

## ***GALATIANS***

Gal. 1: 1-14

Paul's letter to the Galatians is one of the most important documents we have teaching us about the difference between law and grace and it is for this reason Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit penned it.

It was written around 49 or 52 A.D. and even though there is some argument between scholars as to the correct date I do not believe it is of any moment. At least not enough for us to spend hours trying to pin point the date. Suffice it to say - It was written.

The Galatian letter is much in line with the letter to the Romans and we find in it similar statements; not the least of which is found in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter, "*The Just shall live by faith.*" This is actually a quote from the book of Habakkuk. It is found in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews as well.

Paul was writing to these churches to correct faulty teaching that had crept in among them. It is not the only letter he had to write because of these errors. Paul was really upset with what was occurring in Galatia. - Just as in other places he had ministered, the Judaizers had come in among the converts and brought in their pernicious ways. What were those ways? Mixing law and grace together.

One of the reasons the Galatians were easy prey to the Judaizers was because they were a fickle people, They would follow any new thing that came along that was new or curious. Paul had left them with the straight skinny, but now they had some men come along who said Paul was alright as far as he went but he didn't go far enough.

They said in effect, "*We're here to make certain you really are on your way to heaven, but if you do not follow the law, your soul is in jeopardy, so here's what to do about it.*" The Galatians replied, "*Oh goodie, something new for us.*" they were actually trying to place themselves in bondage rather than living freely and we will discover how Paul handles the situation as we move through this letter.

Paul's opening statement is found in verse one as we begin our lesson. - ***Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),***

As we have mentioned before, Paul is stating his authority in writing this letter and here he adds something he does not have in some of his other letters. He usually says - *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ*. But, here he adds the words - *(not from men nor through man)*. The reason for this addition is because he wanted the Galatians to understand he was not depending upon other men to endorse his apostleship. He preached the truth and he got that truth from none other than the Lord himself in a face to face meeting. One of the qualifications to be an apostle was you must have seen the Lord in person.

His authority was from God. These others who had come to them could not make such a statement. His authority was not only from Christ, but from God the Father who had raised him from the dead.

In verse 2 we read - ***and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:***

Paul was quick to also include all the brothers who were with him. Not as proof of the authority he possessed, but because he did not want to neglect those working right along with him. And please notice that the letter is not to one church, but to all the churches located in Galatia.

Just here I think it worth while to mention where Galatia was located and how it came to have so many churches. All of them by the way, fickle believers.

Galatia was bordered on the north by the Black sea, On the south by the Mediterranean sea, and on the east by the Aegean sea. In effect there was North Galatia, South Galatia, East and West Galatia and some of the error is thought to have begun in Southern Galatia.

The Galatians were in fact ancient Gauls. There is much history to be covered concerning this name, however, when the Romans ruled the name was commonly known as Galatia. It was a mixture of Kelts and other tribes who eventually migrated to England, Scotland, France and Spain. These folk are not the 10 lost tribes of Israel. They were and are Gentiles.

Now why even mention this at all you might ask. Only to say this by way of warning - It seems as if every time error crops up it travels on wings of eagles like a wild fire, and is readily accepted. Truth, however, seems to travel on the back of a turtle.

Herein is another reason we must be careful as we study the Word of God.

Moving on to the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse we read - ***Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,***  
We have discussed this before. Suffice it to say that we cannot have peace without grace first being applied to our life. Once grace is applied by God, we then have peace with God. It is always in this order wherever you read it in the Bible. First grace, then peace. It is not only from God the Father, but from the Lord Jesus Christ as well and verse 4 goes on to tell us why we have this grace and peace -

***who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,***

It is because He gave himself for our sins on the cross in order to deliver us from this present evil world.

Paul is reminding the Galatians that in Jesus we are complete. Complete means complete. When a thing is complete you cannot add to it.

When they built the Empire state building it was not complete until they added the sphere at the top making it the tallest building at that time. When that was done it was complete. There has been nothing added since then. Just so, there is nothing to add to the finished work of Christ, and because of that Paul exclaims in verse 5 - ***to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.***

Having said that he begins in verse 6 with a very interesting statement.

***I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,***

We might read this as so many letters in a word, but if we pause to really think out what Paul is saying I believe it would sound more like, “*I am absolutely thunderstruck and floored that you would even begin to entertain any thought about turning away from God who has called you by that grace in Christ we just mentioned to some other so called gospel. I just can't believe what is happening. Are you all mad?*”

This is more in line with what Paul is writing and gives us an idea of the seriousness of their peril. If this continues, their walk before the Lord will amount to nothing more than so many words spoken into thin air. There will be no real life for these folk and it will mean the end of any churches that had been started because they will soon become no more than some

religious organization.

Notice in verse 7 what he goes on to say.

***which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.***

Paul here proclaims there is only one gospel not two or three and he himself has already delivered the true gospel to them - BUT - he says, there are some who have come to you who want to pervert that gospel.

Whenever we add to or delete from the gospel we pervert it. You cannot add one jot or tittle to it because it is already complete. There are some even now who claim there is another book which one must have in order to receive further revelation from God. They say you must indeed have the Bible, but you also need this other book in order to completely know the will of God for your life.

This book is a further testament of Jesus. That my friends is a perversion of the truth of the Gospel and do not ever doubt. It.

Paul is about to give some dire warnings concerning any perversion of the Gospel in verse 8 and we do well to heed what he writes.

***But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.***

This is some very strong language from the apostle.

He is pronouncing a curse upon any who preach anything other than what has been delivered to them. Notice who s included in this warning - First he includes himself in the words "WE." Even if Paul himself were to tell them something other than what has been taught he is cursing himself, but he does not stop there. He goes on to include angels from heaven. This would of course include the highest order of angel such as Michael as well as any other heavenly being.

As if this were not bad enough please notice what the Holy Spirit instructs him to write in verse 9.

***As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.***

Whenever the Holy Spirit repeats a thing we do well to heed what is said. I think you can begin to understand what the Lord thinks about his word. He means what He says and He says what He means.

These Judaizers were trying to add to the finished work of Christ.

When Jesus died upon that cross of condemnation his very last words before He gave up the ghost were, “*It is finished.*” The law came to an abrupt end that very second. Circumcision of the flesh no longer applied to anyone. - We are in the age where circumcision of the heart is what God recognizes.

Those who were saying that “Yes, it is good to have Christ as Savior, but you must keep the law in order to stay saved” were in grievous error and the curse we just read about applied to them.

We now move into the section where Paul defends his apostolic ministry as we begin verse 10.

***For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.***

Paul here states that he is not seeking the approval of man. These Galatians knew who Paul was and it was under his ministry they turned from darkness to light. It was because he preached the truth of God that they came to a saving knowledge of Christ and were placed in his body. They now possessed eternal life within them where before they had been lost and bound for Hell.

He further states - *For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.* - He at one time did strive to please man when he had letters from the Jews in Jerusalem to find those of the WAY and have them imprisoned or killed. If he yet did that he could not be *a bondservant of Christ.*

It is incumbent upon the minister of Christ to speak the truth no matter whom it may touch. We are not to be men pleasers but God pleasers. To do other than speak the whole counsel of God is untrue to the call God has given everyone of us, but especially the preacher.

Paul goes on in verse 11 and 12 as he continues his defense of his apostleship.

***But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.***

***For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.***

As we have briefly stated, Paul did not receive the gospel from any man, he received it directly from the risen Savior. Much the same as John received what he wrote in the book of the Revelation. Paul did not have to go to Jerusalem and stand before the other 12 apostles in order to himself be an apostle.

Paul is now going to explain what we have already spoken about earlier and we will see this in verses 13 and 14. - ***For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.***

He now confesses his former conduct and it was this very conduct in the which he was striving to be a man pleaser. It was beyond measure he persecuted the church. In other words, he went far beyond what any of the others were doing. He had people imprisoned and even put to death for what he believed was right. He was very zealous, but for the wrong reasons.

One side note before we close this lesson. In the KJV we read in verse 13 these words *-the Jews' religion,* These two words should be translated by one English word - *Judaism* - This word is correctly translated in the NKJV. This is the means whereby these men who had come to Galatia were teaching. The very thing Paul denounces as perverted.

The reason I place this little note in here is because it was not merely a set of rules and regulations they were teaching and if well memorized and followed, would serve them in their everyday life. No, it was in fact a way of life that would lead them into bondage.

It is no different with us. If we by our own measure try to be righteous before God we will always fail. It may be that you spend hours in prayer. You may even spend hours on end in Bible study, but if anyone thinks they gain the favor of God in that fashion they will be sorely disappointed.

When we come to Christ; confessing him as our only means of salvation we are as righteous as we ever shall be. It is in him alone that one finds righteousness and justification before God. To pray is very good and it is indeed a command of God to do so. To study the Bible is also very good and it too is a command from God for his children, however, that does not qualify any of us for heaven any more than we already are when we come to Christ.

It is by faith and faith alone we find approval from God. The rest are the good works He expects from those who belong to him. The law is bondage because it does not save from sin. Christ is the end of law and leads to freedom. Of this we shall learn in later lessons

## **LESSON TWO**

Gal. 1: 15- 2: 2

As we take up our study beginning in verse 15 of chapter 1 we are still in the section where Paul is defending his apostleship. Notice as we continue to read:

***But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,***

Please notice the very first word in this verse begins with the conjunction “But.” - If you remember anything from your high school English you will remember that a conjunction changes a thought or an idea, and this is exactly what occurs here.

Paul was an enemy of the church. He hated the church. Why? Because he believed it was against God. He went everywhere breathing out threats and making those threats a reality to those who followed THE WAY. Enter the word “but.”

Even though Paul had been destroying the church, God was pleased to intervene and separate Paul even while he was yet in his mothers womb. Paul was *called by grace*, however, that did not take place in history until a particular time and that time was while he was on his way to Damascus.  
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And what a call that was. Notice how Paul describes it in verse 16.

***16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,***

The Lord Jesus was to be revealed in him. No longer was Saul to be the persecutor, he was to be Paul the apostle of the gospel of Jesus Christ. What’s more he was to bring that gospel to the Gentiles.

Up to this time no one preached to the Gentiles. If one was a Gentile the only way for them to be accepted by God was to

become a proselyte to Judaism. But remember, following the law did not make one righteous and justified before God. It only put you in the place where by faith you could be saved. It merely placed you in the right nation. The chosen people of God.

Notice again what Paul states in the second portion of verse 16 - ***I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,*** - That is: he did not seek the counsel of man . -- In verse 17 he says - ***nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me;***

He did not attend Jerusalem theological seminary. He was not taught by any man. Verse 17 goes on to say - ***but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.*** -----

Now why in the world did he go to Arabia? I believe it was while there in the desert he received instruction from the Lord.

Now just what would lead me to think this was what happened to Paul? If we look to 2 Cor. 12: 2-7 I think we will find the answer.

***2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago; whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows; such a one was caught up to the third heaven.***

***3 And I know such a man; whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows;***

***4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.***

***5 Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities.***

***6 For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.***

***7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.***

I believe this is the only answer we can come up with concerning Paul's knowledge of the scriptures. -

Not only was he well schooled in the O.T. The Lord himself schooled him in the New Testament.

