and wasted it"
- "I profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation"
- "I was more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers"

There is no thought of the LORD here at all.

MARK 7.6–9:

"[The Lord Jesus] answered and said unto [the Pharisees and scribes], Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me,

teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

Contrast this with the following examples from the opening chapters of Luke:

- Luke 1.5–6: **"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."**
- Luke 2.25: **"And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him."**
- Luke 2.36–38: **"And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."**

So now we come back to Paul, and we will close this study with other of his own words

about his past. The entire premise of the epistle to the Galatians is the treachery of turning to *the Jews' religion*. The following is how he now considered all of it:

PHILIPPIANS 3.3–11:

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 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: That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

If now turning to the Jews' religion is treachery, think of what it means to turn to *any* religion. This includes "the Christian religion". The Lord Jesus did not begin a new religion. He did not expand Judaism to the Gentiles. He came into this world to save sinners. We can add nothing to the completeness of our salvation. It is entirely of Him.

1 CORINTHIANS 15.3-4:

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the

scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures..."

BASIC TRAINING: GALATIANS 1:15–19

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Now in this passage, we have a little more of history. In Acts, the Holy Spirit gave to Luke certain details to record. Here Paul gives other details. Both are consistent with the purpose that God had for their particular work.

Paul starts by saying that "it pleased God". The answer to the question of "why Paul" starts with this much: It pleased God! Now this is not in reference to his salvation and conversion from persecutor to follower of the Way, but to the Lord's choice of Paul as a chosen vessel to bear His Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9.15). Notice that Paul says "to reveal His Son in me". God chooses His ministers, and does not answer to us. If He never told us anything else, it should be enough to say "it pleased God". In 1 Timothy, we get another glimpse of the mind of the Lord in calling Paul and making him His minister:

1 TIMOTHY 1.12–17:

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was

exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Notice here that the apostle makes a point to say that God separated him from his mother's womb. This was God's doing. The Lord Jesus Himself separated Paul for ministry, and called him specially. Paul was called to preach the Lord Jesus among the Gentiles, and this he would do. And the Lord Jesus called by His grace. There is no other answer. This is also the only answer as to why He would use any of us. It is by His grace.

"...immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood..."

There was no charge given here to learn the purpose of his call from anyone. This was the Lord's call, and the Lord's message:

GALATIANS 1.11–12:

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Notice Paul also did not consult with another important group of men:

"Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me..."

The Lord alone would teach Paul. He would teach him in Arabia, a wilderness. The gospel which Paul would preach was not to be confused with that of the other apostles. They had their call and their gospel to preach. The nation to which that gospel went, rejected it until "no remedy" (2 Chronicles. 36.16). God would now by His grace reach the Gentiles in spite of the rejection by the chosen Nation. He would teach reconciliation by an enemy who was reconciled.

Now in the Acts narrative, this episode appears to occur between verses 25 and 26 of chapter 9. He says that he "returned again into Damascus" after going into Arabia. It appears that this is where Paul received his gospel to preach. This also seems to come between verses 16 and 17 in Acts 22, and at the first comma in Acts 26.20. Note the content of this revelation is not mentioned in Acts, for the Lord gave it to Paul alone.

"Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."

This visit to Jerusalem seems to correlate to Acts 9.26–29. This was when he met Peter, and James, the Lord's brother. It is also

where he met Barnabas, his first companion in ministry. Notice this happened after three years. Is this significant? Paul was trained in his gospel ministry, i.e. discipled, for the equivalent time as the twelve. The main difference was Paul's discipleship was with the risen, glorified, and ascended Lord Jesus Christ. This is the only Lord Jesus that he ever knew.

Now fifteen days is a relatively short period of time. Why did that visit end so abruptly? Perhaps the answer could be found in the book of Acts:

ACTS 22.17–21:

"And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee: And when the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

The Lord's call to Paul would stand. He was pressed into ministry as apostle to the Gentiles. The dispensation of the grace of God was given unto him and the gospel committed to him would go out to the ends of the earth. Perhaps Paul was reminded of this when he wrote to the Philippians:

PHILIPPIANS 1.6:

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you

will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ..."

Praise God that He will accomplish all of His purposes!

AND THEY GLORIFIED GOD IN ME: GALATIANS 1:20–24

Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa which were in Christ: But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me.

Paul here calls on God as his witness, and does not look to anyone else to verify his story. From the human side, Paul left Judæa because "he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus" (Acts 9.29–30). Tarsus is in the regions of Syria and Cilicia, as is Antioch. Antioch is where Paul and Barnabas were separated by the Holy Spirit to the work of which they were called (Acts 13.2).

From the Lord's side, we will again go to the scriptures and see the Lord's reason for this departure:

ACTS 22.17–21:

"And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee: And when the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

Ministry to the Gentiles apart from Jerusalem was to begin, and the Lord was sending His apostle to them:

ACTS 26.18:

"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me."

While Paul was not in Jerusalem to get to know anyone other than briefly meeting with Peter and seeing James, the Lord's brother, the assemblies there knew one thing for sure. Their greatest enemy was no more. The very man who made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women to commit them to prison (Acts 8.3) no longer existed. He was reconciled to Christ. This reconciliation to Christ was the heart of Paul's message, and if we see that, we can get a glimpse of what was in the apostle's mind and on his heart when he wrote:

ROMANS 5.6–11:

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by

His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the atonement."

Firsthand experience can be the best teacher. And look at how Paul's reconciliation affected the assemblies that he persecuted:

ACTS 9.31:

"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

GALATIANS 1.24:

"And they glorified God in me."

Jesus our Lord knows how to take care of His enemies. And ours. We thank and praise Him that rather than destroying His enemies, He is now saving them and reconciling them to Himself (2 Corinthians 5.18). He will avenge Himself on His enemies, but now during the day of salvation, He is saving them. While it is yet the day of salvation **"we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"** (2 Corinthians 5.20–21).

GALATIANS CHAPTER 2: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Galatians chapter 2 could be titled "A Tale of Two Apostles", or even the same name as the Dickens novel "A Tale of Two Cities". As for the story of two Apostles, the *myths* created by "scholars" about rival factions and Peter's party vs. Paul's party with Paul's party winning out and settling Christian doctrine may make good novels and movies, but is completely unscriptural. All that the BIBLE STUDENT would need to is read this chapter along with the Acts 10-15 to find out what really happened. As for "Pauline" doctrine winning out, all one would have to do is look at what the historic church of Christendom has taught and see that save for a few bright lights along the way, Paul's gospel has not won the day in man's religion. But we are not talking about man's religion. We are studying the written Word of God.

As for a story of two cities, the cities are Jerusalem and Antioch. The first half of the chapter is about Paul's visit to Jerusalem to communicate to the assembly which included the twelve apostles the gospel that he preached among the Gentiles. He made it a point NOT to circumcise Titus. Why even discuss this, especially when we consider the "privacy" of this operation? The point made here is that Gentiles do not need to become Jews to be saved. This was not to make his gospel more palatable to Gentiles, or as "scholars" like to say to "make Christianity acceptable to non-Jews". That is not at all how a Bible believer would look at these events. A Bible believer would see that God was taking His good news to the Gentiles independent of

His covenant people. Hence "the gospel of the uncircumcision"(Galatians 2.7).

The second half details Peter's visit to Antioch, and Paul's rebuke of him for leading a separation of Jewish believers from Gentile believers because of fear of those coming from James who were "of the circumcision" (Galatians 2.12). How often we all go wrong and violate what we know to be true because of the fear of man! Peter knew that the Gentiles who were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" and "strangers to the covenants of promise" were now made near by the blood of Christ. The middle wall of partition was broken down and God was making in Christ "one new man" out of the Jews and Gentiles who believed (Ephesians 2.11-18).

The chapter ends with the great truth of the end of "me". It is the end of "ego".

GALATIANS 2.20-21:

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

This leads us into the rest of the epistle, where Paul makes it clear that law and grace cannot coexist. Resurrecting the law for righteousness is resurrecting the ego.

GALATIANS 6.14:

**"But God forbid that I should glory,
save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**by Whom the world is crucified unto me,
and I unto the world."**

A MEETING BY REVELATION: GALATIANS 2:1-5

Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. 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. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 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: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

During the fourteen years mentioned in verse 1, a lot of things have happened. Paul passes them over in a few quick words. The fourteen years covered here I believe correspond to the events in Acts 9.30-15.1. Here is a quick overview of this time:

1. Peter healed Aeneas who was sick of the palsy for eight years in Lydda. All that dwelt in Lydda and Saron saw him that he was healed and turned to the Lord (9.32-35).
2. Peter raised Tabitha from the dead in Joppa (9.36-43)
3. Cornelius the centurion received a vision in Caesarea and Peter received a vision while in Joppa (10.1-16)
4. Peter went to Caesarea and preached to the house of Cornelius that through the name of Jesus of Nazareth Who was ordained of God to be judge of the quick and the dead that whosoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins (10.17-43).
5. Cornelius and those that heard the Word believed and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. They showed the signs of the believer (Mark 16.17)

before being baptized. (compare to Acts 2.38)

6. Peter told his story to the apostles and brethren in Jerusalem (11.1-18).
7. An assembly at Antioch began to grow. Note that preaching was to "none but unto the Jews only" (11.19) and began to be to the Hellenists (Grecian Jews). Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch (11.19-26).
8. The Antioch assembly sent aid to the Jerusalem assembly by the hand of Barnabas and Saul (11.27-30).
9. James, John's brother, was killed by Herod (12.1-4).
10. Peter was arrested and subsequently set free by the ministry of an angel (12.5-19).
11. Herod was killed by an angel of the Lord (12.20-24).
12. Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch from their delivery of aid to Jerusalem (12.25).

13. Barnabas and Saul are separated by the Holy Spirit and called to His work (13.1–2).
14. Paul and Barnabas go through Asia, Cypress, and the islands and preach the Word of God to Jews and Gentiles that are present. They are rejected and opposed by the Jews, and turn to the Gentiles (13.3–52).
15. Paul and Barnabas are received as gods by the Lycaonians and then the Lycaonians turn on them and stone Paul (14.1–19).
16. Paul rose after being stoned and then returned through all of the places that they had previously visited and appointed elders in the cities (14.20–25).
17. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch (14.26–28).

The reader is strongly encouraged to read these chapters to get an idea of what has been going on with the believers during these fourteen years. Then we come to Acts 15 and read:

ACTS 15.1–2:

"And certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question."

Note that Paul adds here that he went up to Jerusalem "by revelation" (Galatians 2.2).

While the assembly at Antioch determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others should go to Jerusalem about this question of coming into Judaism by circumcision, Paul lets us in on another fact of why he went. The Lord revealed to him to go. He communicated unto them that gospel (good news) that he preached among the Gentiles. Again remember that the gospel that he preached was not after man, he neither received of man nor was taught it but by revelation of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1.11–12). Now the Jerusalem assembly was receiving it from him. He spoke privately to those of reputation, i.e., the Apostles. See Acts 15.4. This was not to be a public argument but a talk among brothers who were all believers in the Lord Jesus. One thing that he would not do is to compel Titus, a Greek, a Gentile, to be circumcised. The act of being circumcised was in effect becoming Jew. The gospel that Paul preached among the Gentiles in no way required that Gentiles become Jews. The requirement is belief in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16.31).

During the meeting, believing Pharisees—yes, you read that correctly—believing Pharisees—said the same thing that these false brethren who came to Antioch said, that it was needful to circumcise the believing Gentiles and to command them to keep the law of Moses (Acts 15.5). In this, let us remember a few things from history. We will go back to Abraham:

GENESIS 17.9–14:

"And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall

circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant."

Many years later, when Peter addressed the men of Israel after making a lame man walk outside the Beautiful gate of the temple:

ACTS 3.25-26:

"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

These Pharisees were not clinging to religion in spite of what the Lord Jesus taught in His earthly ministry. These were Pharisees that believed. They still had the covenant. What Paul revealed to these Pharisees and to all of the elders and apostles was that Gentiles *as Gentiles* are brought into the family of God by faith in our Lord Jesus apart from the covenants. This is a change in the old order of things, and this is the change that is in question in Acts 15. Now who better as a witness to this fact, than Peter:

ACTS 15.6-11:

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

Notice the apostle Peter's last again words here from verse 11:

"But we [Jews] believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we [Jews] shall be saved, even as they [Gentiles]."

If that is not a change from the old order of things, what could be? The nation of Israel was to be a "kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus 19.6), and yet now, they are on the same ground as the Gentiles.

ROMANS 3.22-24:

"...for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..."

Romans 10.4-13:

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which

doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved."

ROMANS 11.32-33:

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

Paul would in no way subject those that he brought to Christ by the gospel given to

him by the Lord Jesus to anything other than that gospel. Antioch would not be subject to Jerusalem, and the "weak and beggarly elements" would not be imposed. The truth of the gospel would continue, and be unmixed with the former order. The believers in Jerusalem would be taught of their own removal from the "camp" of "the Jews' religion", but that is another subject, the subject of that great epistle to the Hebrews. For now we can be satisfied to know that the Gentile believers would in no way be subjected to "the Jews' religion". Their all in all is Christ, and Christ alone.

1 TIMOTHY 1.3-4:

"...charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do."

GALATIANS 1.8-9:

"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. 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."

AN AGREEMENT BOUND ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN: GALATIANS 2:6-10

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: But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 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. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

The Pharisees that believed likely had a well-respected position in the Jerusalem assembly. The Lord said of the Pharisees that *did not* believe:

MATTHEW 23.2-3:

"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."

Now, in the conference in Jerusalem:

ACTS 15.5:

"But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

Add to this that the apostles and elders were all there considering this matter. That is THE APOSTLES. The twelve that the Lord Himself commissioned were all there, except for John's brother James who was killed by Herod. But when the Word of God is on your side, you need fear no one. Paul knew the gospel that the Lord gave him, and he knew what defined him and his ministry. He was an

apostle not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father that raised Him from the dead. (Galatians 1.1) He preached a gospel that was not after man nor received from man or taught by man, but it was taught to him by Jesus Christ (Galatians 1.11-12). Even these who seemed to be "somewhat" cannot overrule the Lord, and Paul was on the Lord's side in this matter, and he knew it. That is how he could say concerning this group:

"But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person..."

In conference, or in the meeting, the Pharisees, apostles, and elders added nothing to Paul, but he added unto them. What did he add unto them? Knowledge of what God is now doing! Knowledge of the gospel that he preached among the Gentiles. Peter got it! That which previously had astonished him (Acts 10.45-48) now made perfect sense. Peter stood up here, on Paul's side, because he saw that Paul was on the Lord's side. Re-read Acts 15.6-11 again:

ACTS 15.6-11:

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

They were all now seeing what God is doing and they saw that Paul was indeed the apostle of the Gentiles. Not only that, the scripture says here that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto him. The Lord Himself committed it unto him just as He had committed to Peter that of the circumcision, and they all knew it.

So what is the gospel of the uncircumcision, as opposed to that of the circumcision? Are they the same, or are they different? Is it just a matter of the audience, or does this difference in audience make a difference? For the present, we will simply let a representative passage from Paul, and one from Peter speak and let the reader meditate on what the scripture says.

The gospel of the uncircumcision:

EPHESIANS 2.11-22:

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are

called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

"For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 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; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Of the circumcision:

ACTS 3.13-26:

"The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered

up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, Whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And His Name through faith in His Name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus,

sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

Note from from verse 8: **"For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles."** The same Lord that sent Peter, and the same Holy Spirit that empowered Peter's ministry to the nation of Israel to call them to repentance after they rejected and crucified God's Christ was now working mightily in Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. The apostles knew it, they "perceived" it, because they were given the gift of knowledge, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit:

1 CORINTHIANS 12.8:

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit..."

Note Peter's use of that knowledge in Acts 5 regarding Ananias and Sapphira to know that they were not being honest in their dealings. Now these apostles, by the same Spirit perceived that God is now working through Paul for the apostleship of the Gentiles. Notice that it was James, Cephas, and John who *perceived of the grace* that was given to Paul. This brings to mind a passage in Paul's letter to the Ephesians immediately following that which is quoted earlier as representing the gospel of the uncircumcision:

EPHESIANS 3.1-11:

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may

understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord..."

Just notice how it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, and that is exactly why they perceived of the grace that was given to Paul. This is why the "pillars" could offer to Paul and to Barnabas the "right hands of fellowship" and that they would go to the circumcision, while agreeing with the Spirit that Paul would go to the "heathen" or the Gentiles. So what happened to the commission from the mount in Galilee?

The command to **"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..."** (Matthew 28.19–20), has been *temporarily* interrupted while the Lord

administers His government of this world in grace. He is not taking over the government of the world yet, but He will in the future when the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ (Revelation 11.15). He is now dealing with mankind, Jew and Gentile alike, in grace, and calling out "the Church which is His Body, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1.22–23). The Twelve would go to the circumcision and Paul would go to the Gentiles. These believers would come together in one body until this present dispensation of the grace of God comes to a close. The Jewish believers will be instructed to "go forth therefore unto [Christ] without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Hebrews 13.13), but as the council in Jerusalem comes to a close, one thing would be certain: a yoke that not even the Jews or their fathers were able to bear (Acts 15.10), would not be put on the Gentile believers, and that they would not be troubled (Acts 15.19) with Jewish things. The Jews' religion would continue to be practiced even among believing Jews for some time to follow, as evidenced in Acts 21.18–26, but believing Jews would be called out of it, as we find in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed, as we learn from history, and the people scattered throughout the world. They will again be regathered, but until that time, those who believe are known, just as we Gentiles who believe, as Christians.

One more thing before we close this study: the "pillars" said that the the Gentile believers should remember the poor. The poor could easily be identified as those that had sold everything and followed the Lord in anticipation of His Kingdom (Luke 12.31–34, Matthew 19.27, Acts 4.32–37). The Lord still provided for them, through the Gentile saints.

Paul and Barnabas had been forward to do this, and would continue. See Acts 11.27–30, and Romans 15.25–33.

In closing, let us remember from this passage how the apostle of the Gentiles and

the apostles of the Circumcision came to an agreement by the working of the Holy Spirit to understand what God is truly doing in this present dispensation of grace.

AN APOSTLE REBUKED: GALATIANS 2:11–16

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 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. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 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? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 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.