When he speaks about "*Knowing a man*" he refers to himself, however, he like John did not want to set himself above anyone else. In this, we see the humility of Paul and how he went from a proud Pharisee to a humble bondservant

Paul states he could boast of a man like that, but he could not boast in himself. And, just in case he had any ideas of boasting,

there was a thorn in the flesh given to him in order that he might remember.

Returning to our study we read in verse 18-19:

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

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

He after three years of learning and ministering he finally went to Jerusalem to meet with Peter and abode with him two weeks. The only other apostle he saw was James, the Lord's brother.

Now just in case anyone should think that Mary only had the One child, Jesus, we learn here that He had at least one other sibling, James. If we search further in the scriptures we will find that he had other brothers and sisters. For instance Matt. 13: 55-56 declares:

***"Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?  
56 "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"***

Here we learn that Jesus had 4 brothers and at least 3 sisters from the words - *"And His sisters, are they not all with us?"*

Now I realize that there are many folk who think Jesus was the only child of Mary. But unless I teach what scripture plainly says, I would be as guilty as these whom Paul is saying pervert the gospel. And quite frankly, I do not have any overwhelming desire to be accursed.

Apparently Paul had the same feeling about these things as do I because he states in the very next verse:

***20 (Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)*** He not only states the fact he is not lying, he in fact takes an oath confirming the truth of what he is writing in the words ***Before God, I do not lie.***

Whenever one takes an oath before God they had best make certain what they say is true because God will not hold an offender guiltless. It would be better to flat out lie than take an oath you are telling the truth.

After he left off with Peter and James He goes on to say in verse 21 - ***Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.***

Now why would this be important enough to include at this juncture?

There are several thoughts by expositors of which I do not think it necessary to go into. If we were taking a seminary course then I would include the several thoughts, however, I believe the main reason is because these regions were far removed from any influence the other apostles might have on the message Paul was given by God to proclaim.

The other twelve did not go to any but the nation of Israel, but Paul was to go to the Gentiles. Not to make Jewish proselytes, but to tell of freedom in Christ. Not bondage to law. - Now as we move to verses 22-23 we read these words:

**22 *And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ.***

**23 *But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy."***

Here he tells us that the churches in Judea had never seen his face, but they knew him by reputation. They knew he was the fellow who took great delight in dragging men, women and children off to prison and he did his dead level best to annihilate the name of Jesus from the face of the earth. - However, now he was preaching this same Christ and striving to build up what he once tried to tear down.

What was their reaction to this news?

**24 *And they glorified God in me.***

They say the angels in heaven rejoice over every person who comes to Christ. If that is true or not, I do not know but one thing I do know, I am exceedingly happy when someone comes to Christ, confessing their sins and asking forgiveness and becoming a child of God.

The conversion of Paul to Christianity was of so much greater note because here was a man that all could see was against the church. Just imagine what it might have been like had Hitler become a Christian. I believe everyone would have stood up and taken notice.

I am also just as certain there would have been many sceptics, but the conversion would have been as phenomenal.

As we come to chapter 2 we enter into Paul's defense of the gospel. He has finished defending his apostleship and now takes on the weightier matter of defending the gospel which the Judaizers were trying to pervert. We begin with verse 1.

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

We now come to a place where some of that high school arithmetic comes in handy. - And you thought you'd not have any more use for it.

Three years after Paul's conversion he made the first trip to Jerusalem where he met with Peter and briefly saw James. - This particular 14 year interval we just read was after that meeting, making a total of about 17 years. If we were to figure that out we could guesstimate his conversion to be somewhere around 34 to 36 AD. That being the case the trip we are now looking at is in the vicinity of about 50 AD.

Between the trip to Jerusalem indicated in Gal. 1: 18 and here in chapter 2 Paul had spent time in Tarsus and Antioch. The only reason I mention this chronology is not to show how studious I can be, but to point out that this time period is in line with the information we have in Acts 15 where he and Barnabas appeared before the other apostles telling them the message of liberty they preached in Christ.

Now, as they were going, they also included Titus in the group. Titus was a Greek and Paul wanted him along to prove a point (if necessary) to the other apostles. His point being that Titus had not been circumcised and there was no requirement from the Lord to do so. Now for verse 2.

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

While it is true the church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas, It is as well true that God gave revelation to do that very thing. Had he not it may have been that Paul would be reluctant to go.

The verse tells us that he preached *privately to those who were of reputation*. The reason he did that was because he did not want disagreement within the body of Christ. - Remember - these other 12 were sent to only the Israelites and it was the Judaic system Paul was up against.

Peter had been given a revelation while he was in Joppa on a roof top at Simon the tanners home. A sheet had been lowered down with all kinds of birds, four footed animals and reptiles in it. He was told to kill and eat. It was here he learned that God shows no favoritism. The Gentiles as well as the Jews could be saved.

As a result he went with the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius and opened up the kingdom to the Gentiles. Other than Peter no one had done that. Peter had been given the keys to perform that duty.

If by chance Paul ran into opposition and the other 12 would not listen, then he would have “*Run in vain.*”

Of course there was no chance that would happen because of the experience of Peter. Remember, Peter carried a lot of weight even though he was not the pastor of the Jerusalem church.

Up to now, no one knew much concerning the Body of Christ. It was this truth that Paul is to reveal. Not only to the church, but to Israel as well.

We are going to learn the importance of Titus being along in our next lesson.

### **LESSON THREE**

Gal. 2: 3-16

Now as we approach verse 3 of chapter 2 we see why Titus being a Greek was included in the company Paul brought to Jerusalem.

***Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.***

Up to the day of Pentecost when the church was baptized if one was to be included in the covenants of God, that one had to be circumcised, but since that day circumcision was no longer in effect. Instead it was a circumcision of the heart by exercising faith in Christ as the only requirement. Titus was brought along as a test case and since the other 12 agreed with the message Paul had, Titus was not required to be circumcised.

But there is a fly in the ointment because verse 4 tells us:

***And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),***

There were false brethren. Those false brethren were of the same ilk as the ones who had come in among the Galatians. They were the Judaizers.

Paul says they were trying to place them back into bondage. That is, the bondage that is in the law.

Before we are finished with this letter we shall have learned much about the law. All we must do is be patient until we get to those verses.

In verse 5, I want us to notice the tenacity of Paul.

***to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.***

Paul here says he did not budge an inch from the truth of the gospel. However, the Judaizers had their say, but Paul would

not move and the reason is in order that the gospel would continue with the Galatians untarnished, unabridged and immovable in the truth.

Had he been like so many today he would have yielded just to keep peace. He could have said, “Oh, OK. One little circumcision shouldn’t hurt.”

But let me ask you - What does a little yeast do? - It taints the whole loaf. The moment yeast is added to the bread, the whole loaf will rise. Not just the part the yeast touches.

Verse 6: ***But from those who seemed to be something; whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man; for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.***

I really like this part. Paul declares that those who thought they were a somebody were actually adding nothing to Paul. He didn’t care how important they were or thought they were. Why? Because God is no respecter of persons. God does not show favoritism.

Man always likes to show favoritism. He thinks it will earn him brownie points and indeed it many times does, but not with God. Those who thought they were somebody didn’t add a single thing to Paul. Nor could they.

Verse seven goes on: ***But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter***

When in fact they all saw that Paul had the gospel for the Gentiles committed to him and that Peter had the gospel to the Jews committed to him they began to sit up and take notice because as verse 8 goes on to teach.

***(for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),***

They all acknowledged that it was God who had worked effectually in Peter as well as in Paul.

Peter had performed many miracles. He raised the dead, healed the blind eyes, and caused the lame to walk. His apostleship was firmly established, therefore verse 9 tells us -

*and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.*

Not only did the 12 perceive the truth Paul had, but the pillars of the church - James, Cephas and John also recognized the truth when they saw it. They Then proceeded to extend to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.

This was a very important step in the life of the church. Had this not been done, Paul would have a tougher time than he already had in proclaiming the truth of the gospel of Christ. Not only that, but the gospel would have suffered among the Jews as well.

And now verse 10: *They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.*

They actually required a little more than is here reported. If we take a quick peek in Acts 15: 19-20 we shall soon see the requirements given Paul and Barnabas.

*"Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God,  
20 'but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.*

This of course is the Lord's brother James who happens to be the pastor of the Jerusalem church giving these instructions. He does so as a result of their searching the scriptures and determining that what Paul and Barnabas are reporting is in fact truth.

Not only were they to remember the poor, but they were to abstain from the things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality (which was rampant in those days) from eating things strangled and from eating blood.

Incidentally, it is a good thing to follow these rules even today.

If we read down to verses 22-29 we will see the whole story of this meeting.

*22 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.*

*23 They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in*

*Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings.*

*24 Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law"; to whom we gave no such commandment;  
25 it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,  
26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth.  
28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:  
29 that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.*

This has been a rather lengthy reading of scripture, but I believe it will help clear up for us the thing Paul is battling in Galatia. It was this exact same problem cropping up in Galatia that had already been settled in the Jerusalem church

Now as we enter into the 11<sup>th</sup> verse we will notice something very interesting concerning our good friend Peter.  
*Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;*

Here we have Paul telling these Galatians about an incident that occurred in Antioch between Peter and himself where he had to dress down our beloved apostle Peter. It may seem odd that one apostle had to correct another, but because of the seriousness of the situation it had to be done.

Peter had made a grave mistake and because he did it publically, he had to be corrected publically.

Whenever a recognized leader of God's people such as a pastor, elder or deacon is in grave error concerning the gospel and if he is in error publically, then he must be corrected publically. This thing that Peter committed was very grave.

It wasn't as if he had an incorrect order of the rapture of the church and the tribulation, he was by example perverting the gospel and that had to be addressed.

Notice how Paul goes about this thing. He doesn't tell one of the elders or one of the deacons, he goes face to face with Peter. Remember this though - Peter was a rugged fisherman and Paul was a scholar, yet Peter was humble enough to take what we

are about to see and did not retaliate.

***12. - for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.***

Here was Peter eating and drinking with these Gentile believers. Ham and eggs, roast loin of pork - all the good stuff, but when certain other Jews came from Jerusalem he withdrew from the Gentile believers because of what these men might think or say.

He had already been given instruction by God at the sheet lowering incident that nothing was unfit or unclean, yet these men put fear into his heart. The same thing happened to Elijah that time Jezebel threatened him with death and he took off to the wild blue yonder.

It can happen to any one of us if we do not keep our eyes on the goal set before us and continue to trust God. Notice what his conduct stirred up.

***13. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.***

All the other Jews followed the lead of Peter in so much as even Barnabas got carried away along with them. It is a blessed thing that Paul had his head on straight.

It is not always good to follow the crowd. Had Paul done that, this letter to Galatia would have been written by someone else. Paul would not have been the man of God that he was.

We must always have someone willing to stand for the truth and face odds that are not pleasant looking. If you ever read Foxes book of martyrs you'll soon discover what I am talking about.

Let us continue on in verse 14.

***But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"***

The moment Paul saw what was happening he stood before the whole assembly and dressed down Peter. Basically he said, **“Peter, you are a Jew and yet you have live as do the Gentiles. However, your actions since these other Jews showed up, are compelling these Gentiles to think they must live as do the Jews.”**

Paul is about to give a basic lesson on salvation to not only Peter but to all who are standing by and we see this in verses 15-16.

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

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

There is no reason for the Jew and Gentile believers to be separate because we all know that the only means of salvation for either is by faith in Jesus Christ.