Paul, having just wrote about receiving the right hands of fellowship from James, Cephas, and John, now speaks of a contrasting event. Peter (Cephas) visited Antioch. We are not told why or when, for the event is not mentioned anywhere else. To put this somewhere in the Acts narrative, it would probably be in the period mentioned in Acts 15:35 when Paul and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. There is no mention of Peter in that verse, and interestingly enough, there is no further mention of Peter in the book of Acts. There is also no further mention of Barnabas after he and Paul parted ways over disagreement as to whether or not to take John, surnamed Mark, with them to visit the brethren in every city.

Verse 12 states that Peter was pleased to have perfect fellowship with the Gentile believers. He understood fully the Lord's word to him:

ACTS 10:15:

"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

He stood up for the Gentile believers in the meeting at Jerusalem:

ACTS 15:8–9:

"And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare [the Gentile believers] witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."

But to save face he turned his back on what he knew to be true, and fearing those of the circumcision coming from James in Jerusalem, he again built up "the middle wall of partition". Peter apparently knew this truth:

EPHESIANS 2:14–18:

"For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 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; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached

peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

He was acting contrary to it. Paul publicly rebuked him for turning his back on the truth that he very well knew.

PROVERBS 29.25:

"The fear of man bringeth a snare..."

It must have been embarrassing for Peter to be publicly rebuked. This is contrasted with verse 2 where Paul went privately to "them which were of reputation". This was not teaching of a new revelation as in verse 2. This was rebuke for wrong behavior. The body of Christ is not a body of earthly distinctions. It is a new creation of union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

GALATIANS 3.26-29:

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

COLOSSIANS 3.10-11:

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."

GALATIANS 6.15:

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

As stated many times in this Galatians study, the Gentiles were not now to take their place as Jews or in subjection to Jews, but now have a place in Christ. Peter and Paul were both Jews, and both know this truth:

GALATIANS 2.15-16:

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

The law would justify no one. **"For by the law is the knowledge of sin"** (Romans 3.20). The place of the law is to show all, both Jew and Gentile, to be guilty before God (Romans 3.19). All separation among those in Christ is sin that is contrary to the truth of our unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4.3).

ROMANS 3.22-24:

"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..."

Peter and Paul did not form separate parties as some *unbelieving* Bible students have supposed in their "scholarly" works. They were apostles and brothers in our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter did not hold a grudge against Paul for this, and there is no indication that they left each other's company on bad terms. In Peter's second letter, he refers to Paul as "our beloved brother Paul" and calls his epistles scripture (2 Peter 3.15).

Colossians 4.10 indicates reconciliation between Paul, Barnabas, and Mark. Sometimes we need help in doing the right thing that we know to be right.

PROVERBS 9.8:

"Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee."

PROVERBS 27.6, 17:

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend ... Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

THE END OF EGO: GALATIANS 2:17-21

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. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 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. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

When we seek to be justified by Christ, we have to admit something about ourselves: we have to admit that we need righteousness that is not our own. It is because by the law is the knowledge of sin (Romans 3.20). In seeking to be justified by Christ I come as a helpless and hopeless sinner. Did He make me a helpless, hopeless sinner? The answer is clear—God forbid! Here is the truth: if I build again the things that I destroy—if I start trying to justify myself by law-works—they still only show me that I am a sinner. And Christ is still not the minister of sin. My righteousness is Christ and only Christ. Paul later told Timothy further truth about the purpose of the law:

1 TIMOTHY 1.9-11:

"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the

blessed God, which was committed to my trust."

If mankind was good, there would be no need for law. Let us remember that murder, theft, kidnapping, and all the rest is not wrong because it is against the law. *It is against the law because it is wrong.* The law declares it so. It makes the iniquity a transgression and a trespass. But the Christian is not under law for salvation, for righteousness, or for holiness. We are justified freely, as a gift, by the grace of God through the redemption that is only found in the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior (Romans 3.24). When we put ourselves back under the law as redeemed people, we again make ourselves transgressors of it. Not only so, but we make ourselves disobedient to the scriptures:

COLOSSIANS 2.6:

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him..."

We received Christ by faith. Our walk is to be by faith. We walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5.7). We also walk by faith, not by law works. The law carries with it a curse:

GALATIANS 3.10:

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written,

Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

And recall that it is the entire law that must be kept to avoid that curse:

JAMES 2.10-11:

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law."

But praise God that **"I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God"** (Galatians 2.19). Christ has set me free by His death:

ROMANS 7.4:

"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."

Any fruit that I bring forth to God is from that condition of dead to the law. **"I am crucified with Christ"** (Galatians 2.20). The "I" spoke of here is the old man, me as in Adam.

ROMANS 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 old man in Adam only serves sin. He is a slave to it, and the way to deal with him is not with laws or self-reformation. The old man must be crucified with Christ. The best that religion can do is to try and put a noble

face on the old man, but the old man cannot and will not be justified by the law.

Notice who is crucified with Christ in verse 20. It is the **ἐγώ: egō**. If we would like to know a root for why so many seek to be justified, or even those who know and truly believe justification by grace through faith find reasons to go back under law, it has a single root: EGO. It is the need for something of myself to make me worthy. But I am not worthy, and that is where we begin. Yes, we absolutely are called to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called (Ephesians 4.1), but that walk is not by law and reformation of Adam. It is living by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Trying to bring the dead and crucified ego back into it frustrates the grace of God, and makes our witness that Christ has died in vain, because we make it as though we could do it ourselves (Galatians 2.21). Let that never be our witness at any time in our walk, and if we go that way, let us repent (this is a proper time to use that word) and remind ourselves that it is all of Christ, and all of grace!

Now the Son of God has given His life for me. He has also given his life to me, and to all who will simply believe God's witness in His Word that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. The believer who is now in Christ is united with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection:

ROMANS 6.3-4:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? 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."

This newness of life does not come by law keeping or an imposition of rules and religion. It comes from being in Christ. Our being united with Christ also makes us dead to the law:

ROMANS 7.4:

"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."

There is no life in law keeping, only a reminder of the weakness of Adam. There is no righteousness in law keeping, only condemnation and knowledge of sin. The

witness of the scripture is clear, but then we learn this wonderful fact:

ROMANS 8.1-4:

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 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: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

GALATIANS CHAPTER 3: DON'T BE A FOOL

We have now made it to the third chapter in our study. Paul has established his place as THE apostle that the Lord Jesus has sent to the Gentiles with THE message that the Lord Jesus gave to him. The epistle left off with the truth that the law has no part in our righteousness. The law can only condemn. We have also learned from studying these chapters along with Acts how that those wanting to bring these Gentiles, the Galatian believers, under the law by their submission to circumcision would not be allowed. Paul told them that submitting to this was submitting to another gospel which he called accursed.

In chapter 3 Paul begins by telling them that they are not using their minds and thinking about this rebellion against the truth—"O FOOLISH GALATIANS"! He asks rhetorical questions, a useful tool in teaching to make people begin to use their minds and think.

Those of the Galatians who have been "bewitched" to go back under law and submit to circumcision are doing so based on supposed obedience to God. The question they would ask is "Did not God tell Abraham that every man child among you shall be circumcised?" Paul begins by reminding them that the blessing came on Abraham when he believed God. In other words, it was by faith.

Paul also reminds the Galatians that the law is a performance system, with blessings and curses tied to performance. That all mankind is under the curse is evident, for the

law that they were putting themselves under has a purpose:

ROMANS 3.19–20:

"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. 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."

Our Lord Jesus Christ bore the curse of the law for us, so that the blessings of the promise by faith could be freely given. So why go back under the curse? The blessing of Abraham comes on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, not by the law, and not by circumcision (becoming a Jew, Galatians 3.14). God gave Abraham a promise, and the law could not change that. Even man's covenants cannot be added to or made void without violation once cut, and God who is the judge of the earth will do right. The law cannot give life, but it concludes all under sin.

GALATIANS 3.22–25:

"But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

The chapter concludes with the glorious fact of the believer in Christ being a full-grown son (Greek—**υἱός** "*huios*") of God with all of the privileges that come with sonship, because of his baptism into Christ (vs. 27).

GALATIANS 3.27-28:

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

1 CORINTHIANS 12.13:

"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."

How great is the grace of God! Being in Christ makes the Gentile believers the seed of Abraham, according to the promise by faith. How much greater, that being in Christ also makes us the privileged sons of God!

RHETORICAL QUESTIONS: GALATIANS 3:1-5

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? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. 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?

Having established the cross as the end of self and the beginning of life, the Apostle now speaks to the mind of the believer. He begins by calling them "foolish". This is an appeal to them to think. This foolishness is just that, they are not using their heads! Paul lets them know that in going back to the law and to rules and to religion you are not using your mind. As good teachers often do, Paul asks them a series of questions to make them think. Questions have that effect, even if we are not expecting the person that we are asking to answer. The first of these questions:

"Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" The implication here is that someone must have some kind of spell or supernatural power over the one who moves away from the truth of Christ crucified and toward religion and law. Christ crucified has implications:

- Romans 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."**
- Galatians 2.20: **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I**

now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

- Galatians 6.14: **"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."**
- Colossians 2.14: **"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross..."**

The Lord endured open shame on the cross that we might be given life. He did not endure the cross so that we might continue failed attempts to please Him by the arm of the flesh. Reversion to law-works and religion is an attempt to dress up the old man—the old man that is crucified with Christ! Remember that the last chapter ended saying that if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ has died in vain.

The next question Paul asks is: **"Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"**

He knows the answer here, and he also knows that they know the answer. They received the gift of the Holy Spirit when they

believed the gospel that Paul preached to them. Faith came by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10.17). There was no commandment that he required them to keep so that they would be ready for the gift of the Spirit. It cannot be denied that during the period covered by the book of Acts, the gift of the Spirit was manifest by visible witness. This should have been very well remembered by the Galatian believers. If we simply look at one incident during the ministry of Paul during this time, we can see how the Spirit was imparted:

ACTS 19.1-7:

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."

There was no works or turning to the law to defeat the flesh so that the Spirit could be received. This was by the hearing of faith. Note well too, that these were already believers, followers of a past program of God. Paul was bringing them out of this past program into the then present program, and

there was no issue, for they believed John about Him that should come after. It was only natural that believers should continue to believe God's message. We should remember that Paul is not asking this question to get information, but asking to make them think and remember the truth—that the Spirit was given by grace through faith.

Another rhetorical question: **"Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"**

Again, not looking for an answer, just looking to make them think. It seems like such a "silly" question, yet it has been the way that most of us Christians think they will live the victorious life—by conquering the flesh with law. We forget that the law was weak through the flesh. No power to keep the law was ever given, it was only demanded. We who are in Christ Jesus have victory, but not by law. Law has always only been a means to try to control the flesh, but the flesh is crucified with Christ. Let us look at Paul's teaching on the Spirit and the flesh:

ROMANS 8.1-13:

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 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: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is

death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

The flesh is usually thought of as walking in sin, but we must never forget that the war between the flesh and the Spirit wages when we try to overcome sin by the power of the flesh.

ROMANS 7.9:

"For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

All of mankind's religious systems make an attempt to reform the natural man. The greater part of Christendom, or the Christian religion is no different. Even true believers, such as the Galatians, fall into this trap. Sometimes utter failure is the best reminder that this is not the pathway to victory. Christ, and Christ alone is our victory. Getting our own mastery over sin would at best lead to self-righteousness and disdain for others that

have not defeated sin in their own life by law-keeping. It is no wonder that it is in this very epistle that Paul gives this warning:

GALATIANS 5.15:

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

This would be a good time to bring in this instruction that Paul teaches regarding the walk of the believer in Christ:

COLOSSIANS 2.6-9:

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

The next question which Paul asks: **"Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain."**

Paul himself certainly suffered much, and the indication is that the Galatian believers did as well. In the Acts record, persecutions certainly followed him. The Lord said to Ananias, **"For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake"** (Acts 9.16). Yet in the same chapter: **"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied"** (Acts 9.31). It appears that the Jewish assemblies were beginning to be accepted among the Jewish people, although considered as "the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24.5). They were in Jerusalem by the

thousands (Acts 21.20), and prayed in the temple. But throughout the period covered by the book of Acts, Paul was persecuted by the Jews, and in Acts 14, they persuaded the heathen there to stone him.

Paul's reaction after all this:

ACTS 14.22:

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

We cannot help but think that if Paul would have proved by preaching circumcision that he was adding to the people of Israel Gentiles who were proselytes to Judaism, he would never have been persecuted. The Lord, however, had no interest in new proselytes. The Lord said of the Pharisees and their proselytes:

MATTHEW 23.15:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

One of the main reasons the Jews rose up in such rage when Paul was in the temple in Acts 22 was that he said the Lord sent him far hence unto the Gentiles. The Gentiles were not being brought into the fold of Judaism. The Lord was making in Himself of Jews and Gentiles one new man (Ephesians 2.15). The Jews put the message of Christ far from themselves, and wanted to keep the Gentiles from the salvation found in Christ as well. Yet the persecutions would have probably ceased if Paul brought the Gentiles into the fold of Judaism. But Paul's message was not reconciling Gentiles to Jews in Judaism. It was

reconciling Jew and Gentile in one body by the cross of Christ (Ephesians 2.16).

GALATIANS 5.11:

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

GALATIANS 6.12-13:

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

Compromise might make the persecution cease, but the will of God was much more important to Paul, and he would suffer persecution for the Lord's sake. He would not let what he already had suffered be in vain, and did not want them to have suffered in vain either.

"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?"

Whether Paul was talking about himself or others among them that were working miracles we are uncertain. It is certain, however, that Paul did work miracles as the signs of an apostle:

2 CORINTHIANS 12.12:

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

Even a casual reading of Romans 7 would bear witness that Paul received nothing but

condemnation by attempts to keep the law. It became death to him. Romans 8 gives witness that Paul lived by the power of the Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead. As we bring this study to a close, read carefully how any attempts to rule the flesh by the power of the flesh is worthless, and that our all in all is in Christ:

Colossians 2.16-23:

"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: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of

angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. 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, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh."

SONS OF ABRAHAM: GALATIANS 3:6-9

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 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. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

In the first part of this chapter, we answered questions that could be summed up in this: What has the law ever done for me? The law has always been a ministration of death:

2 CORINTHIANS 3.6-7:

"...for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones..."

ROMANS 7.7-12:

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

The flesh is incapable of pleasing God by law (Romans 8.8). In fact the holiness of the law has the opposite effect:

ROMANS 7.13, 18:

"Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. ... 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."

But now we see how Abraham was declared righteous—Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. This is what Moses states in Genesis regarding Abraham's expression of faith:

GENESIS 15.5-6:

"And [the LORD] brought [Abram] forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness."

Now here in Galatians, Paul refers to Abraham, because that is how he was known. But in Genesis, this was to *Abram*, not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

ROMANS 4.9–10:

"... for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision."

This was over thirteen years before circumcision became the seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised (Romans 4.11). It may have been quite a few years before that. Now circumcision was added, *and required*, to be in the covenant relationship with God:

GENESIS 17.13–14:

"He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant."

And the law was also added "that the offense might abound" (Romans 5.20), but when we go back to how Abraham was counted righteous, it was by faith. It was by faith in the revealed Word of God. The legalists could not let it be only faith, and wanted to be sure that the Galatian believers (and believers to this day) would have to "do something" to be saved. Or maybe it is not salvation and justification that requires that we do something, for they believe that **"to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"** (Romans 4.5), but it is sanctification that requires law added (do something). Sanctification is also by faith. **"Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh"** (Galatians 3.3)?"

The law is not any more a part of our sanctification than it is our salvation or justification. The Lord has not allowed the arm of the flesh to play any part in our sanctification so

1 CORINTHIANS 1.29–31:

"That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

1 CORINTHIANS 6.11:

"...ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Our "saintification" is found in Christ, just as is our justification. Law-keeping has nothing to do with it. The legalists wanted to tell them that **"Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved,"** (Acts 15.1) and **"That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses"** (Acts 15.5). Here Paul reminds us that it is they which are of faith are the **"υἱός"** (*huios*—"sons with full privilege") of Abraham. Remember that it is important for us to recognize that Abraham was counted righteous *before* circumcision became the sign of the covenant, because unto Paul was committed the gospel of the uncircumcision. Contrast this with Peter and the gospel of the circumcision: **"Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed"** (Acts 3.25). Peter is talking to Jews, the natural seed. These were not of faith, in fact, Peter leveled the accusation right at

them: **"Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses"** (Acts 3.14–15). This is why he tells them: **"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord"** (Acts 3.19).

Paul's word to the Gentiles, and the Galatians in particular, is that the scripture foresaw that God would justify the heathen (Gentiles) through faith. It was *not* by entering in to the covenant by circumcision. God justifies the ungodly when they place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16.31, Romans 3.22,26, Romans 4.5), that He DIED FOR OUR SINS ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, AND THAT HE WAS BURIED, AND THAT HE ROSE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES (1

Corinthians 15.3-4). The natural seed (the Jews) come to God the same way, for as Peter, the apostle of the circumcision states **"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we [Jews] shall be saved, even as they [Gentiles]"** (Acts 15.11).

When God gave the gospel (good news) to Abraham (still Abram) that **"in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"** (Genesis 12.3), He spoke foreseeing the Gentiles who believe blessed with "faithful Abraham".

So we see here that it is not by circumcision or law-keeping that we become "sons of Abraham", but it is by faith in what God has said. We become "sons of Abraham" because we are just like our father, because he, and we, are justified through faith (Romans 3.30), It should also never be forgotten that we are ***"justified freely by [God's] grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"*** (Romans 3.24).

CURSED BY THE LAW, REDEEMED BY CHRIST: GALATIANS 3:10–14

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. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 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: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Before going on in this passage, let us remember where the last study left off: **"So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham"** (Galatians 3.9).

We begin here with the opposite of those that are blessed: those that are of the works of the law, who are under the curse. The believers in Galatia, who were allowing themselves to be enticed by those who would place them under the law, were not hearing the law. The law carries with it a curse. As Peter said at the meeting in Jerusalem, the law was a yoke that **"neither our fathers nor we were able to bear"** (Acts 15.10).

Many well-meaning Christians today still bind the law on themselves and pass it on to others without hearing it. Not only that, they use a "pick and choose" method to determine which commands are still binding, and which are not. They try to prove a scriptural methodology to say this, but they are not hearing the law. Paul states here what Moses said regarding what parts of the law were required:

DEUTERONOMY 27.26:

"Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen."

There was no picking and choosing of commands, as we see in James' epistle:

JAMES 2.10:

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

If you are a believer in our Lord Jesus Christ, you are **"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. 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. 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"** (Romans 7.4–6).

The law is not our justification, and it is not our sanctification. It is no longer the believer's rule of life. We are dead to it. To bring it back to us brings back the entirety of it, including its curse. We also need to be reminded, just like the Galatians, that no man is justified by the law. The just are those that live by faith. This is not just faith in anything. Faith in whatever one chooses to have faith in

is presumption. This is faith in what God has said.

ROMANS 4.5:

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Those who would add a binding law to the Christian's walk also align themselves well with the Galatians, and should answer this question in their own mind:

GALATIANS 3.3:

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

The Christian walk is never about rules and "sin management". Christ has redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us. Why would we again bind that curse on our necks? The honest Israelite who *was* under that law could not live up to its expectations, and neither can any of us. Could it be that those who want to add the law to our Christian walk really still think that they need a little of self? Let us remember that Paul's great announcement of his being crucified with Christ and living by the faith of the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him was made in this very context of *not* going back to the law (Galatians 2.20). The "rule" to go back to, if I may use that word, would be:

COLOSSIANS 2.6–7:

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

How did we receive Christ Jesus the Lord? By faith! So walk in Him—by faith! The just shall live by faith. The just have been justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3.24) on the basis of faith and now are to walk in that same faith. The law appeals to the flesh, but **"if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live"** (Romans 8.13).

For those who accuse us of *antinomianism*—So be it! I am not under your law either, so do not bind it about my neck. Christ has set me free from the law and you will not bind it on my neck, no matter how righteous you think you are or how great a following that you have. As one who has been baptized by the Spirit into Christ, I am in Him, and identify only with Him. I am bound under the law as much as He is. As He died unto the law, so did I. If anyone can find a scripture telling me that the risen, ascended, and glorified Lord Jesus Christ is bound under the law, then you have an argument. Until then, believe the scripture that you *do* have. Christ bore the curse for you when He took it to Calvary and there is no need to resurrect it.

GALATIANS 3.13:

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

Christ set us free from the curse so that He would be free to bless us. He delights in blessing, and He has taken the freedom in His sovereignty to give Gentiles the blessing of Abraham through faith. The Spirit promised to Abraham that in him all nations shall be blessed, and Christ by the cross has set us free from the curse so that God is free to bless us. He is not going against His righteousness

by blessing unrighteous sinners who are under a curse. He is keeping with His righteousness, that on the ground of Christ's death completely satisfying His righteous judgment against sin, He can by grace freely give His righteousness to undeserving sinners because He loves them. He gives freely on the faith principle, because believing is the only thing the depraved sinner can do.

EPHESIANS 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."

ACTS 16.31:

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..."

A COVENANT, A PROMISE: GALATIANS 3:15–18

Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. 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. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Paul here reminds us of the way even man's covenants are handled. While it is true that men are "covenant breakers" (Romans 1.31), we do know what is proper in a covenant. We do not always do what is right and we break the covenants we make, but we can be certain that God, the judge of all the earth (Genesis 18.25), that cannot lie (Titus 1.2), will not deal His covenants unrighteously. He is not a covenant breaker. It is also true that we generally do not allow a change to a contract or covenant after it has been confirmed. We do not allow that, because it would be wrong to change a contract after it has been signed so that the signer has his name signed to something he did not agree to. Why would we even bring this up? Because if we, as sinful members of Adam's race, know that this is a wrong practice, we must understand that God would call this a wrong practice, and the Righteous Judge will do right. He has made other covenants in addition to this one of which we speak, but they do not do away with those that He has already made.

ROMANS 4.13–16:

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they

which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all..."

The promises of God to Abraham are sure. God was very particular in His promise. Abraham would see the up close fulfillment: **"in Isaac shall thy seed be called"** (Genesis 21.12). After Isaac was spared, Abraham was able to see how that **"in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"** (Genesis 22.18). But the calling of the seed did not end with Isaac. The particular seed, Who is the seed by which all of the families of the earth will be blessed, is Jesus Christ our Lord, and none other.

Now, it is also true that the multiplied seed would partake of the promise that God gave to Abraham. No one could read the Old Testament and just do away with God's promises regarding Israel, especially in the Abrahamic Covenant and not see land and

material blessing, but that is not the subject here in Galatians. See Appendix I for some insight on this from Pastor C.R. Stam in his article entitled "A Simple Solution to a Puzzling Problem". It would move us too far off of the subject to address this here. It will be enough to say here that even Israel, Abraham's multiplied and *redeemed* seed, will only be blessed, and be a channel of blessing through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The point that Paul is making is that the law does not change the promises. The law added conditional blessings and curses, but it did not annul the promise. Those which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham, whether they are Israel, the natural seed, or whether they are Gentiles who are of faith: **"In thee shall all nations be blessed"** (Galatians 3.8-9). It is not by the law, and it cannot be entered into by law.

ROMANS 11.6:

"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."

Let us not "frustrate the grace of God" by trying to attempt to make ourselves righteous or holy by the arm of flesh. Let us live by faith as we are called.

GALATIANS 2.20-21:

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

COLOSSIANS 2.10:

"And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power..."

A HARD LESSON: GALATIANS 3:19–25

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. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. 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. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Please read the following passages regarding the law and the purpose that it served.

ROMANS 5.20:

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound..."

ROMANS 7.13:

"Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

1 TIMOTHY 1.8–11:

"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured

persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust."

ROMANS 3.19–20:

"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. 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."

So why the law? It was God's great object lesson. The sons of Israel were a great object lesson for all of the sons of Adam. None of the sons of Adam are righteous. Each one of us stands before the bar of justice condemned. Those who make their boast in keeping the law only find themselves condemned by it. God gave the law to bring us in guilty before Him. While sin is sin whether there is a written law against it or not, there is no transgression of the law without a law. With the law, however, mankind has shown

himself completely guilty. If you have not laid down your own "righteousness" and think that something good in you will commend you to God please hear the scripture. The law was given so **"that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight"** (Romans 3.19–20). The prosecution rests and the defense has been silenced. There is nothing more to say. A guilty plea is all that is left, but glory to God that He has provided righteousness freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3.24). Glory to God that He has given this grace to us because our Lord Jesus died for our sins! Why has God so graciously provided for our righteousness, and redemption, and our sanctification? It can only be answered that He has done this because His grace is matchless and rich. It is because He is the God of all grace, and because He is love. Please, unsaved friend, believe on your only hope today! All that you are hanging on to will only condemn you, but Jesus Christ will save you!

GALATIANS 3.22:

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

By God's sweeping pronouncement that we are all under sin, He has opened the door to all of us to be saved by His grace. He graciously saves all who believe. There is no merit in our faith. The merit is in Christ and only in Christ. All that is required from you, and from anyone, is that you take God at His word and believe what He says about the matter. He is faithful, and the Lord Jesus Christ has been faithful in providing the way that the Gentiles would be blessed according

to the promise given to Abraham, that **"in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"** (Genesis 12.3), **"to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all"** (Romans 4.16).

GALATIANS 3.24:

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

This brings us to the time before faith came. It is before the faith of Jesus Christ came, or before He fulfilled His faithfulness in becoming sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5.21). But now that His work has been accomplished, that **"IT IS FINISHED"** (John 19.30), that the handwriting of ordinances that was against us and contrary to us has been taken out of the way and nailed to His cross (Colossians 2.14), the faith has been revealed. We are not under law but under grace (Romans 6.14). Rejoice in it Christian! It is not cheap grace, for it cost the Son of God His life's blood, but it is given to you **FREE!** If you have not taken God at His word and believed on His only Son and His death for your sins, what are you waiting for? This is the best offer that ever will be given to you!

GALATIANS 3.25:

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

As the law teaches us our need by its great object lesson: **"there is none**

righteous, no not one" (Romans 3.10). So when we learn our lesson and come to Christ in faith, we graduate. The "schoolmaster" did his job! He showed and even proved to us our need, and now that we have graduated to justification by faith of Jesus Christ, the schoolmaster is no longer in a place of authority.

As we continue, we will learn our new place, not under the schoolmaster, but in the privileged position of *sons* (whether men or women) because we are ***in Christ!***

IN CHRIST: GALATIANS 3:26–29

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Notice that Paul here states that "ye" are all the children of God BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST. The word children here is not simply ones that are born, but ones that are fully grown sons with all the privilege that comes with sonship. This is not a father-child relationship as much as it is a relationship of privilege. It is important to remember that this is not the position of all people. The members of the human race are Adam's sons. They share his lot of sin and death. Those who are placed as sons, i.e. adopted, are placed into that position by faith in Jesus Christ.

ROMANS 8:14–17:

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 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."

In our passage in Galatians, the word translated "children" is the Greek word **υἱός** (*huios*), and it is translated "sons" in the passage in Romans. In the passage in Romans, the word "children" is a different word. It is the word **τέκνον** (*teknon*), which is the word

for one born into the family. Both seem to be terms of endearment, and both terms of parentage.

From Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words as a note under the heading "Son" regarding the Greek "HUIOS" (**υἱός**):

*For the synonyms **teknon** and **teknion**, see under CHILD. The difference between believers as "children of God" and as "sons of God" is brought out in Rom 8:14–21. The Spirit bears witness with their spirit that they are "children of God," and, as such, they are His heirs and joint-heirs with Christ. This stresses the fact of their spiritual birth (Rom 8:16, 17). On the other hand, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God," i.e., "these and no other." Their conduct gives evidence of the dignity of their relationship and their likeness to His character.*

Under the heading "Child", regarding the difference between the terms:

teknon—"a child" (akin to **tikto**, "to beget, bear"), is used in both the natural and the figurative senses. In contrast to **huios**, "son", it gives prominence to the fact of birth, whereas **huios** stresses the dignity and character of the relationship.

Understanding these terms will be helpful in the next chapter as well. There is much more to these terms than my limited

knowledge and ability to convey the meanings will allow. For further insight into this distinction see Appendix II. Notice also how the apostle speaks of our placing into that position in his epistle to the Ephesians:

EPHESIANS 1.5:

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will..."

The *adoption of children* in this verse is the idea of "son-placing", or being put into that position of privilege. God has *predestinated* those who are His children by faith in Jesus Christ to be placed as His sons. This is our destiny! The whole of creation will rejoice when this happens:

ROMANS 8.19:

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

This is the position of only the saved, those that have faith in Jesus Christ. While the whole world likes to flatter itself that "we are all God's children", scripture tells no such thing.

GALATIANS 3.27:

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Notice this is not being baptized into a church, or for that matter even being baptized into water. This is being fully united to Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection:

ROMANS 6.3-5:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection..."

This is God's work:

COLOSSIANS 2.11-12:

"In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 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."

This is also how we are put into the Body of Christ, and united to all other members of the body. We are united to them because we are all united to Christ:

1 CORINTHIANS 12.12-14:

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 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. For the body is not one member, but many."

While denominations argue and divide about baptism, its meaning, method, and formula, the scripture speaks of the one baptism by which we are united.

EPHESIANS 4.3-6:

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one

faith, ONE BAPTISM, One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Having put on Christ by being united to Him, there is no earthly status that identifies us, except that of being IN HIM. In the context of this entire Galatian epistle, being in Christ takes away any need to be circumcised. We are IN CHRIST! Being found in Christ, we have become heirs to the promise, because He is the promised seed. Christian, never think of yourself as anything apart from Christ! Your history in Adam has ended at the cross, and Christ is your all in all. We live in a time that everyone has an identity in something, in some type of group, usually identified with its grievance. Let us who name the name of Christ remind ourselves that we are crucified with Christ (Galatians 2.20), and as we understand that we are justified and "saintified" in Christ alone, we are also identified in Christ alone. I am not an [anything]-Christian. I am a Christian. Leave aside everything you are in Adam. If you are a believer in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord *according to the scriptures* (1 Corinthians 15.3–4) then you are in Christ.

If you are reading this and you are unsaved—you have not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as *your* Savior that died for *you* to take *your* place consider this: The Word of God considers now two groups, "races" if you will, of people—those who are in Adam, and those who are in Christ. ***"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"*** (1 Corinthians 15.22). The only future for the dead in Adam is the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20. The future for those in Christ:

1 CORINTHIANS 15.51–52:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Believe today, and do not put off believing on the Lord Jesus Christ for *your* salvation. He is all that you need to be saved, but you do need Him! None of us are promised even one more second to live and breathe, but God has given us salvation from sin and death in Him. It cost Him greatly, but He gives His righteousness to us freely, ***by His Grace!***

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4: CHILDREN OF PROMISE

As we ended the last study in chapter 3, we began looking at the high position of the believer in Christ as a son of God:

GALATIANS 3.26:

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

The position of sonship certainly has privileges, and with those privileges there are responsibilities. The responsibility is now an issue between the son and the Father, and not any longer between the child and the steward.

The high position of "son" is contrasted to the former Gentile, or "heathen", position of slaves to gods that are not even gods. A turn back to serving the law is a step backwards to the "weak and beggarly" elements that had no power over sin. The law, remember, only shows sin, but gives no power to defeat it. Christ by the cross trampled over sin, and now we live by His faith (Galatians 2.20), and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8.2). Choosing to return to the law was choosing to return to poverty. It is living as a slave when you are an heir of God. It is foolishness.

Paul then continues to implore them that he is writing them with this stern letter because of his love for them. He then reminds them of their love for him. He also gives them a warning concerning those that try to turn them to law with their false "gospel". These people are only in it for themselves, while Paul tells them how he is earnestly looking out for the best interests of the saints.

GALATIANS 4.19–20:

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you."

We then see Paul using a scriptural *allegory*. He is using a real historical event to draw a picture. He shows us as being children of promise just as Isaac was. He also shows Ishmael as a type of trying to enter into the promise by fleshly means. This is exactly what the legalizers/Judaizers were doing. But the word is clear:

GALATIANS 4.30:

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

A short word on allegories: This is Paul's use of allegory, and it is inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. God is free to use His Word as He sees fit. We must be careful in our use of allegory. There are many events in scripture that seem to paint a picture of something else, but do not explicitly say that. This is God's word and we are not free to use it as we see fit. In these events, it is better to say that this reminds us of this "something else", and not to say it means "something else". We should not make what we see in a scripture passage have the authority of "thus saith the Lord", unless we are expressly told, "thus saith the Lord". It should also go without saying that changing the word of prophecies to mean something other than what they say is mishandling the Word of God. Paul did not do

that here. What happened between Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac did actually happen. God is telling us by His Word that these things also really do picture the position of the child of promise, that we are to have nothing to do with the flesh, or to come under bondage to the elements of poverty, so:

GALATIANS 5.1:

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

FROM SERVITUDE TO SONSHIP: GALATIANS 4:1–7

Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

In a previous study, we talked about the terms translated "children", "child", and "son", and discussed briefly the differences in meaning. It was mentioned that both seemed to be terms of endearment and parentage. Here, we have another term translated "child" which is the term **νήπιος** (népios). To expound on the meaning of this word, I will quote the scripture where it is used most extensively:

1 CORINTHIANS 13.11:

"When I was a *child*, I spake as a *child*, I understood as a *child*, I thought as a *child*: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

See below for Vine's entry:

lit., "without the power of speech," denotes "a little child," the literal meaning having been lost in the general use of the word. It is used

(a) of "infants," Mat 21:16;

(b) metaphorically, of the unsophisticated in mind and trustful in disposition, Mat 11:25 and Luk 10:21, where it stands in contrast to the wise; of those who are possessed merely of natural knowledge, Rom 2:20; of those who are carnal, and have not grown, as they should

have done, in spiritual understanding and power, the spiritually immature, 1Cor 3:1, those who are so to speak partakers of milk, and "without experience of the word of righteousness," Hbr 5:13; of the Jews, who, while the Law was in force, were in state corresponding to that of childhood, or minority, just as the word "infant" is used of a minor, in English law, Gal 4:3, "children;" of believers in an immature condition, impressionable and liable to be imposed upon instead of being in a state of spiritual maturity, Eph 4:14, "children." "Immaturity" is always associated with this word.

This is like when we say that something is "child's play", meaning that something is so simple that even a child can do it.

Paul is here furthering the point of difference between the law relationship and the grace relationship. Those under the law were in the place of immaturity. As such, those under law were under tutors and governors. "Governors" is the same term translated "stewards" elsewhere. It is the Greek word **οἰκονόμος** (oikonomos). A steward is in charge of a stewardship. Stewardship and administration are the terms that most often replace the word

dispensation in most modern English translations. Here we have a steward being one who is understood to be a "governor", the one who is in charge of the "government" of the child.

Notice here that we have the "heir", the one who is to receive the inheritance of everything from the father in which sense he is "lord of all", under this authority delegated by the father. The tutors and governors are employed by the father to rule over the child who will one day inherit the means of employing the tutors and governors. And any wise father will never allow the child to usurp authority over the tutors and governors while he is a child. That would result in a disaster, both now and when the child became an adult. (Would the child ever actually become an adult in that case?) So the father employs a "schoolmaster". In our day, that would be a school, but we get the picture. The schoolmaster takes authority over the child under the father's authority to properly raise the child.

GALATIANS 3.24:

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

Such was the position of the Israelites under the law, being taught time and time again that they were in need of the Savior. All mankind was given up (Romans 1.24,26), and given over (Romans 1.28) to the slavery of sin, while Israel was called out and separated to be a peculiar treasure above all people, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (Exodus 19.5-6). God called them out of slavery as His "son" (Hosea 11.1) and separated them, putting a difference between them and the rest of the nations (Gentiles). This difference showed there to be no

difference, because every son of Israel was also a son of Adam. The Israelites who were under the law are concluded all under sin:

ROMANS 3.9:

"What then? are we [Jews] better than they [Gentiles]? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin..."

ROMANS 3.22-23:

"...for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God..."

ROMANS 11.32:

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all."