It is by faith alone that a man can be justified before God and not by any works of the law.

He goes on to make a tremendous statement here in the last portion of verse 16 when he proclaims - *for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*

I do not think it can be put it any plainer than this.

There is not one thing we can do to be justified before God.. - As we have heard so many times, not by the works of the flesh shall a man be made righteous before God.

Not by prayer -

Not by Bible study -

Not by tithing -

Not by being kind to animals -

Not by how sweet we are to others. These are all works and there is no justification for salvation in works.

Salvation rests solely upon the finished work of Christ Jesus. ---- Human beings are always wanting to do something for salvation and because of this many are perishing. There is nothing we can do in and of ourselves. It is Jesus. It has always

been Jesus. It will always be Jesus. We can only come, confessing our sin and our need of a Savior. Then and only then will God receive us.

## LESSON FOUR

Gal. 2: 17- 3: 8

As we begin verse 17 Paul is continuing on with his discourse to Peter and the others. Here is Paul dressing down this big fisherman and Peter is not saying a thing to defend himself, because he has no defense.

**17 "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!"**

This verse sounds a little confusing, does it not? What exactly is Paul declaring here? There are several thoughts concerning what is being said and rather than go into each of them I think it prudent to teach exactly what **is** said. Not what is **not** said.

Please note carefully the wording and keep in mind why Paul is writing this letter - in 17a we read - *But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners* <> Simply put he is saying, If we are indeed being justified by faith apart from the law, yet we become circumcised and keep the law, we also will be sinners <> Why? Because we pervert the gospel by mixing law and grace. (Or works and faith)

Now notice 17b - *is Christ therefore a minister of sin?*

In other words Paul is saying, "Is the Lord leading us down a path in order that we might sin, making him the minister of sin?"

Paul thunders back with the obvious answer  
"God Forbid."

Or to put it another way - Is that what Christ is for, to be a glorious example, to show how deep my sin is and how lost I am. Do I now have to keep the law in order to be made righteous - No way! That can never be. The reason is plain - It would mean that Christ is encouraging sin. As the old mother Westwind stories often exclaimed - "No, No, a thousand times No!"

Verse 18 teaches us: -

***"For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.***

If after coming to Christ I once again begin a religion of works; I make myself a transgressor. We cannot have it both ways. If we desire to keep the law we will be lost, but if we trust in Christ we will be saved.

We come now to some very important scripture as we read verse 19:

***"For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.***

How is it that Paul could say something like this.

*I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.* - When did he do this and how was it accomplished - was it through the law or by way of the law that he died. ????- -

Scripture teaches us that, "The soul that sinneth, it must die." That is the law my friends. If one sins that one is responsible for sin and the payment is death.

Paul said that he through the law died. He died because he was guilty of breaking the law. and when he died he died also to that very law. When one has died, they can no longer partake of life.

When a man dies, he is no longer under law. Why? Because he is dead. Just as when a woman's husband dies, she is no longer under the law of marriage to that man. She is free of marriage vows because her husband is dead.

But - not only did he die *through* and *to* the law, he died in order that he might live to God. Now how in the world was that accomplished. He apparently was yet alive, yet he says he died. Please notice carefully verse 20.

***"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.***

Sometimes we do not get the full impact of this verse. We hear the words. We acknowledge the meaning and tuck it away in our memory. We may even have it for a memory verse to recite in Sunday school, but do we fully understand what is being said here.

I would to God I was eloquent enough to get it all out to you, but I am afraid I fail miserably at this, however, I shall attempt to put it across in a way we might all get a better understanding and appreciation of this verse.

When Paul stated, "*I have been crucified with Christ*"

He meant that when Christ was crucified on the cross, he too, was crucified on that cross. - Not symbolically or metaphorically, but realistically, geographically and historically.

He was in the body of Christ upon that cross. He had been placed there from before the foundation of the world. Anyone who is part and parcel of the body of Christ. Who has ever been born again into the family of God by the second birth, also was with Paul in Christ on that day.

When Christ was buried, so too were the sins of Paul and of those I just mentioned because Jesus bore our sins in his OWN body. Yours and mine. They were laid in that tomb, with him and are never to be seen again.

I do hope you understand that.- I pray it is no longer merely words that make for a merit badge in Sunday school. It should reshape our thinking when we think of all the Lord has done for us. Our sins did not simply vanish into thin air, they went into Christ. He died not only physically, but Spiritually so *our* spirit could live with him eternally

It was his spiritual death that caused the separation between He and God the Father. We often focus only on the physical, but it was not the physical that caused him to scream out.

If it were he would have screamed long before the cross. He would have screamed when he received the beating that caused him to be unrecognizable. He would have screamed when they placed the crown of thorns on his head. He would have screamed when they drove the nails into his hands and feet. He would have screamed when they hoisted him up pulling all his joints out; but he didn't.

It was not until our sins were placed in him and he died spiritually and was separated from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit that he screamed.

This is what Paul is talking about when he said  
*I have been crucified with Christ.*

He continues - *it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*; I may look alive to you. You can see me walking and you can hear me talking, but it is no longer me myself, it is Christ who lives in me.

What's more he continues with our lesson by saying - *and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.* - He no longer lives in the works of the flesh; He now lives a life of faith in the

one who loved him and gave his life for him. Not many of us enter into the deep spiritual walk Paul had with the Lord, but it is available to every one of us.

He finishes up this section with these words:

***"I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."***

The grace of God has been active in every age. If it were not then men like Moses, David, Elijah, Samuel and others we could name could not have been saved.

It has always been by grace through faith that men and women have been saved, never by the law because if righteousness could come by the law, then there was no reason for Christ to die. It would have been a senseless death, and cruel for no good reason.

Paul is now saying and will continue to teach throughout this little letter that had there been a law given that could save or add to salvation, then there would be no liberty in Christ, and the work of the cross would only have been an open door and no more. It would mean that there was more to be done and the words Uttered by Christ, "IT IS FINISHED" would have been hollow words..

We come now to chapter three verse one. With this verse we enter into the doctrinal portion of the letter to the Galatians. ***O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?***

You can almost hear the pleading of Paul as we read the first verse - *O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you.* That is: "Who has cast a spell over you." It is as if these Judaizers had come down and mesmerized these Galatians with a perversion of the truth and they were so caught up in it that they took it as gospel.

The Judaizers had the bad spell, but Paul had given them the Good spell and they were not clinging to it.

So many are found in this same condition, they believe a lie rather than studying and praying to determine what truth really is. They come to Christ and are saved, then they of course are hungry to learn more, but if a false influence comes along and

they sound as if they have more light, these folk will be bewitched.

I know of people who have come under this kind influence. I suspect they may have had a genuine conversion, but they tune into so called “Christian radio” (of which there is precious little) or they get involved in reading material that is of no value and are led astray.

I myself at the very beginning got involved in a weekly meeting with such a group. They sounded very good. They certainly were teaching me more than I had ever heard before, but by the grace of God I was rescued from them. I was not yet a Christian. My wife being a Christian let me have my head for awhile before she reined me in and Thank the Lord I listened. (I of course always listen to my wife - Yeah, right.)

There are many groups who sound very good, but their gospel will lead you straight to Hell. - A brand new Christian can easily be led astray. Why? They are now hungry for truth and Satan knows it. Our old enemy will cause us to turn away from the truth by showing us partial truth.

Are all these groups completely in error? No they are not. There is just enough truth to get one into trouble. This is why it is of the utmost importance for a Christian to join a solid church and get under sound teaching. It is also what we are to do in seeing to it that the new Christian is properly taught.

These Galatians were bewitched (so to speak) and were not obeying the truth they were taught. - Now notice the rest of this verse -

*before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?*

Paul had taught them about the body of Christ and how he bore our sins in his own body. They had accepted this truth and received Christ in the same manner.

When any one of us learns this truth and receives Christ as our personal Savior, it should answer forever the fact that there is absolutely not one thing I can do to earn salvation, so why in the world should I be circumcised and place myself under law.

Paul continues in verse 2: ***This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?***

Just how did you get the Holy Spirit? Was it by observing some law? - Or - did He come to you by faith? You cannot have it both ways. Either salvation is by law or it is by faith, and we have already seen that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

***Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?***

Are you really that foolish? You began the road to glory by faith, please explain to me how the works of the law can add anything to that.

It is absolutely amazing how many folk will swallow some lie and never ask for proof to back up what they are told. I can name quickly right off the top of my head several lies that are proffered as truth, and multiplied numbers of people believe it without asking one question.

Jim Jones was a prime example. Heavens Gate another. and people by the thousands swallow it hook line and sinker. - They are foolish and under a spell. It looks like truth but it is anything but truth.

***4 Have you suffered so many things in vain; if indeed it was in vain?***

This is an interesting verse and I'll tell you why -

There has been no mention of suffering in the letter as yet. What's more, it is not mentioned after this. It caused me to investigate the verse a little further.

In the NRSV it says - ***Did you experience so much for nothing?--if it really was for nothing.***

Is the word *suffer* or is it *experience*? -

Vincent claims the word is neutral and could possibly be used either way. He leans toward "Suffer" as the word - however, because the next verse goes right into the miracles wrought among them it more than likely in my humble opinion according to my best educated guess, backed by years of experience must elect that the word used means, "Experience." - - "*Have you experienced so many miracles in vain.*

*Did they come to nothing?"*

What's more verse 5 has an even flow if we select the word, "Experience."

***5: Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?;***

Paul is asking them a pertinent question - "By the way, is the one ministering the Spirit among you, working any miracles, and if he is, does he do it by the works of the law or by the word of faith?"

We must remember that when the church was being established it was accompanied by miracles in order to prove the messenger was God sent.

***6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."***

Paul takes them all the way back to the patriarch Abraham when he declares that it was by faith in believing God that Abraham was made righteous.

Abraham didn't do anything to commend himself to God. God chose *him*, he didn't choose God, but when by faith he believed the promise of God it was accredited to his account. Abraham owed God absolute righteousness. He could not pay. He was in debt.

If we use an accountants journal as an example it may help us understand better. - Anything on the right hand page of a journal is the debit side. What is owed. Things on the right hand side of the ledger is what is not owed.

Abraham was on the left side of the ledger, but when he believed what God declared he was going to do, he was moved to the right side of the ledger.

We are all in the same boat. We are on the wrong side of the ledger. We are on the debit side, the left hand side, and the more we work, the deeper in debt we go, however, the moment we believe what God declares about us and trust in him alone for salvation, He moves us from the debit side to the credit side of the ledger.

Verse 7 tells us some information these Galatians might not expect to hear.

***7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.***

All Jews believed they were sons of Abraham and the Gentiles were excluded from this privilege. Here Paul teaches that the real sons of Abraham are not necessarily Jews only, but everyone who is of the household of faith; they are the real sons of Abraham. That is: the sons who really count before God whether Jew or Gentile.

We know this from verse 8. ***And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."***

This was the promise given to Abraham showing that not only would Israel be a blessed nation, but so too would Gentile nations. All nations come from the loins of Abraham and this we shall see a little later on in our lessons, therefore I'll not take time here to explain, but we will get to it very shortly.

All the way through this doctrinal portion Paul continues to compare law with faith. It will almost become redundant as we move through the verses, but let me assure you, as we do so, it will become more and more apparent what the law was all about and what grace through faith is all about, and why this little epistle is so very important to truth.