GALATIANS 3.22:

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

So our passage picks up:

GALATIANS 4.3:

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

I would take the "we" here to be Jews, those under the law who were in bondage under the elements of the world, although it could apply to Gentiles as well, not as under the law, but as under sin and in bondage to it. I take it to mean Jews because of the context of being under the tutors and governors. In any case, before the "fullness of time", all mankind was in bondage. Both under sin and under law are both bondage. But there is good news:

GALATIANS 4.4:

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

It was the right time for God to send forth His Son. Why did He not send Him forth sooner? We could make some assumptions in this regard, but let us just leave it that it was the right time as God decided. It was the fullness of time, and it was exactly at the moment that God wanted it to be.

This is where Paul speaks to the fact of the virgin birth. He was made of a woman. This looks back to Genesis 3, to what is called the *protoevangel*:

GENESIS 3.15:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Now, I would not add any more to the understanding that Adam and Eve had of that prophecy than what is written. I do not see any indication in scripture of anyone understanding all that this meant. We see 20/20 in hindsight. Such is the case with all of prophecy.

The Lord Jesus as He ministered on the earth did so *under law*. He ministered to fulfill the law:

MATTHEW 5.17-18:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

Putting all preconceived notions of understandings aside, this does help to clear up many seeming inconsistencies between the Lord's earthly ministry in His Humiliation and His ministry from heaven in glory as He revealed to His apostle. In His heavenly ministry, the law is taken out of the way, and nailed to His cross (Colossians 2.14). In His heavenly ministry, the Jew is redeemed from under the law, and both Jew and Gentile are reconciled and redeemed in one body by the cross.

COLOSSIANS 1.14, 20-22:

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: ... And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight..."

EPHESIANS 2.14-16:

"For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 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; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby..."

Now having been redeemed, we now received the adoption of sons, the *sonship*. It is a kind of graduation, if you will, from a state of bondage under the law to freedom as a son in the Father's house. What great grace

our God has shown to the sons of Adam to redeem us by the blood of Christ and to place us in the position of His sons! And this is only by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

GALATIANS 4.6:

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

God has not only saved us, He has put the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, into the very depths of our beings, and this is why we can approach Him as *Father*.

ROMANS 8.15-17:

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 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."

Now it is an interesting distinction that in Romans, we are called heirs because we are the children (*teknon*, "born ones") of God. The emphasis in Galatians is that we are heirs because we are in the position of being sons (*huios*). There are sure blessings distinct to both positions. His grace grants those who have placed their faith in Christ as *their* Savior, as the one Who died for their sins and rose from the dead, the inheritance of both positions. We are in no way in bondage to the flesh, to sin, or to the law.

GALATIANS 4.7:

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

Let us continue to believe what God has said about our position in Christ as sons and heirs of God, and not allow anyone to tell us otherwise. It may not always or ever feel like it, but that is the word of God, and it is not our concern to feel that it is true, but to *believe* that it is true.

LIVING IN POVERTY WHILE EXCEEDINGLY RICH: GALATIANS 4:8-11

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 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? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

This passage begins with the Galatians in the condition that they were in before they heard the Word of truth, the gospel of their salvation. That gospel is that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again according to the scriptures. These folks heard this good news and they *believed* it. (See Ephesians 1.12-13, 1 Corinthians 15.3-4) They were Gentiles who did service to idols, that by nature are not gods. To think of the foolishness of idolatry, hear the words of the LORD through Isaiah the prophet:

ISAIAH 40.18-20:

"To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto Him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved."

Think of the effort and hard work involved in idolatry. Think of the diligent craftsmanship required for a man to make a "god", whose eyes cannot see and ears cannot hear. When it is all completed, the idolatrous people are in deeper poverty than when they started, because all of their goods, time, and effort went into creating a stupid "god". The

Ephesian silversmiths in Acts 19 learned how to make a profit off of their idolatrous religion. Is that a step up or down? The idolatry of the people allowed a group to get rich while they got poorer. How foolish! Who was all behind this?

1 CORINTHIANS 10.20:

"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."

Some Gentile (pagan, heathen) religions worship "nature", rejecting the true God and His word.

ROMANS 1.25:

"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

And then it became idolatry:

ROMANS 1.21-23:

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and

to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things."

As I once heard a wise man say (at least when he said this he was wise): *Sin will make you stupid!*

But take notice that Paul is not speaking against idolatry. These Galatian Christians had in fact turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1.9). He speaks of them as having known God, and even better as being known of God. And they were known of God in this way:

GALATIANS 3.26:

"For ye are all the children [huios, "sons"] of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

So Paul is again begging the question in another way. He is asking, "Why are you going back to the law?"

We have been made righteous by grace. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law and we have been clothed with Christ Himself (Romans 3.24, Galatians 2.21, Galatians 3.13, Galatians 3.27). A return to the law is not a way to righteous living. It is a return to "weak and beggarly elements". These are the things of *poverty*. As those justified by Christ, we are in the position as a son in the Father's household, but living under law we have retaken a position as differing nothing from a servant—a slave. The Galatians are told that their desire to be under law is a desire to be in bondage—when they are *free*!

*Free from the law—oh, happy condition!
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Christ hath redeemed us once for all.*

{Philip Paul Bliss (1838–1876)}

Not only is this a willing turn from freedom to bondage, it is also a turn from riches to poverty. It is absolutely foolish. The wonderful truth that the Lord gave to Paul to deliver, the gospel of the grace of God, is full of riches. See especially Ephesians 1.7, 1.18, 2.7, 3.8, 3.16, and Colossians 1.27 and 2.2. To live in the riches of His grace is not to live by "cheap grace", but to enjoy that which the Father loves to give to us because we are IN CHRIST.

Paul had made great effort to teach the gospel of Christ and to teach them to rejoice in the freedom found in Christ. Yet he is seeing them turn it into a *religion*. To the Galatians, Paul spoke against this return to the Jewish religious things. To the Hebrews, he instructed them to move away from the Jewish religious things and "on to perfection" (Hebrews 6.1). To the Colossians, he speaks against a return to and a making of any new kind of religious system:

COLOSSIANS 2.16–23:

"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: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. 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, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the

**commandments and doctrines of men?
Which things have indeed a shew of
wisdom in will worship, and humility, and
neglecting of the body; not in any honour
to the satisfying of the flesh."**

It is foolish to have freedom and throw it
away to live under the bondage that you were

redeemed from. As Paul went on to tell them,
So I will repeat again:

GALATIANS 5.1

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

AN URGENT AND GRACIOUS PLEA: GALATIANS 4:12–20

{Before beginning this study, the reader is encouraged to read 2 Corinthians 10–13 to get a feel of the personal tone of Paul's defense of his apostleship}

Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. 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. 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. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

Notice now how Paul makes his appeal personal. Remember the studies in the first chapter how that he made the case for his authority as THE apostle that the Lord Jesus called to preach THE gospel of Christ. He is now making his case based on his former relationship with these believers. He is also taking a moment to reveal his heart toward them. He thought it quite probable that among the effects of his epistle to them there would be these two:

1. They would be overcome with grief thinking that they had injured their friend and father in the Lord.
2. They would set themselves up as his enemies going further toward the teachings of the teachers of the law.

The first group is answered with a simple beseeching: "Be as I, for I as ye, ye have not injured me at all". The apostle given the

assignment to steward the grace of God is dealing in grace. He knew it was not about him, and is calling for the return to unity in Christ. What is more, although in reality his "feelings" may have been hurt (a turn of friends against us would hurt even the most spiritual among us) nothing would heal that wound faster and make it as though it was never there than if they were to return to the truth of Christ. Paul does not want them to sorrow over what they have done in this treason toward the gospel, he simply wants them to return to the truth. He is not looking for contrition or restitution. He just wants them back to standing fast in the liberty of the gospel.

To the other group, he has more to say. He reminds them of the struggle that he went through just to preach the gospel to them. This "infirmity in the flesh" is not specifically named, but it need not be.

2 CORINTHIANS 12.7–10:

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

As it has been pointed out, the period of history covered in the book of Acts was transitional. The earlier period is very much characterized by signs and wonders and the powers of the age to come (Hebrews 6.5). That period is really a continuation of the period of the first coming of Jesus Christ, and a continued offer of the Kingdom to Israel and the return of the Lord Jesus to rule and reign over it (Acts 3.19–21). Though Paul also had the signs of an apostle (2 Corinthians 12.12, see Acts 14.10, 19.6, 19.11–12, 28.6), and was miraculously delivered from prison, though he did not flee (Acts 16.25–29), his ministry was not characterized by such events. The period that began with many signs and wonders wrought among the people (Acts 5.12) ended with Paul in a Roman prison. According to the text from 2 Corinthians, the Lord added to Paul infirmities to keep him humble. Rather than a witness of great power, he had a witness of afflictions. Does this not characterize our own Christian walk much more than that of the early chapters of Acts? Why then does it seem so strange to so many

Christians that there is a change of dispensation in Acts? In our age, we are not witnesses to the power as much as we are witnesses to the afflictions. Paul himself was a witness to this very thing:

COLOSSIANS 1.23–25:

"...I Paul am made a minister; Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God..."

In several of our previous studies, I have emphasized the point of the Lord sending Paul, and the explicit and implicit authority that the Lord gave to His apostle with the gospel of the grace of God. In this context, it is important to recognize another detail in the new commission:

ACTS 9.16:

"For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake."

And Paul's recognition of this fact:

ACTS 14.22:

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

As we go back to the context of our passage, Paul reminds the brethren that would set themselves up as his enemies because he told them the truth, that they first saw his afflictions. They saw how he bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus (Galatians 6.17). When they saw this, they received him as an angel, or messenger, of

God. He pointed out that when they received him as such, they received him in the same way as they would received the Lord Jesus Himself. This is the way that the Lord intended for His apostles to be received:

JOHN 13.20:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me."

The former attitude that these Galatians had toward the apostle are indicated in the words "if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." How could they now be his enemy, except that they are affected by the false apostles? How many now have turned away from Paul, the apostle who delivered the Lord Jesus' message of grace? Search your favorite online bookstore for books with the subject of Peter and Paul, Paul and Jesus, or Paul and James and look at the subject matter that comes up. The majority will be about a "Paul" who was a perverter and hijacker of the "Christian religion". (I am speaking of commercial stores and not of Christian bookstores. Christian bookstores usually do not carry such books. These are of the persuasion of liberalism and so-called "higher criticism". It is interesting though to notice that these bible-unbelievers notice a difference in the message that Paul preached compared with our Lord's gospel of the kingdom that He proclaimed in His earthly ministry. The majority of Christians attempt to reconcile them to make them say the same thing, though it is clear that they do not.) How sad that the Lord's sent messenger with the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5.19) has been turned against and relegated to the status of "false prophet". This began even during his own lifetime:

2 TIMOTHY 1.15:

"This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me..."

It is interesting to note that Galatia is a region in what is now Turkey, and used to be known as Asia. Did they ever return to their father in the Lord?

The false apostles had "zealously affected" the Galatian assembly, making them **"desirous to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm"** (1 Timothy 1.7). This was not good. He commended their zeal, but let them know in no uncertain terms that it was wrongly placed. He would have loved to see that same zeal to proclaim the gospel of grace. The Lord would be pleased too.

The false apostles loved to have this following, so that they could credit themselves with many "converts", or proselytes. They were not concerned for the welfare of their converts, but the sum of them. "They would exclude you that ye might affect them." How greatly does this contrast with Paul's affection for them:

GALATIANS 4.19:

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you."

Paul here addresses those who are setting themselves up as his enemies because of the false apostles as his own "little children" (Greek **τεκνίον** (*teknion*)). The Lord used this term addressing His disciples (John 13.33), and the apostle John used this term some seven times in his first epistle (1 John 2.1,12,28, 3.7,18, 4.4, 5.21). This is a term of endearment. He would love to end this

rebuke with words of regard, but stands in doubt of their standing. He wonders if all of his labor was worthless (vs.11). In context of the rest of the book, he is not wondering about their salvation, but rather whether they have "fallen from grace" (back to law-works and a merit system), or are standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has set them

free. As we study this scripture, as has been a theme for all of the studies in chapter 4, let us heed the apostle's voice:

GALATIANS 5.1:

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

AN ALLEGORY: GALATIANS 4:21-26

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Here, Paul goes back again to what was written about Abraham in "the law", or the books of Moses, known to the Jews as the Torah. He is here making a point for them to hear what the law says, and in this regard, he is using a particular event in Abraham's life to make a point. He calls it an allegory here.

Paul's use of this real historical event in Abraham's life to relate this spiritual truth is Holy Spirit inspired (2 Timothy 3.16). He has the sanction of the Holy Spirit to do so. He also never says that these things did not actually happen and really mean something else, but he is stating here that these things tell another story as well. When the so-called church fathers began to allegorize scripture and "spiritualize" the words of the prophets, it was the wrong use of allegory. Paul had the Spirit's sanction to do so. They did not. He never claimed that the words of scripture meant something that they did not, nor did he say that they did not mean what they said. This allegory is a real historical event, but it also tells another story.

That Abraham had two sons is a historical event. Abraham and Sarah (Abram and Sarai at the time) thought they would help God out in keeping His promise. It did not start out well.

GENESIS 16.1-6:

"Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face."

Now the LORD had promised Abram an heir, one that would come forth out of his own bowels (from himself, his actual son, his flesh and blood, Genesis 15.4). That it did not happen immediately seems to have caused

them to think that they needed to step in and help. This may be similar to what the Galatian believers were experiencing regarding their own "perfection" (Galatians 3.3). The false apostles may have convinced them that they needed to help God out in their sanctification. Maybe they thought this among themselves first and then the false apostles came in and convinced them. Whichever is the case, Paul is teaching from the law (the Torah) that to go to fleshly means to help God fulfill His promises will not yield good results. The LORD reconfirmed to Abraham that He would indeed fulfill His promise:

GENESIS 17.19:

"And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."

The LORD's work would be completed by Him without intervention. Abraham's seed would be a great nation. **"In Isaac shall thy seed be called"** (Genesis 21.12).

So now Paul uses this to speak of liberty in Christ vs. bondage to the law. Now **"the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good"** (Romans 7.12). The problem though, is that the law gave a command to a people who were carnal, sold under sin (Romans 7.14). Israel as a nation, and the people individually, proved time and again that they were also the sons of Adam and as such unable to keep the law. The law brings bondage to all of us because we are unable to keep it, and it becomes the law of sin and death. It carries with it a curse. But praise God that

ROMANS 8.1-4:

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 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: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

GALATIANS 3.13:

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

ROMANS 10.4:

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

The first covenant in our passage is the law, given by God through Moses to the Israelites. This is the one given from Mount Sinai and Paul here wants us to think about Hagar the slave when we think of this covenant. This covenant from Sinai "gendereth", or gives birth to bondage. The Jerusalem "which now is" refers to the Jewish religion as such, and the city itself is witness of that. That city has been in bondage since they were carried away to Babylon. In John 8.33, the Jews who seemingly believed on the Lord Jesus had a real problem with Him saying that they would be set free. They claimed that they were Abraham's seed, and that as such they were never in bondage to anyone. Yet they were under Gentile rule even then. At this late date (2016), the "sovereign" nation of Israel, created by the

U.N., cannot even protect its own people without condemnation from just about all of the United Nations. Jerusalem today is still in bondage.

But Jerusalem which is above, the city of Abraham's heirs according to the promise is free. This "mother of us all" is free, and gives birth to free children. This is a real but unseen city because it is above, and is in contrast to the Jerusalem that now is. There will be a new Jerusalem on earth someday, as described in Revelation 21.2.

The other covenant is that which is in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11.25, Matthew 26.28) and this covenant gives birth to freedom. **"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"** (John 8.36).

There is indeed also a new covenant that God will make with Israel, as mentioned in Jeremiah 31.31-34 and Ezekiel 36.22-32. This new covenant will be fulfilled to the houses of Israel and Judah. This new

covenant can only be fulfilled on the basis of the death of Christ for sin. The new covenant that is in Christ's blood now blesses those that have put their faith in Him because of God's grace. This is true whether they are Jew or Gentile.

And speaking of this new covenant (or testament), the work of the law is again contrasted to the work of the spirit in context of this new covenant:

2 CORINTHIANS 3.6:

"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

2 CORINTHIANS 3.17:

"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

GALATIANS 5.1:

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

CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON: GALATIANS 4:27-31

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. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. 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. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

The story of the Nation of Israel is one that is of "children according to the promise". Isaac, by whom the seed of Abraham was called, was a child of impossibility by human standards, but with God nothing is impossible. The greater promised seed was also a child of impossibility, but she that knew not a man conceived by the Holy Spirit and brought forth the Savior. In between there were others. Paul quotes here from Isaiah 54.1, where the prophet is speaking the LORD's words about the Nation forsaken and then gathered by her Husband and Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. And so we learn from this that the works which God completes that are impossible by human effort are more than possible with God. That which He promises He will perform. The one born of the promise will come forth, and the promise of God to complete His work in us will happen. He will perfect us, but it will not be by the flesh (Galatians 3.3).

When Paul speaks here of the one born after the flesh persecuting him that was born after the Spirit, he was probably speaking of this episode:

GENESIS 21.8-12:

"And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

In the passage in Genesis, Ishmael is said to be mocking. In Galatians, it is said that he persecuted Isaac. It is quite possible that there was much more straining their relationship than this one episode of mocking. It is also true to say that the nations of the world in general, and oftentimes particularly those from Ishmael, are enemies of Israel, the Nation born to the seed of promise. In this case though, the enmity is from those who are after the flesh. In context of Galatians, it is those who attempt and press others to attempt to perfect the flesh

according to law. Even today, there is a tendency to lean toward the reintroduction of law so that the Christian knows how to live. We who believe the scripture that we are not under law but under grace are accused of "easy believism" or of teaching "cheap grace". But we do not teach any such thing. They attempt to "harmonize the law and the Gospel", but law and grace are not in harmony. They are not the same song.

ROMANS 3.19:

"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."

ROMANS 6.14:

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

The difference between living by the Spirit rather than by the flesh in regards to sin is stated in the following:

ROMANS 8.5-13:

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the

dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

In Galatians, Paul speaks of living by the flesh in regards to attempting to perfect ourselves by the flesh. Both cases are living by the flesh as opposed to living by the Spirit, and there is little difference in the language that he uses. All of us find ourselves at one point of life or another, even when we know better, giving the "bondwoman and her son" residence.

GALATIANS 4.30:

"Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

Nothing that we accomplish according to the flesh has any inheritance or value with God. It is in that category of "wood, hay, and stubble" (1 Corinthians 3.12). See the comparison between the ministry of the law compared to the ministry of the Spirit.

2 CORINTHIANS 3.3, 6-7, 9-11:

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart... Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the

letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away... For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious."

Why would we not leave behind all attempts to perfect the flesh (Adam, who all in him die), or living to gratification of the flesh, and live by the Spirit?

Since we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free:

GALATIANS 5.1:

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

GALATIANS CHAPTER 5: TRUE FREEDOM

As I ended many of the studies in chapter 4, I found them all leading to the first verse in this chapter:

GALATIANS 5.1:

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

There is no doubt good reason for this. Paul says "Stand fast therefore" to refer us back to that which is stated previously. Because of our position in Christ as "sons of God", we are not to allow ourselves to be put into bondage. The price that Jesus our Lord paid to set us free is too high to allow ourselves to go back to bondage. This includes bondage to sin, and bondage to the law.

For us to seek to justify or to sanctify ourselves a little bit more by the law brings us to the argument of this chapter: Either grace justifies and sanctifies us or law does. It is either by Christ or by law. It is not a "both

and" proposition. It is one or the other. But scripture is clear in this regard:

ROMANS 3.20:

"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."

This should make clear that there is one choice, and one choice alone in the matter.

Chapter 5 goes on to teach us that living by the Spirit under grace will not produce the works of the flesh, and that not being under law is not an occasion to indulge the flesh. As much as we have been crucified with Christ and are therefore dead to the law, we are also dead unto sin and dead unto the flesh. We are alive unto Christ and are free to live and walk in the Spirit.

GALATIANS 5.24-25:

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

THE LAW OR CHRIST: GALATIANS 5:1-6

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Everything in chapters 1 through 4 has been leading to this statement to stand fast in the liberty that our Lord granted us. As stated before, I do not believe in cheap grace. Some who stand for law-works justification or law-works sanctification or so-called "Lordship salvation" may make that accusation, but I do not teach or believe in cheap grace. I believe in the riches of God's grace (Ephesians 1.7). I believe in redemption through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ by which we are granted forgiveness of sins "according to the riches of His grace". I believe that we are justified FREELY by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3.24). It was never cheap, for the Son of God paid dearly for the grace that is given to us. It is, however, given to us freely, and our freedom should not be surrendered to those who attempt to bring us back under the bondage of law. Paul is making the logical conclusion here to his logical argument to STAND FAST—stand with your feet firmly FASTENED to the ground of liberty in Christ Jesus. Do not allow anyone to place that yoke on you that Peter said "neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15.10).

Now comes another statement by Paul that is very striking:

GALATIANS 5.2:

"Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

Read this entire passage several times to get a sense of this statement before continuing. Recall also from chapter 2:

GALATIANS 2.21:

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

The Galatian believers were being swayed from believing the truth of the gospel of the grace of God to another gospel. This other gospel was not a gospel at all. It was not another possible alternative way of salvation and entering into a right relationship with God. It is a perversion of the gospel, and Paul would allow none of it. By inspiration and authority delegated to him, he said very firmly:

GALATIANS 1.8-9:

"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. 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."

That the believers could allow themselves to be put under bondage to law was one problem. They would lose the enjoyment of the free Christian life. But there is more: his argument is that it is either by Christ or by the law. If you can make yourself righteous by the law, what do you need Christ for? If you can make yourself holy or perfected by the law, what do you need Christ for? The gospel of Jesus Christ starts with the premise that

ROMANS 3.19-20:

"...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. 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."

The law carries with it a curse, and under the law we all carry that curse with us:

GALATIANS 3.10-13:

"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. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 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..."

If we simply ended with verse 10, we would all be under the curse. None of us have ever continued in all things written in the law, either before or after the time that we knew them. But praise God that Christ has redeemed us from that curse, and that redemption came at an infinite price. It certainly was not cheap. He redeemed us through His blood. He bore that curse for us so that we would not need to bear it. So what profit is there in going back under the law? By doing so you are acting as if Christ never redeemed you. Are we just dealing with just circumcision to enter into the covenant? A study in the book of Deuteronomy would be good to see the covenant relationship that the people of Israel had, and entering into the covenant by circumcision was an entering in to this works covenant. They had truly become debtors to do the whole law. They did not, for they were not able to bare it, and so Israel was indeed under the curse. Those that encourage law-works living should remember where all this led. The city on a hill that would manifest God's glory among the nations by keeping His law did no such thing.

ROMANS 2.24:

"For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written."

The law did accomplish something that is revealed in Romans:

ROMANS 5.20:

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound..."

When law enters in to our Christian life and walk:

ROMANS 7.9:

"...when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

But we have a standing as justified by grace (Romans 3.24), justified by faith (Romans 5.1), and justified by blood (Romans 5.9). God has expressly declared us to be righteous. It is His declaration that makes it so and He declares it righteously by virtue of the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary. **"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"** (Romans 8.16), so with His witness, we will trust Him that what He has said He will do. I do not feel righteous or holy, but He says that I am. The arm of flesh (law keeping) will not add to my righteousness or holiness, but only revive sin.

We wait in hope for the righteousness (experientially) that He has declared judicially.

PHILIPPIANS 1.6:

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ..."

PHILIPPIANS 2.13:

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Neither circumcision (Jewishness), nor uncircumcision ("Gentileness"), make any difference in Jesus Christ. Jews and Gentiles are all proved "under sin" (Romans 3.9), but praise God that though all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3.23), all that believe are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3.24).

ROMANS 10.12-13:

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved."

One cannot enter into the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ by becoming a Jew (circumcision). There is no entering into the grace of our Lord Jesus by works of any sort. It is only by faith in the One who died for us carrying our sins in His own body.

ROMANS 5.2:

"By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Faith working by love will bring about changes in the believer that are impossible by attempts to live by the law. So, we patiently wait. While we wait we trust in God that what He has said He will do. Remember, we walk by faith not by sight!

A LITTLE LEAVEN: GALATIANS 5:7-10

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. 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.

Paul here looks back to the beginning, when he called them by the gospel of grace. But the enemies of the gospel not only turned the Galatian believers against him, they turned them against the truth. He likens them to runners racing off course. They are racing off course because someone had laid down a false course. This false course has law-works as conditions of righteousness and holiness.

But the law is finished in Christ!

ROMANS 10.4:

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

EPHESIANS 2.15:

"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..."

COLOSSIANS 2.14:

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross..."

Paul did not add law-works to the gospel, and did not allow others to do it either.

ACTS 15.1-2:

"And certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner

of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had *NO SMALL DISSENSION AND DISPUTATION* with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question."

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

It may seem that this idea of circumcision is no big deal. Go along to get along might be the argument today. But the picture of leaven here makes the problem plain. If we let a little bit of error into our doctrine, look at what it becomes. The Lord told this parable:

MATTHEW 13.33:

"Another parable spake He unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."

Many have argued the issue and we will not get into here what exactly the Lord is speaking of in this parable, but look what happened to the meal: the whole was leavened.

In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul brings up leaven to speak of sin and immorality being allowed to continue and thrive in the assembly. It was not only allowed, it seems that it was

applauded. Here we are speaking of leaven as bad doctrine. Let a little in, the whole lump will be leavened. All of the doctrine will turn bad. A look at "church history" will show what a little leaven will do. Paul knew this and this is why he came at them so strongly in this matter.

But the minister of the Lord always has hope. **"I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded."** Paul knew that his labor in the Lord was not in vain, and later told them to bear each other's burdens, and **"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"** (Galatians 6.1). Such is the ministry of correction. It is to correct the error and not to shame the one in error. We need to remember this in dealing with erring brethren as well. Such was the apostle's attitude toward the Corinthians in their behavioral "leaven":

2 Corinthians 2.3-11:

"And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love

toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

Such it would be in the Galatians' doctrinal leaven. Grace does not demand revenge or retribution. When the change and repentance comes, the work of correction is done. There is no reason to beat it to death. The goal is to bring the erring individual[s] back, not to shame them.

Now those leading the rebellion against the apostle's message would bear their own judgment. Maybe this sounds harsh, but remember that

GALATIANS 1.8-9:

"...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. 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."

It is imperative that every gospel preacher "get it right" when it comes to the message of grace.

"Pause, reader, and consider! Are you attempting to explain the Gospel to others without the exact knowledge of your theme? Would you choose to take a remedy which had been compounded by a blind druggist? Are you persisting in error because of indolence, carelessness, or mere theological prejudice? Failure to state accurately the Gospel of saving grace may result in the damnation of the

misguided, and the meriting, at least, of the anathema of God on the part of the blind guide. After due consideration, no sane person will treat these facts lightly".

{Lewis Sperry Chafer, GRACE}

In this we state also that it is of utmost importance that we treat the Scriptures in the proper way, as Paul said to Timothy:

2 TIMOTHY 2.15:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

It is not study to show your pastor approved, for the workman of God is to study to show himself approved. He will surely

never show himself approved unto God if he preaches a "gospel" mixing law and grace. The two cannot coexist. They are not to be "harmonized". They are by the same composer, but not the same symphony. The result of the mixture is the "Babel" confusion that exists in most of Christendom. They all may glory in their history, or some great historical figure or movement, but let this be said of us:

GALATIANS 6.14:

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

THE OFFENCE OF THE CROSS: GALATIANS 5:11-12

And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

Paul is stating here once and for all that he does not yet preach circumcision. We may say at this point, having this full epistle, that it should go without saying. He makes it clear here that if he would begin to preach circumcision, the persecution against him would cease. Look at how the Jews in the temple were at relative peace listening to Paul until he mentioned going to the Gentiles:

ACTS 22:21-22:

"And He said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. *And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.*"

Remember that at this time, the assemblies at Jerusalem had peace:

ACTS 9:31:

"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

Now when Paul and his companions visited James and the assembly at Jerusalem, the assembly was at peace with the temple Jews, but it seems that there was issue between the believing Jews and Paul:

ACTS 21:17-25:

"And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us

gladly. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication."

Paul *did not* teach the Jews among the Gentiles to not circumcise their children, which is to say to forsake being Jews.

He *did* teach the Gentiles that they were not to circumcise themselves to become Jews. They were not to be bound under the law of Moses. Paul would later write to the Hebrew believers to go on to perfection (Hebrews 6.1) and to go forth without the camp and bear the reproach of Christ (Hebrews 13.13). There was to be a separation of the Jewish believers from the *Jews' religion*, but he was not teaching that yet.

Paul faced problems also from the unbelieving Jews. They would not accept the gospel that he preached, and would not allow it to be preached to the Gentiles either.

1 THESSALONIANS 2.14–16:

"For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

Paul lived with perils of his own countrymen and perils of the Gentiles (2 Corinthians 11.26), and could have made some of the persecution from his countrymen cease by "preaching circumcision". I take preaching circumcision as "proselytizing" Gentiles, or bringing them into the Jews' religion. Who does not want a new convert to their religion? But what is it?

GALATIANS 3.28:

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither

male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

To be in Christ is not to get into the fold of the Jews' religion. It is to be *in Christ!* There is no difference (Romans 3.22), all have sinned (Romans 3.23), all have to come to Christ by way of the gospel which is the "preaching of the cross" (1 Corinthians 1.18–24), and He is rich to all that call upon Him (Romans 10.12). The Jew is no longer in the place of privilege where he once was under the old dispensation. He is in no way excluded either, for **"through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we [Jews] shall be saved, even as they" [Gentiles]** (Acts 15.11). This loss of the place of privilege is what I believe the "offense of the cross" is referring to in this context.

1 CORINTHIANS 1.18, 22–24:

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ... For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

The cross of Christ is what stands between God and the world. Man does not object to religion or wisdom. He loves philosophy (man's wisdom). But the cross? The cross is the way between man and God, and man's religion and philosophy will not lead him there. That is the offense of the cross. It lets mankind know where he really stands. Have you, reader, accepted that Christ died YOUR death on that cross? Believe it and be saved! Be made righteous in God's court! That is the word of

the cross: The power of God and the wisdom of God!

GALATIANS 5.12:

"I would they were even cut off which trouble you."

These are STRONG words for these "false brethren"! This passage, along with Philippians 3.2 are probably where Paul earned the false accusation of being anti-Semitic. Paul loved his brethren according to the flesh and looked forward to the day when they would turn to the Lord. Romans 9-11 should give ample evidence of this. But look at what he is wishing for them here! The italicized words in the verse below when found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament are the same as that which is translated "cut off" in Galatians 5.12:

DEUTERONOMY 23.1:

"He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD."

It is elsewhere used in the New Testament to describe amputations or cutting of ropes. These are strong words, but they are

what the Apostle describes them to want, and therefore he is putting it on them. In Philippians, he does not call them the "circumcision", but the "concision" (mutilation). When it is not of God, the badge of the covenant becomes nothing more than a mutilation. They were looking to "glory in the flesh" of their converts (Galatians 6.12), but the Holy Spirit speaking through Paul puts this on the same level as that described in Deuteronomy 23.

There is no one who felt more kinship to the Jewish people than Paul, but His call as Apostle of Jesus Christ and the Apostle of the Gentiles could not allow him to be soft regarding this error. Perhaps this could help to explain the Lord's words regarding discipleship:

LUKE 14.26:

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

Our loyalty to the Lord must always come first!

CALLED UNTO LIBERTY: GALATIANS 5:13–15

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

The reason that Paul stood so much against the actions and teachings of the "false brethren" (legalists) was because what they were proposing was a new yoke of bondage. It was a new slavery. Those who are called by the gospel are called to liberty, not bondage. As "called by the gospel", I mean those who hear the gospel and believe it.

ROMANS 10.17:

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

EPHESIANS 1.13:

"In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise..."

And the gospel that we are called by is:

1 CORINTHIANS 15.1–4:

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

Remember Peter's words at the "Jerusalem council":

ACTS 15.10:

"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

Israel could not carry the heavy yoke of the law when they WERE indeed under it. How much less will we be able to carry it when we are NOT under it. We are called by God through the gospel to the "glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8.21).

So now Paul takes a slightly unexpected turn. Actually, it is not a turn. He rather plots out the correct path when the believer may be deceived to follow another path that leads where we ought not to go.

GALATIANS 5.13:

"Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

This is where we find spelled out for us the true use of Christian liberty. I am free, but being free from sin makes me free to serve. This is freedom to serve the One who said **"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My**

yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matthew 11.28-30). How much more we can find rest in Him now that He is at the right hand of God in the heavenlies **"far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come"** (Ephesians 1.21).

Using liberty as an occasion to the flesh does not exalt liberty. It brings us back to bondage:

ROMANS 6.16-18:

"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? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

You are not in bondage to sin if you are in Christ. If you have not believed the gospel that Christ died for your sins according to the scriptures and was buried and rose again according to the scriptures, then you are still in bondage to sin. If you have, then you are in Christ, so the question is raised, why would anyone go back under sin?

ROMANS 6.23:

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

All sin ever paid was death, but God has freely given us eternal life in Christ. Why go back to serve the cruel, slave-driving task master, when you are set free from sin by the Lord of Glory?

Then there is the issue of rights: I have rights, but I am free to give up my rights for the good of others.

ROMANS 14.20-21:

"For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 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."

1 CORINTHIANS 8.9, 13:

"But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak... Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

Paul himself, as the Apostle of Jesus Christ had "rights" as an apostle, and stated that he could make demands of the assemblies because of his position. But the gospel is far more important than our comfort:

1 CORINTHIANS 9.11-12:

"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ."

1 CORINTHIANS 9.14-15:

"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void."

Paul did not write these things to make them offer to give for him, but that they would follow his example of thinking of what is best for those he loves (the assemblies in Christ), rather than what would be good for him. He also gave up rights that others may be saved:

1 CORINTHIANS 9.19–23:

"For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 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; 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. 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. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

This is not to indicate compromise, for "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump", but it does indicate not flaunting freedom.

1 CORINTHIANS 10.23–24, 32–33:

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth... Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

We find these chapters in 1 Corinthians very enlightening regarding the delegated authority that Paul truly had, and it is really more overwhelming to find that he is speaking of his authority in the context of NOT exerting it because he is more concerned about others than about getting his fair share. "Love thy neighbor as thyself" could hardly be better demonstrated concerning Christian liberty than it is in Paul's exhortations to the Corinthians. How much greater is that demonstrated by our Savior:

PHILIPPIANS 2.5–8:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

He laid down His life for His friends (John 15.13), and wonder of wonders, for His enemies (Romans 5.10) as well!

Let this mind be in you and me as well. As we close this study, let us look at the last part of this passage. I have found it quite interesting that this warning about biting and devouring one another occurs in the letter against legalism. Does it not usually follow that legalism brings with it a "biting and devouring" because we make ourselves appear better by destroying others, pointing out their failures? Let us not do this, but build each other up, and love our neighbors as ourselves!

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH: GALATIANS 5:16-21

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 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. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 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.

If you have followed this study of Galatians from the beginning, I am sure that there is a well-worn path between Galatians and Romans, especially to chapters 3 and 8. Romans 8 brings us to our life of victory as walking in the Spirit. Please read and re-read this wonderful declaration of the victorious life that the Lord has for the one walking in the Spirit. In our passage in Galatians, we are again instructed to this path of victory. The victory is NOT won by dwelling on the greatness of our sin, or thinking about how we can control sin, or cleaning up our act, or self-loathing, or any such thing. All of these are the flesh trying to gain mastery of the flesh. They are Adam working by Adam's methods to change what Adam is by nature. But there is no victory here. Adam will prove himself to be Adam every time. Praise God that He did not save us into a sin management program, but into the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And the instruction is not to press down sin and gain mastery over the body of sin. The instruction is:

COLOSSIANS 3.1-4:

"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. When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

The work of the Spirit in us, the Spirit that is "life because of righteousness" is so completely contrary to the old man that they are said to "lust against each other". They are not just opposed, but militantly opposed. The flesh enjoys when the believer fights against it, because the works of the flesh are manifested in the fighting, even if the fighting is with itself. We do not need to fight it. We need a new life, and that is what God gives to us:

ROMANS 8.11:

"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Notice that He shall quicken our *mortal* bodies. This is not a promise of resurrection as much as it is a promise of new life now, in our mortal bodies. The question becomes then, why do I still struggle and why do I still feel defeated? The Spirit does not seem to be at work in me. These questions still come to

me as well. The one thing that we can do while our feelings are contrary to what the Lord has said in His word is that we need to trust the Lord and have faith in His Word, not in our feelings. We need to be "led" by the Spirit. Now, one will not be able to discern the leading of the Spirit if he is not reading and listening to the revealed and written Word of God.