## **LESSON FIVE**

Gal. 3: 8 - 18

In this 8<sup>th</sup> verse of chapter 3 we have a little more to glean from it before we move on, therefore let us read again what is written.

**8 *And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."***

Just when was this promise made to Abraham; and by the way, was Israel a nation at the time the promise was made? Lets check it out. Turn all the way back to the first book in the Bible, the book of Genesis and go to chapter 12: 1-3.

**12:1 *Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.***

**2 *I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.***

**3 *I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."***

Here was a promise given to Abraham and God promised to give him a land, make of him a great nation and those who bless that nation God would bless, but those who curse that nation, God would curse. This appears to be only one nation, but what nation we do not yet know because Israel was not yet a nation. However we do know from history that the nation is indeed Israel.

Apparently Abraham believed what God said and he moved out of Ur of Chaldees. But is this the promise we speak about from Galatians? Let us investigate a little more. Turn to Gen. 13: 14-16.

**14 *And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are; northward, southward, eastward, and westward;***

**15 *"for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.***

**16 *"And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.***

It is here that God maps out the territory that is to belong to Abrahams descendants. It is as far as the eye can see. What's

more the descendants will be as sand upon the sea shore so that if one can number sand ,that is how numerous the nation is to be. But we are yet speaking of one nation.

Now go to Gen. 15: 5-6.

***Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them."***

***And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."***

***6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.***

We come now to the particular promise we are interested in and it is a very unique promise. Please note what is said - *"Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."*

This time God told Abraham to count the stars if he could and that would be the descendants. It no longer is one nation he speaks about, but nations because the directions are a bit different than he has so far had.

The other directions were of sand - an earthly nation, this is stars, a heavenly nation.

In Gen. 12 God said *"Nation."* here God says *"Descendants."* and in verse 6 Abrahams faith was accounted as righteousness.

In Gen. 17: 1-5 we get even a clearer understanding.

***17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.***

***2 "And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."***

***3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:***

***4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.***

***5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.***

Please note that the one nation spoken of in Gen.12: 2 has now become many nations.

As we return to our text we read now in verse 9:

9 *So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.*

If one is of faith, then that one is a seed of Abraham and will be blessed along with him, whether Jew or Gentile because we all come from the loins of Abraham. But here's the catch; Although Abraham fathered many nations physically, he also is the father of those of faith. It is a two sided coin. On the one side there is the flesh, on the other side there is the spirit

We all come from Abraham, but that does not automatically make us saved, nor does it make us Jewish. We are not of the so called 10 lost tribes. We too must exercise the same believing faith Abraham exercised when he believed God.

There will be a lot of lost Gentiles as well as a lot of lost Jews. Why? Because they do not believe what God has declared.

Now as we read verse 10 we begin to notice a warning. -

*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."*

Paul is now pointing out the curse of the law. The law was good, but, it carried a curse with it. This is the curse - If one strived to keep the law and thought by doing so he was pleasing God in a way that would allow him to enter heaven that one is sadly mistaken.

Why? Because, unless one continued constantly in the keeping of the law they were doomed. That means, you could go all day long without committing one sin, but at the last moment of the day you sinned only a little bit; you have not continued and therefore are cursed.

No one who has ever lived can possibly continue in the whole law. First of all, who knows all the law. There's over 400 and most folk cannot even recite the 10 commandments, let alone keep the whole law.

Name me just one person who loves the Lord God with all their heart, all their mind and all their strength. Can't be done, not even by a monk in a monastery. The minute they stub their toe on a door sill they're done.

Just in case there may be someone who has the gall to say, "I can keep the whole law, verse 11 stares us right in the face -

*But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."*

See what I mean? It is not the law that saves or has ever saved anyone; it is faith. It has always been faith. Right from the Garden of Eden up until this very day.

Verse 12 : ***Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."***

Keeping the law does not take faith, it takes obedience. The stop light turns red you stop. There is no faith involved because if a police officer is near by, you soon learn the cost of breaking the law. It takes faith to run a stop light. Hoping and praying you don't get caught or have a car hit you.

Paul is going to continue for several more verses teaching about the law verses faith. He wants to make certain there is no mistake concerning the perilous situation these Galatians were stepping into and he continues in verse 13. ***Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),***

Even though God gave the law, and it brought a curse along with it, He had a plan. That plan included a Savior and it was that very Savior who bought us back (redeemed us) from the curse of the law by becoming a cursed thing for us. He died on our behalf so that we might have life, and a blessing as we read in verse 14.

***that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.***

What was the blessing of Abraham? As we have shown, by having faith in God and believing his word We as Gentiles are blessed along with believing Abraham in order that we might receive the promise of the Spirit. Now you might ask, "What promise is that exactly?"

It is the promise that no matter who one may be, if they believe as did Abraham, the promise to Abraham is our promise as well and simply put it is in these few words we read in 3: 11 - ***"The Just shall live by faith."***

Now in verse 15 we read these words - ***Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.***

Just what does Paul mean by this? Allow me to amplify a bit.- *“My brothers. Look at it from a human standpoint, When a last will and testament is drawn up, it cannot be changed even though it is only mans covenant, no one adds to or annuls it.”*

Whenever one has a will made, they usually retain an attorney for the job. When it at last is completed to the satisfaction of the one making it, That will cannot be altered or changed. It is binding.

Paul now makes it even clearer in verse 16.

***Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.***

God made certain promises to Abraham of which we have already studied from Genesis, and the promise cannot be annulled or deleted from because it is the covenant of God. If mans wills cannot be changed, how much stronger is the will of God?

Now here is the kicker - The will God made and promised to Abraham becomes effective the moment one believes. The reason is because the testator has died, making the will effective.

When we make a will, the will cannot be carried out until after our death. The same applies to the Covenant of God. Christ had to die to make it effective.

When one turns to Christ they immediately inherit the proceeds of the promise given; eternal life. It is present tense, not future tense. One verse should suffice. Turn to 1 John 5: 13.

***These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.***

Please notice the tenses in this verse -

1. You who *believe* - are now believers
2. That you may *know* - not think or hope
3. That you *have* - present tense not *will have* but *do have* eternal life.

The law could not provide any of that.

Now notice the rest of verse 16 - *He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.* - This is important for us to notice because the promise is through the Seed of Abraham, not to the seeds. The reason is because he is speaking of the spiritual, not the physical.

There was only one Seed God had in mind and that was none other than the Lord Jesus. He is the promised Seed and the law was fulfilled in him, and came to a halt. It no longer is applicable, BUT - the promise is yet in force and can never be taken out of force. It is the confirmed will of God.

Eternal life was never promised to anyone who obeyed the law. The promise was to and through the Seed of Abraham and he knew full well the meaning of that promise and we see the proof of it when he offered up his son Isaac.

Allow me to pause here a bit, just in case you are puzzled about all this talk concerning the seed of Abraham. Christ is the promised Seed. The very same one promised to Adam and Eve after they had been expelled from the garden. *"I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed ( the serpent) and her seed"* Gen. 3: 15. However, because of the promised Seed, there are many seeds from the loins of Abraham, both saved and unsaved. Both of Israel and of the Gentile nations.

The promise has always been of a redeemer for a sinning race. This involves every one of us because all have sinned and all need a redeemer.

Now as we approach verse 17 - I want us to take care in what is said by the Apostle Paul.

***17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.***

Paul is telling the Galatians that the law didn't even come into being until 430 years after the promise was given and the promise was never erased merely because the law was added. What was the promise he speaks about that was confirmed in Christ? Turn with me to Gen. 15: 17-18.

*And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces.*

*18 On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram,....*

Here's the picture if I may use a rough illustration.

God had just told Abram that his descendants would be as the sand on the sea shore and the stars of heaven. Abraham believed God and God accounted it as righteousness. Then God instructed Abraham to get the proper animals and divide them in half.

Lay one half on the left side and the other half on the right side, leaving a path down the middle.

God then caused a deep darkness and sleep to fall upon Abraham and as that happened, God walked between the two halves of animals from one end to the other and shook hands with himself as it were. This confirmed the oath in such a way that it could not be annulled. In fact Hebrews 6: 13 teaches us -

*For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,* All this was confirmed in Christ. It had nothing to do with the law. It had all to do with faith in the promise.

Paul continues in Verse 18 - *For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.*

If the inheritance should come by the law, it cannot come by a promise; BUT - (that great conjunction in scripture) God gave it by promise. That promise is yet in effect even though the law is no longer in effect.

Make no mistake though - there is nothing wrong with the law and there is much we can profit by if we obey. Laws such as "Do not kill, do not covet, do not commit adultery" and the like.

Paul wrote in Rom. 8: 2 *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. - 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,*

What this is saying in plain English is; The law of life in Christ sets me free from the law of sin and death. I am no longer

under the bondage of it. Verse 3 however, sometimes confuses people, but I think a simple illustration will suffice. The law could not do what Christ did for us; that is; it could not set us free or give us life because it was weak - THROUGH THE FLESH. What does “Weak through the flesh mean?”

Suppose you cook up a good roast beef with all that good brown gravy and it is as tender as can be. When you take a knife to it, all that happens is, it falls off the roast onto the plate and you don’t get a good clean slice. One might say, “I’d better get a better knife, this one is no good.” - However, there is nothing wrong with the knife it merely is weak through the flesh.

It is our flesh that is weak, not the law. Now as we move further into chapter 3 we will learn more of the purpose concerning the law.

## LESSON SIX

GAL. 3: 19 - 29

Paul anticipating the Galatians and all who read scripture now asks a logical question as we see in verse 19.

**19** *What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.*

Well! If the law can't save you and if the law doesn't add one single bit to salvation, what is the purpose of the law? - Almost any thinking person might ask the same question, and since these Judaizers were confusing the Galatians with their nonsense, Paul is going to answer in such a way that there will be no mistake about the usage of the law. He said - *It was added because of transgressions.*

Does this mean that as God looked over planet earth He noticed how much sin there was and decided to put up some stop signs at the proper intersections? No, that is not the reason. Here is a part of the reason -

It was to awaken in man a sense of guilt and not a mere vagueness about sin. A mere "I wonder if this is sin?" will not drive people to their need of a Savior and as we shall see later on God had a different purpose in mind.

Paul goes on in this verse to say - *till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made;* Remember, God made the promise to Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac about a coming Seed. If you will please notice; The word Seed in your Bible is in caps, therefore it is speaking about a person of the Godhead, namely Jesus.

Now the last part of this verse is a puzzle to me, therefore anything I offer is of no significance. -

*it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.* I simply do not know what that means exactly and having said that, if you find someone who does know, tell me.

However verse 20 I can handle a little better. -

**20** *Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.*

Whenever you have a mediator, by virtue of the word you need two people, else there is no need for a mediator. - Unless of course you spend a lot of time arguing with yourself. In that case you need a mediator for me, myself and I. Is that what we have here?

Simply put - Moses was the mediator between God and Israel, but he had no real authority to make a promise on his own, nor to forgive sin BUT (our favorite conjunction) God *does* have such authority and He did it through a mediator.

Who was the mediator? The Lord Jesus and since God is one He could do the mediating all by himself. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus* 1 Tim. 2: 5.