Notice how Paul continues:

GALATIANS 5.18:

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

Notice the exact phrasing here—not under the law. If we are walking in the Spirit submitting to His leading, or possibly the sense here is submitting to the leading of the new man in us, then we are not under the law. He does not say that we are "outlaws", or that we live above the law, but that we are not under it. When we are led by the Spirit, the law has absolutely no claim on us. We are walking in the sphere where the law has no jurisdiction. We are under grace. This is the life that defines us.

Now all believers are called the children ("born ones") and *sons* of God:

GALATIANS 3.26:

"For ye are all the children [sons] of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

But those who are led by the Spirit are truly living in the full capacity of that position of sonship.

ROMANS 8.14:

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Paul then enumerates several "works of the flesh". This list, when broken down, looks

to be a list of what is on the entertainment schedule, or a list of weekend plans. This should be no surprise. The world walks in the flesh as God has said, so why should we be surprised when the flesh acts like it. We should not be surprised when an unsaved sinner acts like one. These are the works of the flesh. What WE should be doing is walking in the Spirit so as to not be accomplishing the works of the flesh. We walk by faith and trust God. Notice then Paul says that **"they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."**

The idea of inheriting the kingdom of God is found in Paul's epistles, and it is quite interesting that it is related to behavior, except in 1 Corinthians 15 where he is about to unveil the secret of the resurrection at the rapture:

1 CORINTHIANS 15.50:

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

Our bodies as they are now cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

The other times that Paul speaks of what or who will not inherit the kingdom of God, he speaks of unrighteous behavior as defining the person who will not inherit the kingdom of God.

1 CORINTHIANS 6.9–10:

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

EPHESIANS 5.5:

"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

Now, let it be said that this is not a "qualifier" for grace through faith righteousness, or grace through faith sanctification. It is important in this matter to remember that in these passages the works of the flesh and the unrighteous are being described. The one who is living as a son of God, led by the Spirit, will not behave in this way. It is not required that a law be made for us to live under when we are led by the Spirit. The one who is saved and trying to live by the power of the flesh will fail. See Romans 7, and the good news that Paul tells us to fall back on as he leads in to the wonderful truth of *no condemnation*:

ROMANS 7.24-25:

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the

law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

This idea of inheriting the kingdom of God is an important study point that needs to be further developed. One thing is certain however, that the believer in Jesus Christ is commanded not be involved with the things that they were saved from:

EPHESIANS 5.6-7:

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them."

1 CORINTHIANS 6.11:

"And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

God forbid that the works of the flesh should ever define the believer in Christ. The children of disobedience have no inheritance with you. You should never be a partaker with them either!

THE OUTWARD SIGN OF AN INWARD FAITH: GALATIANS 5:22-26

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Now we come to what the Spirit produces. As when the works of the flesh were described, they were not listed as if to say "if you do not do these, you will not be walking in the flesh", it is the same here in discussing the fruit of the Spirit. Paul is not giving instruction with the fruit of the Spirit specified as "start showing love, joy, peace, etc., and you will be walking in the Spirit". It is really, that when we operate in the flesh, this is what we will accomplish, and if we walk in the Spirit, this is the fruit that we will bear. Notice that Paul states that "against such there is no law". The law put demands on the flesh that it could not meet, and it put prohibitions on the flesh that excited the flesh against it.

ROMANS 7.5:

"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."

But walking in the Spirit, the production of the fruit of the Spirit is such that the law has nothing against it, and no law is against it. So is the Christian who is not under law but under grace "antinomian"? Not at all in any way! We walk in a sphere that the law has no jurisdiction, and that if the law had jurisdiction, it would find no fault.

ROMANS 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."

Positionally, and by way of God's declaration, our "old man", Adam, and the old nature that is ours by virtue of being children of Adam, is crucified with Christ by virtue of our being reckoned in Christ. Our job is to recognize that it is so. This is one of those cases where we go with "thus saith the Lord", rather than by what we see and feel:

ROMANS 6.11:

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Our other job is to walk in that fact that we have appropriated by faith:

GALATIANS 5.24:

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

The flesh is on the cross here. In chapter 2, we learned that I, the "ego" is on the cross.

GALATIANS 2.20:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live

in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

The flesh wants to please the ego, the affections, and the lusts. The Spirit produces fruit that is supernatural in character. We must be careful that when we teach the "fruit of the Spirit" that we are not teaching a behavioral code. We are speaking of what the Spirit produces, because it is the Spirit. The old man is dead, and any life that is in us is because of Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 5.14–15:

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."

Now many might object and say that this is all a bunch of nonsense and doublespeak. The truth is that Adam is positionally dead, just as we are positionally raised up together with Christ, and seated with Him in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2.6). Again, our job is not to make it so, but to reckon it so. There will come a time when what we are positionally in Christ will become our reality as well.

1 CORINTHIANS 15.50–54:

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put

on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

PHILIPPIANS 3.20–21:

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

We shall be changed! Now we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5.7), and **"we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith"** (Galatians 5.5).

Paul starts another statement saying that "if we live in the Spirit", as a way of implying that we do. It is much like a father saying to his grown up son, "if you are an adult, act like it." He is not saying it as a matter of doubt, but as a challenge to "act our age". We are to walk in that sphere in which we are alive.

This chapter ends with this statement:

GALATIANS 5.26:

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

Desiring vain glory is the opposite of the truth that I am crucified with Christ. Provoking and envying one another are works of the flesh. Putting ourselves under law voluntarily (God has not placed us under the law) excites the flesh to fulfill its nature, so as I stated in a previous lesson, is it any

wonder that in context of warnings against legalism, Paul states:

GALATIANS 5.15:

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

Brothers and Sisters, we are redeemed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and called into liberty in Him. Take hold by faith of that which God says about who you are, and walk accordingly. Trust Him for the results, for He wants you to bear much fruit.

PHILIPPIANS 1.6:

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ..."

PHILIPPIANS 2.13:

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

GALATIANS CHAPTER 6: IMPORTANT CLOSING COMMENTS

We have made it to the end portion of this letter, and here is where we have the lessons from the letter coming into practical use.

The first item that Paul addresses is with a brother who is taken in a fault. The call is completely a call to restoration, and not a call to punishment or to demand restitution. We see the heart of the Apostle in dealing with not only those in the assemblies who are in sin or of those living according to the works of the flesh, but also those who have fallen into the errors of the false apostles and their false "gospel". He follows this up with the reminder that we give account of ourselves to the Lord, and it will not be about how we compare to others. At His judgment seat, we will bear our own burden.

As we continue, we are reminded that the seed we plant will be the fruit that we harvest. The result is the encouragement to "do good unto all, especially unto them who

are of the household of faith". Let us remember also that this is without the law as our taskmaster. Grace produces a joy in well doing that the law never could.

Paul then brings this letter to a close with the reminder of the difficulties and tribulations that he faced and continued to face for the truth of the gospel unmingled and uncorrupted with works-religion.

The cross of Christ is our only glory and boast. We remember that our salvation, our walk, our sanctification, and our only hope is in Christ alone. It is in His death that we have life. The cross that brought Him open shame is our only glory.

As we begin our study of the last chapter, my prayer for all readers and students is that you will all come to know the greatness of God's grace, what it saved and saves you from, and the glorious life of grace that the Lord Jesus died and rose again to save you to.

THE MINISTRY OF RESTORATION: GALATIANS 6:1-2

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

The last chapter ended with a challenge, that if we live in the Spirit to also walk in the Spirit. Then, the opposite of this was to desire "vain glory", and to provoke and envy one another. If we look back to 5.19-21, the vain glory is very much in accord with the works of the flesh. And there is nothing like law-keeping religion to excite the works of the flesh. But this does not need to be, and Paul does not call on the Galatian believers to shun those operating in the energy of the flesh. He is seeking their restoration. He is not seeking restitution. In this call, it is instructional and an example for us all living under grace, that whether doctrinal faults as in Galatia, or behavioral faults as in Corinth, there should be spiritual believers who take it upon themselves to restore the ailing brother. That was the entire point of this epistle that the Lord gave to Paul to write, and He has preserved it for our edification and instruction. Those overtaken by the false doctrine of the false apostles needed to be restored to the place from which they had fallen. They needed to be restored to grace.

Sometimes, it seems, there is a joy to see grief in someone that has caused grief in you. That is not, however, walking in the Spirit. That is pure fleshly energy. That is not operating under grace or showing the grace that you have received to others. It is not the way that Paul dealt with the Galatians or the Corinthians:

2 CORINTHIANS 2.3-10:

"And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ..."

The goal of all of it was not grief. It was rather the repentance of him that was in the wrong. It would not, and should never be a stick to beat the offender down.

2 CORINTHIANS 7.9-10:

"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance:

for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

We live in a day and age here in America when no one is supposed to "judge" anyone. Matthew 7.1 has become the most important verse of scripture. But let us remember that we do not have an "anything goes" Christianity. We have been called to holiness (1 Corinthians 6.20, Colossians 1.22, and many more). The goal of correction is not "judging" but it is restoration. I cannot restore my car by ignoring the rust and I cannot restore my brother by ignoring the fault. I can, however, graciously come along side him and restore him, and then rejoice in his restoration.

Notice too that the instruction is to "ye which are spiritual". The ministry of restoration is not for everyone. The Christian operating in the flesh cannot restore another Christian operating in the flesh. Only those who are walking in the Spirit are qualified.

1 CORINTHIANS 2.15-16:

"But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."

This is not in any way to say that restoration ministry is best left up to the professionals, but it does mean that if one is not walking properly himself, he has no energy to help someone else.

LUKE 6.39:

"Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

The Christian who is walking in the spirit will walk in a spirit of meekness. He will not be operating in anger, and will not joy in the fall of others. There does come a time when the rod of correction (1 Corinthians 4.21) is necessary, but coming in the spirit of meekness is the Lord's way of correcting. There is a time when the erring brother will not take correction. There may be a time too that the sin is so gross that the heavy hand of correction must come quickly, but even then remember the goal:

1 CORINTHIANS 5.3-5:

"For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, *that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*"

How wonderful it will be to see our brother who was in error confirmed, and saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Let us not confuse this with justification, for that was by grace when we believed on Him Who justifies the ungodly. But at the judgment seat of Christ, we want to see our brother richly rewarded. How great a blessing we will have been to him!

Let us remember too that we are also capable of falling into error.

GALATIANS 6.1B:

"...considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

As we consider ourselves having also the possibility to fall into sin and error, let us treat our brother in the way we wish to be

restored. Verse 2 gives the call to bear one another's burdens. We can only do this here. We may wish to bear another's burden at the judgment seat, but we will all only bear our own there (vs. 5). This ministry is available to the believer walking in the spirit now.

As we bear one another's burdens we do fulfill the law of Christ. While we are not under law, it is a joy to fulfill it simply by walking in the Spirit.

ROMANS 8.4:

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The law of Christ may refer here to simply living in the way that is prescribed to us living under grace. Paul may also be hearkening back to something specific, like:

MATTHEW 7.12:

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

In either case, there is encouragement and warning here. You believers walking in the Spirit, work for the restoration of your brother. And do it in the kindness that you would want to be shown if you were the one at fault. Remember the grace that was shown to you:

EPHESIANS 4.32:

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

TO KNOW OUR PROPER PLACE: GALATIANS 6:3–5

For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.

Now some might say that Paul certainly thought an awful lot of himself. In reading 2 Corinthians chapter 11, we might think that Paul is boasting about all that he has accomplished. In Romans 11, he says that he magnifies his office. But this is where rightly dividing the Word of Truth is necessary. We must distinguish between Paul as the man who was once known as Saul of Tarsus, and Paul, the called Apostle of Jesus Christ and the Apostle of the Gentiles. His office was, and is, a high calling and a high position. When speaking from that office, it is important that he speaks and writes with the authority of that apostolic office. We see the two aspects of Paul in the following:

2 CORINTHIANS 12.11:

"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."

The truth of the matter is that Paul always marveled at the grace of God that called (actually, pressed) him into service. He was the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1.15). He called himself less than the least of all saints (Ephesians 3.8). He referred to himself as the least of the apostles and not fit to be called an apostle (1 Corinthians 15.9), yet God's grace and call was not dependent upon his fitness to ministry, but on the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

But to us all as members of the Body of Christ, we are called to remember our place and not to think of ourselves higher than what we are:

ROMANS 12.3:

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Some may think themselves wise because of past education, or upbringing, or status, but the scriptures remind us that we have nothing except what was given to us from God. We are to use what we have to the glory of God, and should never think of ourselves as indispensable. The work of God will go on without us, but how blessed we are when we submit ourselves to His work, and to His wisdom.

1 CORINTHIANS 3.18–20:

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."

1 CORINTHIANS 1.31:

"That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

The world's wisdom does not commend us to God, and when we become arrogant in our abilities, we often miss some of the simplest and most important things. The Corinthians boasted of their knowledge and their leaders, but they ignored gross sin in their midst. This was allowed to continue while they boasted:

1 CORINTHIANS 5.2:

"And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."

Another thought in this idea of not thinking higher than we should of ourselves is in the area of theories about things not revealed in the scriptures. Our theories about the councils of God before creation or other things of such nature which are not revealed in scripture are speculations. There are many things that God has chosen not to reveal, and that is His sovereign prerogative to not reveal them. Paul warns of this type of fleshly vanity, which leads us away from Christ:

COLOSSIANS 2.18-19:

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

Our wisdom is found in Christ and in His Word. What He has revealed is what we should preach and teach. Going beyond what

scripture reveals will never lead to anything profitable. Paul goes on from this thought of not thinking higher than we ought to think to a reminder, or maybe we are being taught for the first time about being responsible to God for ourselves:

GALATIANS 6.4:

"But let every man prove his own work..."

This is the mention of the judgment seat of Christ in the book of Galatians. This is a good reminder that we are responsible to God for ourselves, and not for others. We are not here to fix others so that we may have the glory.

ROMANS 14.10-12:

"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. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

We *are* responsible for how we bear one another's burdens, fulfilling the law of Christ. We labor much on the behalf of others, but not for our own glory. We do it for their good. Paul wrote to the Colossians that he preached to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (Colossians 1.28). It was his job to preach. It was their job to listen. Also to the Corinthians:

2 CORINTHIANS 5.9-10:

"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. 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."

It is our job to listen as well.

1 Corinthians 3.10–15:

"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. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 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. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

God committed unto Paul a dispensation of the gospel (1 Corinthians 9.17). The dispensation of grace was given to him to make known (Ephesians 3.2). In the passage above, he declares that he is a wise masterbuilder, and that he laid the foundation that we are to build on. That foundation is Jesus Christ. When the foundation of a building is laid, it is often etched in the wet concrete the date that the foundation is laid. Paul says this about establishment:

ROMANS 16.25–27:

"Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and

the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

Did you get that God establishes the believer according to Paul's gospel? Did you get also that God will prove the work that we build on that foundation to prove what sort it is? What will be the result of work that does not abide that is built on that foundation? What will be the result of work that is built on another foundation?

We are all responsible to God for our own work. **"For every man shall bear his own burden."** One of the burdens that we bear is the burden of others for their good and benefit.

1 THESSALONIANS 2.19–20:

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy."

When Christ sits on His judgment seat, we will rejoice when others receive their reward. We will rejoice when we know we helped another believer along the way to receive those rewards. The Lord will richly reward those who put others above themselves and bear their burdens—for His sake!

SOWING AND REAPING: GALATIANS 6:6–10

Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 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. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

The first point in this section of the scripture is a communication between the student of the Word and the teacher of the Word. This term "communicate" is the Greek term **κοινωνέω** (*koinōneō*), which has the thought of fellowship, partnering together, sharing, working together. It *could* have the idea of financial support, but this is not necessarily the only meaning. Coming off of verse 5, where we are reminded that every man shall bear his own burden, we should remember that the teacher bears a great burden, and from verse 2 that we should all bear each other's burden, thus fulfilling the law of Christ. Again, it could be financial support, but it could be helping to carry other weight. It could also be encouragement, or just something as simple as friendship. That is a wonderful aspect of grace. We have many ways to show kindness to each other and to support each other, and none are left out.

Before moving on from this idea of sharing between the teacher and the student of the Word, we should be reminded of the way that Paul did not insist on support from the assemblies he ministered to, even though he let them know that he had the right:

1 CORINTHIANS 9.11–18:

"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap

your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel."

Paul would rather *not* exert his right over the assemblies and work with his own hands than to even give the indication that he was living off of them. His desire for the Corinthians was not their gifts to him, but they themselves:

2 CORINTHIANS 12.14:

"Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children."

Paul did love how the Philippian assembly communicated with him and was thankful for their gifts to him and their support:

PHILIPPIANS 4.14-17:

"Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account."

This communicating with him was the evidence that they were bearing the fruit of the good news of Christ. They were sowing to the spirit, and they were reaping fruit unto life everlasting. Paul had ministered to them, and saw their generosity as fruit he was reaping unto life everlasting. The Philippians' sowing was Paul's reaping. His wishes for the Galatians was the same joy and the same fruit. This fruit does not come from law-keeping, but it comes from a heart transformed by Christ through the gospel. It is grace showing itself in grace. Just as we are forgiven by grace (Ephesians 1.7) and forgive because of grace (Ephesians 4.32), we give by grace with the motive being the grace given to us.