In verse 21 we read:

***Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.***

Paul asks and answers his own question - Is the law against the promise God made to Abraham? - *Certainly not!* - You see; The law was to show sinfulness as we have stated, but another reason for the law other than what we have stated is; it could only point to Christ, but not save. The promise (which was first) has precedence over the law.

Because - *if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.* - But it is not. - Righteousness is by grace through faith.

Verse 22 ***But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.***

Paul continues to hammer away at the Galatians by reminding them that “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” and that those who exercise faith in Jesus and his finished work. Those who actually believe - - the promise will be given.

VV. 23 ***But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.***

This may look a little tricky right here, however, when we keep in mind how the people of the O.T. were saved it will help. They were saved the same as we are today, by exercising faith in Christ. How did they do that seeing as He had not yet revealed himself.

The writer of Hebrews attests: *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,*

It was through the prophets and fathers that the Hebrews learned about the coming Messiah. They were looking forward to Him who was to come. Now the writer says in verse 2 - *has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,*

We in this dispensation look back to the Lord Jesus. It is He who is our faith and it is He who was the faith of the O.T. believers.

Not everyone believed concerning the promise.

They insisted on the keeping of the law to make them righteous before God. They even added a few of their own just to make sure. For instance, If the Sabbath arrived as you were coming into town with your goods loaded on a donkey, You could loosen the girth, but you had to let it fall to the ground by itself. If you took it off that was work, but loosening the girth was not.

The others who were believers obeyed the law, but they had a sense of guilt and unworthiness before God that caused them to have faith in the promise. That was what the law was to do, so we see it did it's job in some.

Paul continues - 24 ***Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*** - The law was a teacher to bring us to Christ. That is: things contained in the law should have been a sign to those believers because everything in the Tabernacle pointed directly to the Lord and his work.

1. The altar of sacrifice.
2. The basin the priests bathed in before entering the holy place.
3. The burning lamp.
4. The table of shewbread.
5. The incense altar. ---- everything in that place as well as the law which was to be observed represented Christ. That is why Moses was told to it make exactly as he was given instructions. - It represented Christ.

Now verse 25 tells us - 25 ***But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.***

We no longer need something to represent Christ because He has already come and we have seen him.

As we turn to 1 John 1: 1-2 we see the proof - ***That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have***

*seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life;  
2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the  
Father and was manifested to us;*

We do not need the law to show us Christ. We do not need the Tabernacle to show us Christ. He has been heard with the ear of men. He has been seen with the eye of man and He has been handled. Not only was He seen, but He was studied, gazed upon. Not merely a light perusal, but an intense study such as one observing a replay of a football game on television. They looked at him from every angle.

In our day and age we must look with the eye of faith, but He is clearly revealed to all who will believe.

The pages of our Bible are replete with him and the Bible (as was the Tabernacle;) was written exactly as God told the writers to write. Just as Moses could not impose his own ideas on the building of the Tabernacle, neither could the writers take liberties with what they wrote. It was superintended by the Holy Spirit.

Now verse 26 - *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

As we should well know by now, the only way to be a son of God is by having faith in his only begotten Son.

We will take up sonship a little further on when we get to the section that applies to sons in chapter 4.

We now come to a verse that is widely not understood properly and it is because of the word “Baptized.”

There are four words that are translated in our English Bible by the word Baptize, but they all have a different meaning and the rub comes because we have incorporated them all into one word.

The word used here in our text is the word *Baptizo*.

This means a dipping, such as one would dip a garment in order to dye it. It is also used for the baptism performed by John to the Israelites. This word is the same word used in several other places such as those in the Ark, and the children of Israel who passed through the Red sea.

Now how do we distinguish the way Paul uses it here from being to salvation, or an additive to salvation?

Notice verse 27 as we read.

***For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***

This cannot mean merely the water baptism we are all commanded to undergo, because we know that water cannot wash away sins. Peter wrote in his first epistle 3: 21: ***There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,***

Water baptism is merely the following of a command to be baptized. It has nothing whatever to do with salvation. Water baptism is a dipping - "*Baptizmo.*" Baptism into Christ is not a dipping. It is into His body. Once baptized into His body there is no getting out and what's more you do not want to get out.

The thief on the cross was saved, yet he was never baptized by water. - Water baptism is an outward sign of an inward change and our relationship to Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

Remember what we learned in Gal. 2: 20 - ***"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.***

Water baptism places our seal of acknowledgment on that truth. Even if one such as the thief did not have the opportunity to get baptized,; this truth would still apply.

Romans 6: tells us this is this fact when it says -

***Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?*** - This is an inward union that has occurred, not a union to bring about. -- Being baptized by water does not cause that union to happen, - it in the life of a believer has already occurred in time past and because of that fact we *were* buried with him - as back in Gal. 2: 20.

This is why verse 4 repeats that - ***we were buried with Him through baptism into death,***  
And because of this fact we know - ***that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.***

Christ was raised from the dead -past tense -

We should walk in newness of life. - present tense.

Water baptism or not, “*Old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new..*” Let us therefore walk in that newness.

Rom. 6: 5-6 - *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death,* ( water baptism, signifying we believe this ) *certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, - - Why ? -*

*6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*

This ties in with Gal. 2: 20.

*11. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

If you are from Texas you will understand the word *reckon* quite well. It is the same as saying, “ It’s a done deal. If a Texan says, “I reckon I’ll get me a drink of water” you can count on the fact he’s headed for the well.

The main point of all we have just discussed is that we might understand that baptism is not excluded from error if we indeed try to make it a rule of salvation. If we should do that we would then be guilty of perverting the pure gospel of Christ because we would be adding works for salvation.

Now in verse 28 we read: - *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

In this baptism into Christ there is no recognition of Jew or Gentile, slave or free man, male or female. The reason is because God is no respecter of persons. *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, no not one. There are none who understand. No one seeks after God.* BUT - because of Christ, we can all be accepted in the beloved and we are then part and parcel of that one body. The body of Christ.

*29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

What a wonderful verse this is. It teaches us that all who belong to Christ are of Abrahams seed. That makes us heirs

according to the promise. That same promise God gave Abraham way back in Genesis.

Part of what we inherit according to that promise is given in the epistle to the Ephesians. I think I'd like to see just what God has given those who are heirs of the promise, so let us take a peek at our inheritance in Eph. 1:3.

**3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,***

We have every spiritual blessing conceivable in the heavenlies. I don't know them all but I do know a few.

**4. *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,***  
- Before ever God created one single atom, He chose us and placed us in Christ. -

Not only that, but He promised we would be holy.

I am not very holy now, and no matter how I try I am not as holy as I one day will be. I shall also be *without blame*. I have not the slightest idea how that will feel, but I do know I will no longer need to use 1 John 1: 9. Because I will be without sin in my life at all.

We are also - *predestined to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself*, Of this adoption we shall learn more in just a short while as we move through this epistle. It is very important for us to understand this truth.

***He has made us accepted in the Beloved.*** - We are not accepted on our own account, but we are accepted in the Beloved and that is because we were chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world.

He has made known to us - *the mystery of His will*,

And that mystery is Christ IN US the hope of glory. That very same glory all have come short of.

Notice verse 10 - ***that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him.***

Not merely Jew and Gentile. Not only slave and free, not just male and female, but all our loved ones who are in Christ, that we might be together with him forever and ever.

When a Christian goes to sleep, it is not the last time his saved loved one will ever see them because He will gather us all

together when He calls out the church. *The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them to meet Christ in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

I could go on and on with the inheritance we have in Christ but they are too numerous for us to cover in our time together. Suffice it to say, if you are Abrahams seed according to promise; That promise which is greater than the law, then you are one in Christ and you have a home in glory. This world is not your home, you're just passing through.

## **LESSON SEVEN**

Gal. 4: 1-18

Now as we come to chapter 4 we will learn about the sons of God we have alluded to in chapter 3 as we begin verse 1.

- 1 *Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,*
- 2 *but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.*

If you have ever seen the play or the movie “The King and I” I believe you’ll have a good idea of what this verse is telling us. If you will recall, the king hired Anna to teach him all the proper Etiquette needed to rank along the other sophisticates. She also was to tutor his son who would become king upon his death.

This is similar to what actually took place in O.T. days. Kings had several wives and when they bore sons to the king they were under tutors until the proper age when he would then “adopt” or “Son place” them. They were always his sons, but at an appointed time when their schooling was complete he then would claim them lawfully as his own. He would go to the Forum or courthouse and there make them rightful heirs.

Until that time he was no different than a slave. In fact, slaves often were their teachers.

Believers in the O.T. had to come to God the same way we all do, by faith and were known as children of God, but they were not known as sons of God.

We in the N.T. age upon coming to God are sons of God. You might ask, “What is the difference?”

In the O.T. Those who belonged to God were the same as we have just described; they were “*heir de jure*” by right, not “*heir defacto*” in fact.

Paul is pointing out something these Galatians would understand. Prior to the Holy Spirit being given at Pentecost, Saints were known by God as his children, but since then saints are known as sons. In Romans 8: 14-17 we get some help on this.

**14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**

**15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption**

O.T. saints did not have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. They did not cry out "*Abba, Father.*" but now because the Holy Spirit was given to indwell us

we cry out, "*Abba, Father.*" Now notice the next two verses.

***16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,***

***17 and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.***

### Son Placing

Adoption is an important feature of the riches of Divine grace and a gift to never be overlooked or thought of as of no moment. Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote and I quote -

“There is no body of scripture which undertakes to direct the conduct of beginners in the Christian life as in distinction to those who are of a mature nature. Whatever God says to the old and established saint He says to every believer - including those most recently regenerated.”

“In human experience legitimate birth and adoption never combine in the same person. There is no occasion for a father to adopt his own child. In the realm of Divine adoption, every child born of God is adopted at the moment he is born. He is placed before God as a mature responsible son. Thus adoption becomes one of the important divine undertakings in the salvation of men and is a position of great importance.”

Notice please how Paul continues in verse 3.

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

Here Paul speaks to his own condition as well as the rest of the Jews as being under bondage to the law.

As far as any were concerned, the child had no say so, nor did he have any claim on the riches of the father until the appointed age was reached. In fact they differed nothing from the slaves who were teaching them. The slave had more rights than the children. They were over the children.

***But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,  
5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.***

It was not until the appointed time by our heavenly Father that He sent his only begotten into the world, born of a virgin; born under the law in order that He could be a proper kinsman redeemer for those under the law.

Now does this “*under the law*” mean Jews only, or does it include the Gentiles too? It includes everyone, because the soul that sins shall die and since all are sinners, all have broken the law.

Now for those who might contend that Jesus did not become a son until he was born of a virgin we must notice carefully the words of this verse - *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son*  
It does not say God sent forth Jesus, It says God sent his Son. - Jesus has been the Son from all eternity past and will be for all eternity future. - There was a time when we did not exist, but Jesus has existed forever.

One other thing to note before we leave this verse. The fullness of time does not mean, “The ripeness of opportunity.” It was not merely an opportune time for the Lord to appear on the scene, (as some would teach) it was the time when all prophecy had been fulfilled concerning his appearing. And if you recall from our teaching in the book of Daniel, the time was predicted exactly. If you do not remember, you can get that information from my notes on Daniel.

Moving on to verses 6-7 we read. - **6 *And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"***

**7 *Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.***

Because we are indeed sons we have the privilege of calling God, Abba - Father. Thus we are no longer merely children of God, but joint heirs with the only Begotten Son. What a tremendous blessing we have. No other generation has ever been able to say that or even think it.

Also notice if you will, and mark it in your Bible if you like. When folk say to you the trinity is not in scripture; point them to this verse. - *God* (the Father) - *has sent forth the Spirit* ( Holy Spirit) - *of His Son* - (Jesus) - *into your hearts*, There are of course many other verses, but here is a good one to refer to.

**8 *But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.***

Paul here reminds the Galatians that back when they did not know God they served false gods. In other words, they were not necessarily in bondage to the Jewish law, but they were in bondage to the law of whatever gods they served. They had to perform certain rituals in order to appease their gods and keep them happy.

They had little statues of one nature or another to aide them in this endeavor. Unfortunately we have some professed Christians today who do the same thing. They have a picture or some heavenly object that they say aids them in their worship of God.

The picture may be on the wall, or on their desk, or even in their Bible and as they gaze upon it they imagine the Lord Jesus. If it happens to be something carved from stone they profess they do not use it as an idol, but it does aid them in their worship.

My Bible expressly forbids that type of action and it is a very deadly sin. It looks and feels very harmless, but that is one of the ways our human nature reacts and the enemy of our soul leads.

Harry Ironside put it this way, - *“There is no artist on earth who can paint my Christ. In order to see my Christ you must go to the Bible. If you want to be put in a worshipful spirit sit down and read the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah, or the account in the gospels of what Christ accomplished - You do not need the beggarly elements of the world.”*

I liken it to the buss bars in an electrical transformer. When one would open the cabinet and look at the big copper buss bar. It looks all dusty. There is no sound from it or odor and it is just sitting there, but if one were to merely lightly touch it they would immediately be ushered into eternity. 50,000 volts of raw power would course through them. They thought it looked innocent, but it was deadly.

In verse 9 we will read some very familiar words. Words we have seen before.

***9 But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?***

Doesn't this remind you of the Israelites in the wilderness? Remember what they said to Moses.

We want to go back to Egypt. We don't like the way the Lord is leading us. We want leeks, onions and meat. Boo Hoo. Boo Hoo. They desired the weak and beggarly elements of the world.

By listening to the Judaizers these Galatians were returning to the very same things they had escaped and Paul says to them in verse 10 ***You observe days and months and seasons and years.***

They were returning to the keeping of certain days and feasts. They returned to the Sabbath day, but the Sabbath was given to Israel as a memorial of their release from captivity of Egypt. We are not under that restriction because we do not observe the Sabbath rest. Our Sabbath rest is in Christ and it is not one day a week, but every day. All seven, all year all our life. Christ is our Sabbath. That is why Hebrews 4: 11 says, ***Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.***

What was that disobedience? They could not enter because they had no faith. Verse 6 of this same chapter says - 6 ***Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,***

Since those who first had opportunity refused to enter, there remained a rest for those who by faith would enter. Verse 10 continues - ***For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.***

We cannot work our way into Gods good graces. It is all of Jesus and none of us.

Just in case someone might ask if we can be certain we are no longer obligated to observe these things turn to Col. 2: 16-17.

***16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,***

***17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.***

Festivals, food, drink, new moons, sabbaths, are only a shadow - the real thing is Christ. Some may think that the Saturday sabbath is for the Christian - it is not. Paul plainly has instructed us.

Paul now in verse 11 says - ***I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.***

Paul is placing them on notice that he fears for their salvation because he may have wasted all his labor for nothing. He is saying he is fearful they have not been saved, and he is fearful they did not understand the message he brought them concerning the liberty we have in Christ that sets us free from the law.

They had confessed their sins, they had most likely been baptized and they certainly seemed genuine in their profession of faith, but now Paul is nursing some doubt.

People from time to time will ask me if I think So and So is saved. The reason is because that individual may not be walking as a Christian ought to walk. Not according to what the world thinks, but according to what the Bible teaches concerning how a believer ought to conduct themselves.

It may be that the person in doubt is a member of the church, but they do not obey the teaching of scripture as they ought and for all intents and purposes one cannot tell them from an unbeliever. My usual reply is, “*By their fruits you shall know them.*”

If there is no outer manifestation of an inner change of conduct, then it is anybodies guess and that is what Paul is concerned about. The mere keeping of rules and regulations is not proof of the life of Christ indwelling. As we continue through the rest of this epistle it will become apparent that he is re explaining what he previously taught and striving to make quite clear the trap these Galatians were falling into.

In verse 12 he goes a step further when he says: ***Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all.***

What does Paul mean by “*Become like me because I became like you?*” When Paul first came to them he did not come as a Pharisee or a Jew bound by the law.

He came to them as one of them. He ate with them, he drank with them and he preached to them of the grace of God, not the law of Moses.

He did teach them about observing holy days such as the Passover, the feast of firstfruits, ordinances of the great day of atonement, or feast of tabernacles. He had kept all these himself, but he did not impose them upon these Galatians for had he done so it would have been as these Judaizers, a perversion of the truth in Christ and it would not give salvation.

Now he tells them, “*Forget about what you are hearing and become like me. You are not injuring me, you are injuring yourselves.*”

In the next few verses we have a little problem from many who have differing ideas of what Paul is saying. Notice as we read

verses 13-15

**13** *You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.*

**14** *And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*

**15** *What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.*

The *physical infirmity* Paul mentions here is speculation by very many as a reference to the thorn in the flesh given to him by the Lord after he had received those revelations we spoke about in an earlier lesson. It is contended that his eyesight was very poor.

Now I will tell you right off quick, as far as I can tell it is all speculation. He may have indeed had poor eyesight because of the reference in verse 15 about plucking out their own eyes for him and that the trial in his flesh was because his eyes ran all the time - I don't know and quite frankly neither does anyone else.

We can certainly build a convincing case for the eyes being the problem, but it could have just as well been allergies causing the problem, but when someone is willing to pluck out their own eyes for another person what it tells me is; they are willing to go to any extent to help that individual.

If my wife or one of my children, grandchildren, great grandchildren need one of my eyes, it would be out in a heart beat if it would help them. So far there is no transplanting of eyes. Parts of eyes, yes, but not eyes themselves.

If I were going to make an argument for Paul about his eyesight, I would have to say he had perfect eyesight, because the Lord healed his eyes and I find nowhere in scripture where God ever did a halfway job. The infirmity in his flesh came at a later date.

It could have been a bad back from being beaten with rods. Those rods were unforgiving. They didn't bend and the only thing that ended up broken was the back.

After all the things Paul has just reminded them about he says in verse 16 - ***Have I therefore become your enemy because***

***I tell you the truth?*** - At one time you were willing to sacrifice your most precious possession and now have I become a stench to you?

He continues on - ***17 They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them.***

***18 But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you.***

These Judaizers desire to woo you over to their side because as always, they love the preeminence and they go about it with much zeal. So much so that it appears attractive and if you are captured by them, they will rule over you and have the best seats as well as be recognized as being “*a somebody.*”

If one is being zealous for the sake of the gospel and the liberty in Christ it is a good thing, but this is not what was occurring in Galatia.

We are about to enter into a change of tone as we move into our next section.

## LESSON EIGHT

Gal. 4: 19-29

As we begin this section Paul is about to give further instruction and notice the love expression as he begins

**19** *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,*

**20** *I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.*

**21** *Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?*

He calls them, “My little children.” It is not quite the same as when he wrote to the Corinthian church where he had to be stern. There it was a case of gross misbehavior. Here is it is case of foolishness in following some who perverted the gospel. He was being stern, but as a mother might be stern when the child is acting foolish.

It was these Galatians whom Paul had begotten in the gospel and he admonishes them as such. In fact he goes clear back to their birth and treats them as a mother might recall the birth pains of child delivery, and he says, “*I did this once and now I am doing it again.*”

I often wonder how any woman who has had a child can even think of having another. It must be something placed in her by God, otherwise I am certain no woman would do this on purpose. I am only a guy, but a mere hang nail is about all the pain I want to suffer. How is it then that woman usually outlive the men? -- Well, here Paul is saying he is in labor all over again because he desires to have Christ formed in them.

In verse 20 we get an idea of the tone of this letter because Paul has a desire to be with them in order that he might change the strict tone of his writing and his doubts are mounting all the time due to the fickleness of their heart and their foolishness in believing these false teachers.

In verse 21 he says *Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?*

Good grief man; do you not hear the demands of the law? If you do, then who pray tell can keep it?

Now Paul is about to give them an illustration that ought to make things click in their thinking as he moves into verse 22-23.

**22** *For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.*

**23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,**

This is a good allegory Paul is giving because he is likening the two sons born to Abraham as the law and the promise. He uses Hagar and Ishmael as an illustration of the law. She was the slave woman. She could not do as she pleased, because Sarah is the one who laid down the rules for her to follow. The same as the law lays down rules to follow. She only had the freedom allowed her by Sarah.

Ishmael was born out of impatience. Sarah thought because she was well past the age of child bearing that the Lord intended to use Hagar as the vessel through whom the promised son would come. In fact that was not the intent of God at all. Both she and Abraham acted out of haste and as a result 12 nations were born of Ishmael that to this day give Israel problems as well as the rest of the world. It was a fleshly choice they made. It had nothing to do with any promise God had given.

The son of promise was of course Isaac. He was a miracle baby. Much the same as Christ was a son of promise. A miracle baby, born of a virgin with no earthly father being involved.

Now, Paul opens the door a little wider for our understanding.

**24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar;**

Hagar and Sarah are symbolic of the two covenants of God. Hagar represents the law that was given at Mt. Sinai. It is the law that places one under bondage. How do we know this? The very next verse explains.

**25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children;**

Jerusalem is yet in bondage because they have failed to recognize the promise. They still labor under the law and will do so until the blindness is lifted from their eyes. Let us also take note that Sinai is in the desert - It is not in the promised land. It may seem to be of no note, but I assure you, when God teaches a lesson, He pulls out all the stops. It is either Law or it is Promise. It cannot be both.

Notice the wording in this next verse: **26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.**

This seems to be an odd statement does it not? What is Paul striving to tell us here? - Let me see if I can at least make the waters a little less muddy.

First: the Jerusalem which is here below, the earthly Jerusalem is of the law. That is where the temple worship is to be centered.

That is where the priests were to minister and the sacrifices were to be made. Jerusalem is the place the Israelites were to go once a year on the great day of atonement in order to come under those sacrifices. It was nothing more than bondage to a list of do's and don'ts. Do this and live - fail to do this and die.

But, the Jerusalem from above is free. It is made of promise and is the mother of all who are in Christ. It is that new Jerusalem mentioned in the book of the Revelation. Let us drive the bus over there and take a look.

Rev. 21: 9-11. - **9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."**  
**10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,**  
**11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.**

There are several thoughts concerning this whole passage, but what I want us to notice is, the new Jerusalem. This is the church exalted. The angel said to John that he was about to show him the bride of the Lamb, and her beauty is indescribable. John describes her jewelry and her glory as of being of God. - The 22<sup>nd</sup> verse goes on to say - **22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.** - No longer is a temple needed or required, because God is the temple and the everlasting light of it.

Verse 27 of Galatians says: **For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband."**

Rejoicing is called for because it is not by labor of the flesh that the promise comes. It is those who are barren - without hope - who should break forth and shout. It is the Gentiles who had no Savior and had no God that were desolate. It is the desolate of Israel who had gone into Babylonian captivity that God has made this promise to.