As we move on from "sowing" as communication to others, we come to sowing to the flesh and reaping corruption. Now one

may be tempted to speak of liberty in Christ as license to do anything he pleases, but Scripture never makes such a claim:

ROMANS 6.1-2:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

Rather, we are told that because of our place in Christ, and because of the grace that we have been shown in Him, we are to walk in newness of life (Romans 6.4). This newness of life has no room for the works of the flesh, and if we walk in them, we will reap corruption. There is nothing that the flesh accomplishes that is of any worth. It will all see corruption. Whether it is trying to perfect our old nature by fleshly means or to walk as a Christian by fleshly means (law-keeping), it will all only reap corruption. The best of it will all die when Adam, the old man, dies. That does not even account for the manifest works of the flesh in chapter 5, verses 19-21. It is evident that all of those lead to corruption, often sooner rather than later. Just think of all of the sins and sinful behavior that leads to death, and remind yourself that the wages of sin is death. If that is what we sow, we should not be surprised at the harvest.

We are well aware that planting is a difficult task without an immediate reward. That may be why farming is not an attractive occupation to many. The work is hard, the days are long, and the reward...delayed.

GALATIANS 6.9:

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

But the farmer knows there is a harvest coming, and works diligently that it may come to pass. He prepares the soil, plants the seed, irrigates it, gives it the proper nutrition, makes sure that sunlight is not impeded in his field, and he waits. And waits. So the Word reminds us here that we should not expect instant gratification, but we should be faithful in our service toward our Lord and toward others. God is faithful, let us be faithful to Him.

With faith in our God's faithfulness, we can do good unto all, especially to the

household of faith. That should be remembered when it comes to prioritizing the importance of things. We cannot do everything, but the Lord did not leave us a list. He just gives us our priorities for well doing. And since it is as we have opportunity, we do not have such a long list of things to do. It is "what we can". This also does not give us a time to say that we are done. We have opportunity as long as we are on this earth—until our Lord catches us away! The opportunities are always a blessing—let us take them when we can!

THE CROSS, OUR ONLY GLORY: GALATIANS 6:11–15

Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. 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. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. 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. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

We now are going back to a theme started in chapter 4, verses 11–20. The care that Paul has for his children that he fathered by the gospel is again evident. He is showing this letter that he is writing itself as a further proof. Whether, as said by some commentators, that it is large letters due to his eye condition, or the size of the letter itself that is the proof is of little consequence. Paul wrote this because the need was so great. This falling back to the weak and beggarly elements of religion (Galatians 4.9) was no small thing so Paul wrote no small letter.

Paul's care for the Galatians is an example for us of the Lord's care for us. He truly went through great pains to purchase us for Himself. While no sacrifice on anyone's part can even be measured on the same scale as that of the Son of God, we can go to great lengths for those that we truly love. That is what Paul did with this Galatian letter, and we surely can go out of our way for those we know are in need as well.

It seems too that this is again showing the care that Paul has for his children contrasted with the care that the Judaizers had for themselves. It seems from this passage that these were believers who were in compromise, and would show to the

unbelieving Jews that they too were true Jews. They would show that they were converting Gentiles to become Jews. They were bringing them into the fold of Judaism, and they had the marks in their flesh to prove it. But it is not our marks in the flesh that save us. Isaiah said long ago that "**by His stripes we are healed**" (Isaiah 53.5). So Paul makes it plain that he will not glory in flesh. Whatever glory any may think that is due them, it all goes away when we look at the cross.

To be sure, these who gloried in the flesh needed a religious rite to glory in, because they would make their boast of the law, but could not keep it. Here is Stephen's scathing rebuke of the nation of Israel as a whole:

ACTS 7.51–53:

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

Notice that regardless of their circumcision in the flesh, they are not circumcised in the heart (their innermost being), or in their ears (what or who they choose to hear). They certainly did not hear the prophets, or the Lord Himself. In fact, here is where they have been given the final verdict of GUILTY.

Paul, one of those who at the time of Stephen's rebuke was in fact one of those uncircumcised in heart and ears, later had this to say regarding circumcision:

ROMANS 2.28-29:

"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

However, of these who wanted to rest in the flesh, and substitute religious rites for actual law keeping, Paul gives this reminder earlier in Galatians:

GALATIANS 5.3:

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

But thanks be to God that in place of religious ceremonies and law-keeping, we are complete in Christ:

COLOSSIANS 2.9-13:

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power:

"In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in

putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 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. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses..."

So as complete in Christ, we come back to Him and to His cross. How could an instrument of torturous death become such a glory? It is because of the One who died on it, bearing all of our sins, all of our curse, the full curse of sin and it's just penalty for us. *For me.*

GALATIANS 6.14:

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

Everything that the world offers is nothing when compared to the cross. There is no glory anywhere, save the cross. God forbid that any of us should glory in anything else. At the cross stands the end of all human argument of worthiness to a holy God. At the cross the playing field is leveled. All are guilty, all are unworthy. The cross is truly THE crisis of human history.

ACTS 4.25-28:

"Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do

whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

Jews and Gentiles, acting as one stood in opposition to God's Christ, and now all stand together as only guilty. Guilty of sin and coming short of the glory of God (Romans 3.23), and all as enemies of God by wicked works (Colossians 1.21). Now the only remedy: ***the cross!*** The very place of this awful crime against God's Chosen is the very place that becomes our salvation. How can we glory in anything else?!

The cross of Christ alone is where the new creation begins. How could circumcision or uncircumcision mean anything, when at the cross our glorious Lord took on our shame and guilt and paid it all? How could any religious works mean anything?

Praise God for the wonderful Savior who died for our sins on that awful cross. Amen, Hallelujah!

A MARKED MAN: GALATIANS 6:16-18

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

We are now at the closing remarks of this epistle. Paul limits his bidding of peace and mercy to those that walk according to the rule of glorying only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the new creation that is made by Him. The matter of circumcision or uncircumcision is irrelevant, for

GALATIANS 3:28:

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

In Christ, all earthly distinctions vanish. We all come to Christ on the same ground: guilty sinners with nothing of value within us. Upon believing the gospel that He died for our sins and rose again, we are justified and identified in Christ without distinction.

Paul now bids this peace and mercy upon the Israel of God. Who is this Israel of God? Some think of it to be what Paul is calling the new creation, in other words, the church which is His body. Even some who do not hold to "replacement theology" hold to this being "the church". If that is the case, this is the only time that "the church" is called Israel. (I put "the church" in quotation marks because I prefer not to just use "the church" as the name for the church which is His body. That leads to the error of every time the term church is used throughout the scriptures, it is

referring to the body. That is simply not the case. In Acts, the word church is almost always used to describe a local assembly, and not always one of believers. There are many assemblies, but only one Body of Christ.) The scriptural answer to who this Israel of God is referring to: the "remnant according to the election of grace", i.e., believing Israel (Romans 11.5). The "little flock" (Luke 12.32) who at this time still gathered in Jerusalem as Jews were still Jews. Remember, they were saved as Jews, and they were those that came to the Lord Jesus as the hope of their nation. It seems quite silly to think that when the hope of the nation is realized, the nation ceased to exist. These were they who were "circumcised in heart and ears" (Acts 7.51). Now in the epistle to the Hebrews, they are called to suffer with Christ without the camp (Hebrews 13.13), and we learn from Paul's Gentile epistles the glorious truth of the one body of Jews and Gentiles baptized into one body (1 Corinthians 12.13, Ephesians 2.15, 4.4, etc.). Those gathering as believing Jews in Jerusalem and not attempting to impose their religion on Gentile believers are the Israel of God that Paul is referring to.

Now he is not interested in hearing from anyone about their "marks in the flesh". He had his own marks. He and those with him could say of themselves that they were

2 CORINTHIANS 4.10–11:

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

Not that this servant of the Lord was overcome with his sufferings. As we learned in previous studies, Paul's ministry was to be marked by sufferings (Acts 9.16). The entirety of the age in which we live is marked by sufferings of God's people, and it is a rare time in human history that we do not suffer as God's people. In the United States of America, we have been blessed beyond measure as Christians who do not suffer like others around the world, but we also should not expect this to be the way it will always be. The world is not the friend of God or His people. But if we do suffer, let us suffer as Christians, and not as evil-doers (1 Peter 4.15–16). Then let us rejoice at the opportunity to suffer for Christ's sake.

COLOSSIANS 1.24:

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church..."

PHILIPPIANS 1.29:

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake..."

2 TIMOTHY 3.12:

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

We do not often imagine how the suffering servant of the Suffering Servant must have appeared, but we do know this, that he was certain that if he suffered, it would not be in vain:

2 TIMOTHY 2.12:

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us..."

From what we know of our salvation in Christ Jesus, that there is no condemnation (Romans 8.1), and no separation (Romans 8.39), we can say with confidence that this is not a threat that one saved can be lost. But we will be denied opportunity to suffer for His Name if we deny Him, and we will be denied rewards at the Day of Jesus Christ that could have been ours, if only we had been faithful.

My friends, we have come to the end of our study in this wonderful epistle to the Galatians. As Paul closes with the benediction of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ being with the spirit of those that he was writing, so I end this study with you. It is not just a kind way to end this, but in all honesty, rejoice in the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and do not be moved from Him.

GALATIANS 5.1:

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

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: A SIMPLE SOLUTION TO A PUZZLING PROBLEM

by Pastor Cornelius R. Stam

THE PROBLEM OUTLINED

"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."

Here the Apostle Paul appears to state unequivocally that all the promises made to Abraham regarding his "seed" referred, not to his multiplied seed, but to Christ alone.

How many theological battles have been fought over this passage, and with what negative results!

The basic problem is that the word "seed," in Hebrew and Greek, as in English, may refer to one seed or to many, to a single seed or to a bagfull. In the latter case the word is used as a collective noun, thus in *both* cases the singular form is used. If I had a barn filled with individual seeds, it would be correctly referred to as "a barn full of *seed*." The plural form would *never* be used in such a case, *unless* a variety of *kinds* of seed were referred to: e. g., "The store carries twenty-four different seeds." But even then it would be more customary to say: "The store carries twenty-four different *kinds* of *seed*." It is evident that the Apostle Paul, in Gal. 3: 16, is not referring to a *variety* of seeds, however, so the problem remains: Why does he argue

that the Holy Spirit's use of the word "seed," in the promises made to Abraham and his progeny, proves that He was referring to only *one particular* seed: Christ?

Albert Barnes, meeting this problem head-on in his commentary on Galatians, rightly says:

"Now no one ever probably read this passage without feeling a difficulty, and without asking himself whether this argument is sound, and is worthy of a man of candor, and especially of an inspired man."

The difficulties increase as we go to the particular passages in which God made the promises referred to, for very clearly *not one* of them refers to one particular seed, but *all* very obviously refer to *multiplied* seed!

This makes it appear all the more that Paul, in Gal. 3:16, was seeking to win a point by the use of sophistry; by taking illegitimate advantage of the Holy Spirit's use of a word.

When this writer was still a young pastor and had barely begun to take a stand for "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery," he received a striking letter from the president of a popular Christian College.

Said the president in effect: "I am an antidispensationalist, and you are generally considered an ultra-dispensationalist, but this I firmly believe: Either you are right or I am right, but the Bible teachers in between are certainly wrong." He referred to those who believed that the Body of Christ had its historical beginning with Peter and the eleven at Pentecost.

Very graciously he invited me and any of my friends to spend one or more evenings with him at the college to discuss the matter.

Several of us accepted his invitation, but our discussion centered almost exclusively around one verse: Galatians 3:16! We couldn't seem to get away from it.

This passage, he contended, was the Holy Spirit's own exegesis, or explanation, of the promises made to Abraham. He insisted that no matter how plainly the promises themselves seemed to refer to Abraham's *multiplied* seed, God *Himself* says in Gal. 3:16 that they referred to *one particular* Seed alone: Christ.

We, on the other hand, contended that if God made promises to Abraham which

obviously referred to his *multiplied* seed, but actually meant them to apply to only *one particular* seed, He was not being honest with Abraham. This we both agreed could not be the case, but it shows how important it is that we understand Gal. 3:16 correctly for the veracity, the trustworthiness, of God Himself is involved.

Before examining the original promises referred to, may we make one important suggestion to our readers, and particularly to our younger pastors? When you are faced with what appears to be an insoluble problem in Scripture: some seeming contradiction, perhaps, do *not* strain or force the meaning of any Scripture passage so as to arrive at some solution which may seem acceptable to you. Rather, *wait, just wait and pray for further light.*

But must we then accept so apparent a contradiction as that outlined above? Is it possible that Gal. 3:16 is the divine exegesis, God's own interpretation, of the promises made to Abraham? Let us be Bereans and search the Scriptures to see whether this is so. Let us see whether these promises can be fairly interpreted to refer to one single Seed: Christ.

THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM AND HIS SEED

The first promise made to Abraham (then still called Abram) is found in Gen.12:1-3:

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:

"AND I WILL MAKE OF THEE A GREAT NATION, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

This promise was confirmed and enlarged upon several times, as we learn from the book of Genesis.

Gen 13:14-16: "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward.

"For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

"AND I WILL MAKE THY SEED AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH: SO THAT IF A MAN CAN NUMBER THE DUST OF THE EARTH, THEN SHALL THY SEED ALSO BE NUMBERED."

Gen. 15:5: "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, LOOK NOW TOWARD HEAVEN, AND TELL [COUNT] THE STARS, IF THOU BE ABLE TO NUMBER THEM: AND HE SAID UNTO HIM, SO SHALL THY SEED BE."

Gen. 17:6-8: "AND I WILL MAKE THEE EXCEEDING FRUITFUL, AND I WILL MAKE NATIONS OF THEE, AND KINGS SHALL COME OUT OF THEE.

"And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in THEIR generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

"And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be THEIR God."

Gen. 22:17,18: "That in blessing I will bless thee, and IN MULTIPLYING I WILL

MULTIPLY THY SEED AS THE STARS OF THE HEAVEN, AND AS THE SAND WHICH IS UPON THE SEA SHORE: and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice."

Who could read the passages above with unbiased mind and question that in all these promises God had the *multiplied* seed of Abraham in mind and that Abraham would surely understand them so?

Concerning the passage last cited above, Barnes remarks (in dealing with Gal. 3:16) that obviously it refers to Abraham's multiplied seed "without *any* particular reference to an individual," and adds: "Such would be the fair and natural interpretation should it be read by hundreds or thousands of persons who had never heard of the interpretation here put upon it by Paul."

But we are not yet through, for remember, the apostle says in Gal. 3:16: "*To* Abraham and his seed were the promises made." Not "of" or "concerning" (though this is also true), but "*to*," and we do indeed see these promises already confirmed to Isaac and Jacob in the very first book of the Bible, and then later to the children of Israel as a nation. And again Abraham's *multiplied* seed is unmistakably in view.

Note first the confirmation made to Isaac:

Gen. 26:4: "AND I WILL MAKE THY SEED TO MULTIPLY AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

And the further confirmation to Jacob is no less emphatic in its reference, not to one seed, but to many:

Gen. 28:14: "AND THY SEED SHALL BE AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH, AND THOU SHALT SPREAD ABROAD TO THE WEST, AND TO THE EAST, AND TO THE NORTH, AND TO THE SOUTH: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Perhaps the reader has noticed that already these promises in Genesis have been made to Abraham and *more* than "one" of his seed: Isaac *and* Jacob, but certainly these promises were made indirectly to more than these: to Abraham's greatly-multiplied seed.

It should be noted here that nowhere does God state that *all* of Abraham's seed are intended. Indeed the implication is clearly otherwise, for these promises were confirmed, not to Ishmael, but to Isaac; not to Esau, but to Jacob. That is, the multiplied seed through whom the world would some day be blessed would *come* through Isaac and then Jacob, from whom the "children of Israel" sprang. And it was even a certain generation of these that God had in mind. But all this is perfectly consistent with the promises cited above, while it would scarcely be honest of God to make such promises if He did *not* plan to bless the world through Abraham's multiplied seed, but only through his single Seed: Christ.

MOSES AND THE PROPHETS

But there is still more to consider before we go to the solution of this problem.

It is clear that *Moses and the prophets* understood these promises to refer to Abraham's multiplied seed. Here we could quote scores, perhaps hundreds of passages in confirmation, but a few will have to suffice.

As Moses stood before the children of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea, just across Jordan from the land of Canaan, he proclaimed the divine challenge:

"Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land

WHICH THE LORD SWARE UNTO YOUR FATHERS, ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB, TO GIVE UNTO THEM AND TO THEIR SEED AFTER THEM."

"THE LORD YOUR GOD HATH MULTIPLIED YOU, AND, BEHOLD, YE ARE THIS DAY AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN FOR MULTITUDE."

"Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it..." (Deut. 1:8,10,21).

Isaiah surely understood God's promises as referring to Abraham's multiplied seed when he predicted concerning redeemed Israel:

"Arise and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people:

but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the *brightness* of thy rising" (Isa. 60:1-3).

Jeremiah surely understood it so when he declared:

"And I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; AND THEY SHALL BE FRUITFUL AND INCREASE."

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

"In His days JUDAH SHALL BE SAVED, AND ISRAEL SHALL DWELL SAFELY "(Jer. 23:3,5,6).

To be sure, these blessings will come to Israel and Judah in the days of Messiah's reign, but it is still the *multiplied* seed to whom these blessings are promised.

Most certainly the prophet *Zechariah* too understood all these promises so:

"AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS, THAT AS YE WERE A CURSE AMONG THE NATIONS, O HOUSE OF JUDAH, AND HOUSE OF ISRAEL; SO WILL I SAVE YOU AND YE SHALL BE A BLESSING "

"THUS SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS: IN THOSE DAYS IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT TEN MEN SHALL TAKE HOLD, OUT OF ALL LANGUAGES OF THE NATIONS, EVEN SHALL TAKE HOLD OF THE SKIRT OF HIM THAT IS A JEW, SAYING, WE WILL GO

WITH YOU; FOR WE HAVE HEARD THAT GOD IS WITH YOU" (Zech. 8:13, 23).

Surely this must refer to the multiplied seed of Abraham. It *could not* refer to Christ. Was Christ "a curse among the nations"? Did Christ have to be "saved" to become a blessing to them? These two verses from Zechariah 8 establish beyond the shadow of a doubt that it was God's plan—and it still is—to bless the nations through the *multiplied* seed of Abraham.

Does this all change when we come to the so-called "New Testament"? In no wise, for our Lord and His disciples went to none but "*unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*" (Matt. 10:5,6; 15:24) simply *because* according to all covenant and prophecy Israel had to be saved before she could become a blessing to the Gentiles.