Paul caps this off by saying - 28 *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.*

First he calls them brethren. He includes the Jews as well as the Gentiles. It is the Galatians who also are children of promise. It is the same as was Isaac.

Whoever takes God at his word is also a child of promise.

In verse 29 we read: *But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.*

This is a very interesting verse and the reason is,- not only did that persecution occur between Ishmael and Isaac, it continued right up to the time Paul was writing this letter. It is yet continuing even to this very day. Let us examine this a little further.

Remember we said that Ishmael was born according to the flesh? It was the works of Sarah and Abraham in his taking Hagar as a wife in order to produce what they thought would be the promised son, but in so doing, they went out of the will of God and it was going to cost them.

Whenever anyone steps out of the will of God it costs them. Adam and Eve stepped out of God's will and plunged the human race into sin and that sin cost the life of the Lord Jesus. Sin has a price, no matter if it is little or big. A little white lie will produce the same death as murder. Sin is sin and it costs.

When Abraham and Sarah did not wait for the promise God had given them, it produced a son who persecuted the son of promise. How was that done ? . For the answer we shall have to see the correct translation of the word "*Persecuted.*"

Turning back to Gen. 21: 8-9. Where the quote is from we read:

**8** *So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.*

**9** *And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.*

In the KJV The word is "*Mocking*" not *scoffing*.

In the NRSV the word is "*Playing.*"

Here in our Galatian text the word is "*Persecuted.*"

Which translation is correct because it makes a world of difference for our understanding.

We can rule out the NRSV because it was a bit more than "playing" that Ishmael was doing. Isaac was about three years old because that was the time babies were weaned and since Ishmael was 14 when Isaac was born it would now make him 17. Now one might say, "What is wrong with a 17 year old playing with a three year old. If that had been the case I do not think it would have stirred up Sarah's emotions as much as it did.

Persecuted is a little stronger and that is correct here.- In this day and age we might easily say; the sons of Ishmael are persecuting the sons of Isaac, however, the O.T. translation does not quite bear out that meaning for those particular days, therefore the word must be "*Mocking.*"

The word used here in Galatians does not refer to innocent fun, such as playing would indicate. However, let us remember that Paul is writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, therefore, he is kept from error.

The word in this instance is in fact persecuted because that is exactly what later on occurred and is occurring even today. The Jews are yet persecuted by the Arab nations.

Now; when Isaac was weaned at age three, there was a great celebration and feast. Up to now Ishmael had been heir apparent. He was to inherit all of Abrahams vast wealth. All of a sudden the ground gave way under his feet and since all attention was focused on Isaac, Ishmael began mocking the whole thing.

If we use the NKJV word "Scoffing" we get the same effect, but using the word "Playing" tends to lead astray because it sounds as if Ishmael was merely making a game of things. Ishmael was doing a little more than that. He was being downright ornery.

I have given this long exposition because it is important for our understanding Sarah's comments to Abraham in verse 10 where we read - ***Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac."***

This was very hard for Abraham to hear. After all, he loved Ishmael. He was his son born to him in old age. Actually his first son, but not the son of promise.

The son of promise is important to us as well because it points to the Son of promise who paid the price of our sin. Isaac was a miracle baby because Sarah was well past the age of child bearing.

Rather than take matters into her own hands she should have said as did Mary, *“Be it unto me as You have said”* when the angel announced she would become pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

Sarah did not want any complications concerning who was to inherit and if Ishmael remained there it would be one big fight over the estate. How did Abraham feel about this news? Verse 11 tells us his reaction.

***11 And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.***

He did not welcome the idea. He wanted Ishmael to remain with him. It was going to be a very difficult job kicking out Hagar the mother of his first son and making Ishmael go with her.

It was heart wrenching for Abraham. He certainly must have spent a sleepless night figuring out how to go about doing such a thing. God however has a plan in mind and He reveals it to his servant as we read in verse 12-13

***12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.***

***13 "Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed."***

God actually comforts Abraham. God always brings comfort when we consult with him and I am certain that is what Abraham did although we have no record of it.

Abraham was a praying man. God was teaching his servant all along and even though Abraham slipped from time to time, God did not give up on him. Now to me, that is very good news. It shows me that although I slip from time to time, God does not abandon me and leave me to my own devices.

Not only does God comfort Abraham concerning Hagar, but he gives a great promise concerning Ishmael when He tells Abraham He will make of Ishmael a great nation and the reason is because Ishmael is the seed from the loins of Abraham.

We might well say to ourselves, "I am not certain that God was really doing Abraham any favors by the promise, look at the world situation today, however, we must never forget the promise in Rom. 8: 28

***And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.***

We may not always see the purpose God has in mind, but we can rest assured it will work for good to those who are the called. - It is working for Abraham, it is working for good concerning Isaac and it will work for good concerning all the promises of God.

Paul finishes this section with these words: ***Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."***

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

God did not intend for Ishmael to be heir and He tells Abraham so. It is the son of the freewoman who is the heir.

From the seed of Abraham comes both a fleshly nation and a spiritual nation. The spiritual nation comes from THE seed which is Christ and is comprised of all who are born again. The fleshly nation, are of those who refuse the offer of salvation and they are also the ones who mock the children of the promise.

## ***LESSON NINE***

Gal.5: 1-12

Paul has just finished giving the Galatians a great Bible lesson concerning the difference between law and promise. He has given excellent allegory concerning the two sons born to Abraham. The one from the slave woman, Hagar, and the son of promise Isaac, Born of Sarah. He now continues with an admonition in verse 1 of chapter 5.

***Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.***

I had at first thought to make the exposition of this verse word for word in the English, but then I remembered that in the Greek the sentence structure is much different than in the English.

The reason I mention this is because as I looked in all the Greek materials in my library I noticed something I thought good to share with you all. In chapter 4 the very last verse says - 31 *So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*

This is the way the Greek renders the verse as well.

However, when we come to 5: 1 The English is different and begins with the words, “Stand fast.”

The Greek, however, begins with the subject of which Paul has been speaking in the very last of 4: 31 - namely - *Freedom.*

Here is the way the Greek actually reads:

*“In the freedom therefore, Christ us made free.”*

In other words; in the same freedom that the son of promise was given so too is the freedom Paul is telling these Galatians to “*Stand fast*” in. He comes directly without break, from the very subject in 4: 31 to that same subject in 5:1. It is the Freedom Christ has given to all who are born again into the family of God.

Now why did I think it important enough to share all this? It is because we should make no mistake about the allegory Paul has shown and why he has shown it.

It was an allegory pointing to a great truth, but he wants us to understand the reality in our own lives.

He desires not only the Galatians, but us as well to get a good grip on the truth he is teaching.

Now let us examine this second verse carefully so there is no misunderstanding about what Paul intends here. - 2 ***Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.***

If we were to take this verse all by itself it might lead to some confusion or even freight in the life of a believer. Especially if one is a male.

As we all know, most male babies born today are circumcised in the hospital right after they are born. Does this mean that Christ will never profit them? Well, the answer is of course, “No.” Babies today are circumcised for health reasons or merely because everyone does it. So then, what does this verse mean?

Paul is here teaching that if the Galatians become circumcised they turn their back on the very freedom Christ has provided for them. They are mixing a faith, works, kind of salvation. - James wrote in his epistle - chapter 2: 17-18

17 ***Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.***

18 ***But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.***

You can have works, but the works must come as a result of faith, not as a means to salvation.

Calvin said, “*Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone.*”

These Judaizers were telling these foolish Galatians that trusting in Christ was good. In fact it was very good, but that was not enough, there has to be more.

There has to be the works of keeping the law. This is a *mixing*, not a *result* of faith.

Now Paul goes even further in verse 3 ***And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.***

This is very familiar language. We have read something like this before when we were in chapter 1 where we read - ***But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.***

- ***As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.***

Remember we said that whenever the Holy Spirit has one of his writers repeat something so close together it is of great importance and it behooves us to pay attention. This is the case once again right here.

If one turns their back upon Christ and desires to be placed under the law, they then are a debtor to keep that whole law. - verse 4 continues - ***You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.***

Once again we must be very careful here because there are some who use this verse as a loss of salvation verse and in so doing fall into great error. Let us see what the verse actually is teaching.

We will take the verse from the end rather than the beginning of it and in that way we can answer the question that causes a stumbling. The words, "*You have fallen from grace*" does not mean that they were once saved and now if they are circumcised they are lost. What it does mean is this:

If a person strives to keep the law in order to be saved or more saved, that person has fallen away from the grace provided by God in Christ.

They have chosen to have their own works put to the litmus test. The grace of God profits them nothing. They do not have the freedom provided in Christ. Remember in Gal. 3: 10 we read - ***For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."***

In simple words, one cannot keep a portion of the law or choose which law he will keep, because cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things written in the law.

The law is like a chain, break one link and the whole law is broken. My father owned a garage; he also had a tow truck. The old trucks had a chain wench in order to haul cars. If while hauling the car a link broke, the car fell off the tow truck. Dad did not have to have every link broken to lose the car, just one link did the damage.

The law is the same way.- Paul said, "*If you desire to be placed under the law, then you set Christ aside in becoming*

*circumcised. You are fallen from the grace of Christ that provides freedom from law.”*

He continues on in verses 5-6 - ***For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.***

For we through the Spirit - *What Spirit?* - the Holy Spirit - eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness - *What hope of righteousness?* - The Lord of righteousness.-

At this present time we have a righteousness that is not complete. We still sin every day and must use 1 John 1: 9 continually, but when He (*The hope of righteousness*) returns, we will be changed. *“This corruption must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality.”* Our righteousness will then be complete. We no longer will have to confess sin.

We are waiting for this righteousness by faith, not by keeping the law. Paul continues - ***For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.***

It does not matter whether you were a Jew who kept the law or a lowly Gentile who cared nothing for the law, neither avails anything. The only thing that avails is Faith working by love. The faith and love that is in Christ Jesus. Paul now asks a question. It is actually a rhetorical question. One he already knows the answer to, but he desires to keep their attention focused on the subject before them. - 7 ***You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?***

Did someone come in and place a road block before you? Are there holes in the road keeping you from going forward? I mean, you were running the race very well and all of a sudden you seem to have hit a wall. What happened? I know one thing for certain -

8 ***This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.*** -

You didn't get any of this information from me and you certainly didn't get it from the Lord either. If anyone follows anything other than the truth of the gospel, that one follows Satan. It does not take a lot of error to cause one to fall from the grace they have in Christ, How do we know this? Read the very next verse.

9 ***A little leaven leavens the whole lump.***

We have talked about this on numerous occasions. We used soot rather than leaven. It does not take a whole handful of soot to cause a white cloth to become dirty, a small speck will do the job.

When I worked in the power plant providing the electricity we all enjoy we used to burn coal. The coal was stored in bunkers on the eighth floor, just under the roof. It was fed down through pipes to crushers that turned it into very fine powder before it was delivered through to the boilers. It got on everything. We all looked like we were working in a coal mine after the shift was finished. The result was, I could not wear a white shirt because the coal was so much into my skin that no matter how my wife washed the shirt, after a bit the collar and back were grey. I didn't have to place the shirt in a hopper to make it dirty.