Did the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, then, bring about a change in this plan? No, for *after* Pentecost we find Peter declaring to an audience of Israelites:

"Ye are the children of the prophets, AND OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD MADE WITH OUR FATHERS, SAYING UNTO ABRAHAM, AND IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE KINDREDS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED.

"UNTO YOU FIRST GOD, HAVING RAISED UP HIS SON JESUS, SENT HIM TO BLESS YOU IN TURNING AWAY EVERY ONE OF YOU FROM HIS INIQUITIES" (Acts 3:25,26; and cf. Vers. 19-21).

Our Reformed and Presbyterian brethren have long held that God is through with Israel, that the Church is spiritual Israel and Christ the King of the Church, now sitting on David's "spiritual" throne in heaven. But this is

arbitrarily altering the plain Word of God and, indeed, is contrary to reason.

Finally, Paul himself declares to the Roman believers:

"I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part is happened to Israel, UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

"And so ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED, AS IT IS WRITTEN..." (Rom.11:25,26).

With this present dispensation of the mystery and Gentile blessing through Israel's *fall* in view, the apostle says in the same chapter:

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall *the receiving of them* be, but life from the dead?" (Ver. 15).

Now it is evident that the latter "them" in this passage must be the same "them" as the former "them." The latter cannot possibly refer to the Church, but to Israel, the nation which has been temporarily cast away. Verses 23 and 24 further confirm this.

What then is the explanation of Paul's words in Gal. 3:16: *"He saith not, And to seeds,*

as of many, but as of one, And to thy Seed, which is Christ"?

We can well see how our covenant brethren came to the conclusion that the promises to Abraham and his physical seed must be "spiritualized," for Paul clearly stated to the rejecting Jews of Pisidian Antioch:

"... It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you, BUT SEEING YE PUT IT FROM YOU AND JUDGE YOURSELVES UNWORTHY OF EVERLASTING LIFE, LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES" (Acts 13:46).

At first sight, and without the rest of Paul's epistles and the Word in general to guide us, it might well be gathered from this and similar passages that God was casting Israel aside forever.

Indeed, in Rom. 11:11 Paul himself declares that *now "through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles."*

But the so-called "spiritualization" of the Old Testament promises is really nothing less than an arbitrary altering of them by theologians so as to make them conform to their own systems of *doctrine*— *and we have no right to alter the written Word of God.* Moreover, Paul himself makes it crystal clear that the casting away of Israel is only temporary (See again Rom. 11:12, 15, 23–26).

THE GLORIOUS SOLUTION

Why, then, does Paul say in Gal. 3:16:

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, He saith not, And to

seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

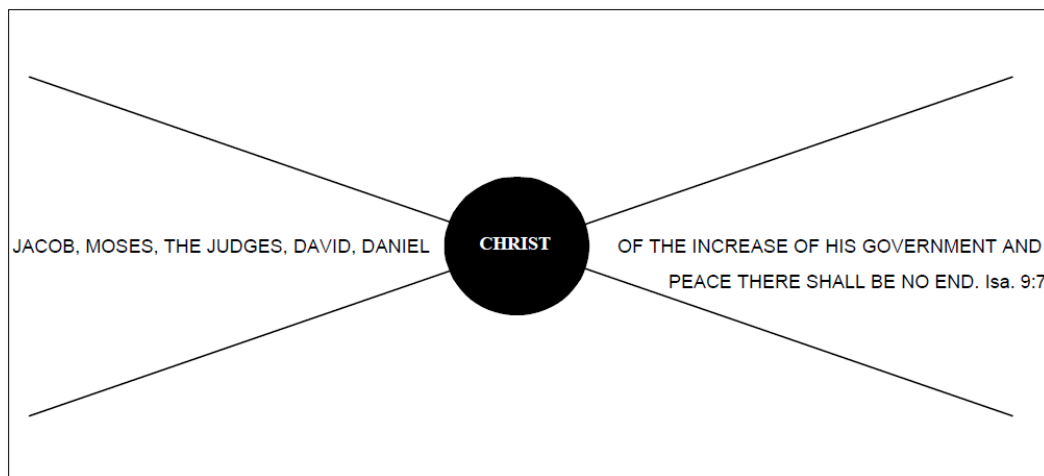
In the light of the promises themselves and all their confirmations in the Book of

Genesis; in the light of all the further confirmations in the law and the prophets; in the light of Peter's plain words in Acts 3:25,26, and in the light of Paul's own epistle to the Romans is it not crystal clear that God planned—and plans—to bless the Gentile nations through *Israel*, Abraham's *multiplied* seed? Would it not be foolish and wrong to conclude from one passage, Gal. 3:16, that all these promises referred to one single Seed: Christ? To such a view the words of the puzzled little girl to her mother are rightly applied. She asked: "Mother, if God didn't mean what He said, why didn't He say what He meant?"!

But God *did* mean exactly what He said, and the wonderful, satisfying solution to this problem, as to so many others, is to be found in the mystery revealed by the glorified Lord to and through Paul. As Pastor J. C. O'Hair has pointed out so beautifully in his book, *Daniel's Secret, Paul's Mystery, John's Revelation*, whenever it appears that God's prophetic program *cannot* be fulfilled, God reveals a

secret that provides a glorious and satisfying answer. Perhaps it will help at this point first to notice what the verse does *not* say. It does *not* say that God would *not* bless Abraham's multiplied seed, or through them the world. It does *not* say that God would bless *only* Christ, the single Seed, and make Him *alone* a blessing to the world, though *in a sense* this is true, for all blessing flows from Him. The Apostle simply states that in making the promises to Abraham and his progeny, God used the word "seed," which is singular in form, and that He did this because He had Christ in view. In other words, God specially avoided the use of plural words which might have been used, such as "in thy *children*," "in thy *descendants*," etc., for there was no generation of Abraham's offspring who, in themselves, could have proved a blessing to the world.

Perhaps the following diagram will help to explain the simple solution to the problem we have wrestled with.



Considering the above diagram in a general way as representing the history of

Abraham's physical seed, through which generation of that seed could the world

possibly have been blessed? Through Jacob and his generation? Jacob himself swindled his brother out of the birthright and blessing and his life from then on is a long story of human failure. Little wonder Psalm 146:5 declares: "Happy is he that hath the God of *Jacob* for his *help*, whose *hope* is in the Lord his God," for Jacob and his whole generation surely needed God's *help*.

Could the world have been blessed, then, through Moses' generation? Hardly, for under Moses Israel constantly murmured and complained and rebelled. He called them "a stiffnecked people" (Ex. 33:3; *et al*), and indeed, Moses himself was not free from many human failures.

Could the world have been blessed through the generation of the Judges, then? Far from it, for Judges 17:6: "*Every man did that which was right in his own eyes*," explains why the history of the Judges contains with wearying monotony the phrase: "*And Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord*." How could they have been a blessing to the other nations?

Could David's generation have been the one to bring blessing to the world? How could they, when David himself, though a man after God's own heart, was guilty of adultery and murder, and when but recently Israel had rejected God and had cried for a king to reign over them "like the other nations"?

And as to Daniel's generation: by this time God's people had departed so far from Him that He had delivered them into the hand of the Babylonians. Please glance now at the above chart and note how the possibility of blessing to the world through Israel's multiplied seed *diminishes steadily* until we

get to one Person—just *one* of the seed of Abraham: the *Lord Jesus Christ*.

Does it follow, then, that God's promises concerning the multiplied seed will not be fulfilled because they forfeited the blessing through failure and unbelief, and that therefore the nations will be blessed through Christ alone?

Not exactly. Are we hedging when we answer the question in this way? No, for God will indeed bless the world through the *multiplied* seed of Abraham; this had been proven, not only by the unconditional promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but also by repeated prophetic confirmations both before and after Pentecost. However, Israel will never become the world's blesser until she becomes so *through Christ*; until she has been "*saved*" through Christ, her "*Redeemer*," for the blessing of the world is wrapped up in Him—in Him alone.

Note that Christ is the focal point in the above outline. All blessing is centered in Him and must be found in Him. God has been demonstrating this for the past nineteen hundred years. Hear some of Paul's Spirit-inspired statements on this subject:

II Cor. 5:17: "Therefore if any man be IN CHRIST, he is [or "there is"] a new creation..."

II Cor. 5:21: "For God hath made Him to be sin for us, [Him] who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God IN HIM."

Gal. 2:20: "I am crucified WITH CHRIST; 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,¹ who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Eph. 1:6: "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted **IN THE BELOVED [ONE].**"

Eph. 1:7: "**IN WHOM** we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

Eph. 1: 11: "**IN WHOM** we also have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

Eph. 1:13: "**IN WHOM** ye also trusted ... **IN WHOM** ... ye were sealed ... "

Eph. 3:6: "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise **IN CHRIST** by the gospel"

Phil. 3:8,9: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ,

"And be found **IN HIM**, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ,² the righteousness which is of God by faith."

¹ Note carefully: "by *the faith of,*" not my faith in. Faith is referred to here subjectively: our Lord's *worthiness* to be *believed*. See the author's booklet, *The Faith of Christ*.

² See foregoing footnote.

Col. 2:6,7: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye **IN HIM**;

"Rooted and built up **IN HIM** . . . "

Col. 2:9,10: "For **IN HIM** dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete **IN HIM**, who is the Head of all principality and power."

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."

Truly "*it pleased the Father that **IN HIM** should all fulness dwell*" (Col. 1:19). What do you want, unsaved friend, that is worth anything at all: forgiveness? peace? joy? assurance? They are to be found in Him and in Him alone. He is the Fount of every blessing, the Source of all supply. And what, dear Christian friend, do you have that is worthwhile that is of yourself? Nothing. All you have and are, you have and are *in Him*.

You have "redemption ... the forgiveness of sins" *in Him*, because you were crucified *with Him*, and buried and raised *with Him*. You have been made "the righteousness of God" *in Him*, and God now "accepts" you *in Him*. You are "a new creation" *in Him* and have "obtained an inheritance," a most glorious one, *in Him*. God now sees you *in Him* and has pronounced you "complete *in Him*."

For nineteen hundred years God has been teaching this lesson, and not until Israel sees it and stops trying to "establish their own righteousness," humbly receiving Christ and the riches of His grace, will the blessing overflow to the other nations. *Then* all nations will be blessed through Israel, *through Christ!*

Thus Paul, in Gal. 3:16, does not imply that God will not fulfill the promises to Abraham's multiplied seed. He only points out that God used a *compound*, or *collective* noun in making these promises since He knew that the multiplied seed could not *in themselves* prove a blessing to the world. It is *redeemed Israel* that will bless the world (Zech. 8:13; Rom. 11:26): *through Christ*.

Thus, even the word "seed," in Gal. 3:16, while singular in form ("Not many... but one"), is still plural in fact, for as we have said: we use the word "seed," whether of one single seed or of a bagfull. Moreover, any one seed *contains* much seed, potentially. This agrees with our Lord's words in John 12:24: **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn [kernel] of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."**

One more thing: As the possibility of world blessing through Abraham's multiplied seed diminished until Christ's appearance and redemptive work, so it will grow and expand once the favored nation is "saved" and finds her place *in Christ*. You say, "Christ is Israel's *Messiah*, her *King*; she does not

belong to His Body?" True, for the revelation about the Body of Christ is a high truth indeed. But morally and spiritually *every* man stands before God, either in Adam or in Christ. We can no more divorce ourselves from Adam than can the leaf from the twig or the twig from the branch or the branch from the bough, or the bough from the tree, *unless* we are *redeemed*: taken out of Adam, as it were, and given a position in *Christ*. This was so even of those who were saved before Paul was entrusted with "the revelation of the mystery," or was even converted to Christ, for in Rom. 16:7 he refers to some who were "*in Christ before me*."

Unsaved friend, will you learn the lesson God is teaching today, as He forms "the Church which is His [Christ's] Body"? The lesson is simply that there is no true blessing to be found anywhere but *in Christ* and that *you* cannot possibly be a true blessing to anyone else, except *in Christ*.

Our generation is constantly emphasizing relevancy. Well then, this is the most relevant truth of all. Accept it and not only will your life be filled with meaning and purpose, but the blessing will overflow to others.

APPENDIX II: THE MEANING OF "SON" IN SCRIPTURE

by Sir Robert Anderson

*{This is Chapter 2 in Sir Robert Anderson's book **The Lord From Heaven**, ©1978 by Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI. There are several footnotes in the printed book that are not here. The entire book is well worth reading.}*

It is unnecessary to notice passages where the word "son" stands for remote descendant, as, for example, in the first verse of the first Gospel, or in the familiar phrase "Children of Israel," or again, when the Lord declared that in building the tombs of the prophets the Jews bore witness that they were the "sons" of those who slew them? (Matthew 25:29-31) Still less need we notice the numerous occurrences of the word in its primary and common acceptation. But such is the influence of our *English* Bible upon our habits of thought and speech that when we are told that James and John were "sons of thunder" the phrase seems as natural as when we read that they were sons of Zebedee. Our English Bible, I say advisedly; for when the Revised Version first appeared, people were inclined to resent such unfamiliar phrases as "sons of the bride-chamber," and "sons of disobedience." And yet the distinction between "son" and "child" is of great importance; and in ignoring it our translators have sometimes obscured, or even perverted, vital truth.

In the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, the Lord seems to say that by loving their enemies men may become children of God. But this is utterly opposed to Christian teaching. It is by birth, and only by birth, that the relationship of father and child can be created. Moreover the Lord was there addressing His disciples. (Matthew 5:44, 45)

Again, the A.V. reads, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born...of God." (John 1:12,13) But this is no less inaccurate. Thus it is indeed that we become *children* of God, and "children" is the word here used; but sonship connotes what children ought to be. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are *sons* of God." (Romans 8:14; cf. 2 Corinthians 6:17,18)

To many the statement may seem startling, but its truth can be easily tested, that in the New Testament believers in Christ, as such, are never designated *sons* of God. In other words, that phrase never occurs as a mere synonym for "children of God." The words of Galatians 3:26 may seem to be an exception to this, but in fact they afford a striking illustration of it. For when the Apostle writes, "Ye are all the sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus," he uses the word "sons" in a peculiar sense, his purpose being to mark the difference between the position of children under age, and of those who have attained their majority. In this Christian dispensation the people of God are no longer treated as in a state of nonage, "under tutors and governors," but are now deemed to be of full age, and take rank as *sons*.

In Hebrews 12:8, again, the word “sons” occurs in a sense equally foreign to our English use for it marks the distinction between the legitimate offspring and the illegitimate, to the latter of whom the status of *son* is denied.

These two passages are quite exceptional, the word “son” being employed to connote dignity or privilege, whereas it is generally used to indicate character or nature. And it is noteworthy that when the word is employed in this ethical sense, no thought of parentage is involved, unless, perhaps, remotely, and by way of a poetic figure. The Gentile Galatian converts, for example, could have no possible claim to be “children of Abraham,” nor would the Apostle have thus described them; but, though not “sons of the stock of Abraham,” he tells them that “they which are of faith, the same are *sons* of Abraham.” (Galatians 3:7) The word is here used as definitely in a figurative sense, as in the phrase “sons of thunder.”

And that phrase might teach us to distinguish between the traditional “St. John” and the Apostle of that name. The one was a soft, womanly creature, whereas “the beloved disciple” was a bold and manly man who used strong, stern words. For with him those who cherish malice are murderers; and those who belittle the Lord Jesus Christ, or deny His glory, are liars and anti-Christ. And remembering that his brother, the Apostle James, was a man of the same type, we can well understand why his death was specially pleasing to the Jews when he fell as a victim of Herod’s malignity.

If Joseph (or Joses) had been called “a child of consolation,” we might suppose him to have been the recipient of very special comfort; but when we read that the Apostles

surnamed him Barnabas, or “*son* of consolation” (Acts 4:36) we conclude that he was a man of intensely sympathetic spirit.

In the same way “sons of wrath” would be Greek for the Hebrew “sons of Belial”; but when the Epistle to the Ephesians tells us that by nature we are “*children* of wrath,” the words are meant to express our condition and destiny. So, again, the phrase “a child of disobedience” might perhaps imply that the individual was the progeny of a parent’s sin, whereas “sons of disobedience” describes what men are essentially and as to their very nature? (Ephesians 2:2,3; 5:6; Colossians 3:6)

The fact that the Apostle exhorts the Ephesians to walk as “*children* of light,” whereas “*sons* of light” is his word to the Thessalonians (Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5), may seem to indicate that in this instance, at least, the words are used as synonyms. But an examination of the passages will make it clear that here, as elsewhere, the words carry their distinctive meanings. The one statement describes the normal condition and environment of the Christian the other relates to his character and nature. There is a double parallel. “Watch and be sober” answers to “Walk as children of light,” but “Ye are all sons of light” answers to “Ye are light in the Lord.”

This may remind us of the Lord’s words in explaining the Parable of the Unjust Steward: “The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.” (Luke 16:8) The comparison here is not between earth and heaven, but between those who belong morally to the present economy and those who are “light in the Lord.” But in another passage, where the Lord speaks of “sons of this world” and “sons of the resurrection,” the contrast is merely between

our condition in the present economy, and what we shall be when we “attain to that world.” (Luke 20:34–36) He thus uses the phrase in a double sense. In the one case, “sons of this world (or age)” includes all who belong to this economy in the sense of being *in* it, whereas in the parable it indicates those who are *of* it.

Nor will this seem strange if we keep in mind that in Scripture the word bears an Oriental and essentially figurative meaning. And this is true, even where a literal sense might seem possible, as for example, when the Apostle Peter appeals to the Jews as “sons of the prophets.” (Acts 3:25) His audience may, of course, have included some who were actual descendants of the prophets; but the

words he added, “and *of the covenant*,” make it clear that no such thought was in his mind. In addressing them as “sons of the prophets and of the covenant,” he was appealing to them as heirs of the hopes and promises of which the covenant and the prophecies spoke.

So again, when the Apostle Paul denounced Elymas the sorcerer as “Thou son of the devil,” (Acts 13:10) his Oriental hearers would understand his words as describing the man’s character and nature. And in this same sense it was that the Lord Himself branded the typical proselyte of the Pharisees as a “son of hell.” (Matthew 23:15)

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