We had to even get colored sheets for the bed because she was ashamed to hang out white sheets for the neighbors to see. Even though she was very careful in the wash, the minute those sheets and shirts touched it, there was dirty water. As a result, she washed things I wore separately. - *A little leaven, leavened the whole wash.*

Satan likes leaven. Just a little makes him happy and just a little is all he cares about getting into the lump, because it will sift through the whole loaf causing a perversion of the gospel.

Paul now writes - 10 ***I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.***

Paul is here stating to the Galatians that he has great confidence in their doing the right thing. He knows what he taught them, he knows what he is now teaching them and since he is confident in their walk before the Lord he is also confident they will heed his warning. - Not only that but he goes a step further and says that whosoever these people are or whoever the individual is that is bringing this perversion to them, that person will be judged.

If a person is depending upon their works of the law or any other works to be made righteous before God, they will end up in the same predicament as those at the Great White Throne Judgement. They will be judged BY their works and if one is judged BY their works they fall short of the glory of God. *All our works are as a filthy rag.*

As we move to verse 11 we find Paul now making a defense of his ministry and teaching. There were those who claimed he preached a dual message because of the circumcision of Timothy. Timothy as you will recall was of dual citizenry. He was half Greek and half Jew and in order for him to be effective in the Jewish realm it would be profitable for him to be

circumcised.

We learned that when Paul went to Jerusalem to see the other apostles concerning the message Christ gave him to preach that he had Titus along. He was uncircumcised, BUT he was not Jewish. Paul had him as a proof case to show that circumcision was not necessary to be saved.

Timothy on the other hand was an entirely different issue, but it did not show any duplicity of the message Paul preached. Rather it showed the wisdom of winning the lost to Christ. As the scripture says: "*He who winneth souls is wise.*" Prov. 11: 30.

Paul ends this particular portion with a kind of nasty remark when he says in verse 12 ***I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!***

In effect he is saying that those who are preaching that one must be circumcised in order to go on to salvation might just as well do the whole job and make eunuchs of themselves because that is about all the good it does for anyone since Christ initiated the new covenant.

It may be thought that Paul is being a little crass here in his declaration, but of the commentators I have read, they are in agreement that Paul was doing what was correct. We must remember that if not, he has to answer to God, not to us.

One writer has written and I think it worth quoting.

*"Instead of saying, Shame on you Paul, for wishing such a thing." Should we not rather say, "Shame on ourselves" that when in our own day and age the soundness of the gospel is being sacrificed upon the altar of ecumenism and when ever so many people are being led astray by a so called gospel that recognizes no contrast between the saved and the unsaved, but only the brotherhood of all men, (as if in a redemptive sense all men were brothers) our own cheeks have lost the ability to glow with righteous indignation."*

It may look like a crass remark, but apparently God allowed it in scripture - and for good reason -

## **LESSON TEN**

Gal. 5: 13-26

As we come to verse 13 of our study we find a division mark. There is probably not one in your Bible, but I believe one should exist because Paul is about to give a particular charge to the Galatian believers concerning all he has been teaching; namely, Freedom in Christ over bondage to law. Notice how he begins verse 13.

***For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*** The word, “*For*” means in this instance, *because*. “Because you have been called to liberty do not use it as an opportunity for the flesh.”

We have taken some time in our class to explain as best we could how when a person comes to Christ there might be some baggage brought with them from what they have previously believed. These Galatians were no different. They are in the center of pagan beliefs and have been involved in their practices, so that when the Judaizers came along they found ready fodder for their perverse gospel.

When Jesus said, “*Straight is the gate and narrow the way that leads to eternal life* it was more than some fancy footwork of words. The Lord never made useless statements that had no meaning. One of the purposes of this particular statement seems to me to mean that as we take that narrow path to eternal life we must be very careful not to drift aside into legalism on the one hand (*which the Judaizers were presenting*) and liberalism on the other, (*which is using liberty as licence.*)

So, using the Tuttle amplified version the verse would read, “*Because you, brethren, have been called to liberty; but do not use liberty as a licence for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*”

Sanctification does not come in a day. It evolves over a period of time. Many bad habits are brought right along with us when we first believe and by Bible study, prayer, and fellowship in church, sitting under sound teaching do we come to a more perfect knowledge of who we are in Christ.

Because we are a new creation (2 Cor. 5: 17) we can by these efforts let the word of God dwell in us richly (Col. 3: 16) and be conformed to his image. (Rom. 8: 29) because our minds will be transformed. (Rom. 12: 2). - Do you see why it says in Isa. 28: 10 - ***For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a***

*little."*

When we neglect Bible study we do not understand all God desires to teach us. We cannot read the Bible like any other book. It must be studied and scripture must be compared with scripture in order to learn full truth.

If this is not done we face the possibility of falling into the same trap the Galatians were headed for so Paul tells them - ***For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."***

Right away quick I know I am unable to keep the law. I do not have to read all of them because I have a tough time keeping this one and since I do not do as was written earlier, (*Cursed is everyone who does not continue...*) I break the law, because I cannot always love my neighbor as myself. It is OK for me to run over a bush in the yard, but when my neighbor does it my love is put to the test.

Love is one of the toughest jobs we have as a child of God. He himself must be operating in us in order to accomplish that task. However, let us not make the mistake of thinking by loving one another it has saving value. It is merely the outcropping of what has taken place on the inside. Now if love is not evident in the life we will be doing as in verse 15 - ***But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!***

Here is the exact opposite of love - biting and devouring. What is meant by that and do any of us fall into that category? It is not as if we have never seen that occur, in fact I am quite certain it has occurred at one time or another in our own lives. Whenever we gossip it is back biting, and whomever is the victim will be devoured. In Phil. 4: 8 we read - ***Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things.***

Rather than listen to or carry a bad report it would be wise to obey the edicts of this verse. If we hear an untruth, think on the truth, think what is noble about that individual or what is just, pure, lovely, or of good report, not gossip, we are to think on these things. It is easy to find fault, all we must do is look within and we will plainly see. But if we instead carry reports that are praiseworthy and virtuous it is much more Christ like and worthy of meditating on. It will keep our own mind clear in order that we might receive truth from God and it will help build character in the other person. And most importantly it will

foster love.

The Bible tells us they will know we are Christ's' by our love. We certainly do not want folk saying, "I know they are Christ's' by their back biting." We want it said, "See how they love one another" - not, "See how they devour one another." Moving on to verses 16-17 - ***I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.***

***17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.***

We all should know (if we have been a Christian for very long) that God does nothing with the old nature when we come to Christ. He merely takes the new man and slides it in right next to the old man. We still have many of the traits of our sin nature within us and it will if given a chance rear its ugly head and the new nature must fight against it. It is continuous warfare.

If we are to win in this battle, we must ever be diligent and watch. Paul said in Romans 7: ***For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.***

***19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.***

Paul wrote Romans after he wrote Galatians and here we see that he still battles with his old nature. This tells me that the battle never ends, but the good part is, we can win many of those battles. How do I know this? Read with me Rom. 7: 24 ***O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?***

***25 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.***

It is Christ who will deliver us - It is Christ who has delivered us and it will always be Christ who delivers us and that is the punch of what Paul is writing in Galatians. How does this occur?

***18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.***

As we are borne along by the Spirit of God we will not come under law, but will fulfill the law of the Spirit which is liberty and freedom in Christ.

Remember we mentioned sanctification a bit ago? It is not the old man who is sanctified because he is so corrupt nothing can be done with him. Nor is it the new man who needs sanctification because the new man cannot sin. It is the man himself who moment by moment in his walk with God that is sanctified - set apart to God.

Back in verse 16 we are told to walk in the Spirit. Now how is that accomplished in our life? Even though we have the Spirit of God indwelling us, we may not always be walking in the Spirit.

Sin comes into our life each day. Not only knowingly but unwittingly. When that occurs we are not “Filled” with the Spirit. We actually leak, Don’t you know, and we need a refilling. How is that accomplished? It is done by using 1 John 1: 9 and confessing our sin. It is not something we should do at night just before going to sleep. If we wait that long we will have lost a whole day. It should be used often during the day. As often as necessary.

The O.T. high priest could only go once a year into the Holy of Holies to confess sin. He had to have as we know the proper sacrifice and it must be in proper order, but we can go any time anywhere and it has been provided for us at great expense to God and to Jesus. He desires for us to walk in the Spirit, filled with the Spirit and we have no excuse not to obey this command.

In this way we will be sanctified, set apart to use for God. He does not always have his way in our lives, else we would not need 1 John 1: 9, but it has been provided for our use so when the flesh wars against the Spirit we can have victory.

As we read verses 19-21 we will see the works of the flesh as Paul brings them to our attention.

**19** *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,*  
**20** *idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,*  
**21** *envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

First it must be kept in mind that even a Christian may from time to time fall into any one or several of these sins. It may be that any one of us commits adultery. That of course would be a sin, but it can be forgiven.

We could commit fornication, uncleanness, lewdness all of which mean vile thoughts or actions. Now these thoughts may come into our mind from time to time but we do not need to nurse them or day dream about those thoughts. The bird may

land in our hair, but we can keep him from building a nest.

The list goes on to include much more and we could spend time here talking about each one, but then I fear some might get the idea that having done one or more of these things they are now lost for eternity. That is not true. The only way that is true is if it is a life style or continual habit.

If that were the case I would have to say you should check your salvation and make it sure by following what we will learn in the next section.

I do want to make one more comment here and that is concerning drunkenness. I have known some who call themselves Christian, but are drunkards.

They may say as I have had some say to me, “Medical science says I have a disease.” I do not agree with that. I believe it is a sin and the reason I believe it is a sin is because God said it is a sin and those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now be certain to remember - I am not talking about falling into that sin, I am speaking about a lifestyle of drunkenness. For any who continually commit the things listed and do not repent. They are in the danger of being committed to Hell for eternity.

Let us never take what God calls sin and try to place a softer label on it merely because it makes us angry or uncomfortable. Each and every one of us have sinned and come short of the Glory of God and it was for sin that Christ Jesus had to come into the world. He did not come because we had some disease. Our only disease is sin and there’s a cure for that and his name is Jesus.

As we approach verse 22 and 23 we will notice the fruit of the Spirit. We have seen the works of the flesh and they are many, but now Paul tells us - 22 ***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.***

Please notice that it is “The *fruit* of the Spirit” not *fruits*. Sometimes we miss that. In the Greek it is singular and it is also singular in the English. Many a teacher has tried to make something more of this than it is and they read into it what is not

there.

Each one of the fruit mentioned is a product of the Spirit of God working in our lives as we yield to him. It is not “If we have love , then joy will be next and when we have joy, peace will be next and so on” It is a product of God. The word Spirit is in caps and thereby we know it is speaking of God and not our spirit.

You will notice there are nine things concerning the fruit of the Spirit. These first three are things that pertain to our own person. *Love - Joy - Peace.*

The next three are *Longsuffering, Kindness, and Goodness.* This is what we need in our dealing with others. Some folk are a little gruff and step on our toes every now and again. We need longsuffering with them. Some folk may need kindness, Possibly they have not been treated well in their lifetime. We need to be kind to such as these. Others need a taste of goodness.

The last three I like to think of as a work product. *Faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.* These are especially good in building our character.

The great thing is we do not have to worry about breaking any law when these things are exercised in our life, because *against such things there is no law.*

Paul ends this chapter with these last three verses.

***24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.***

There is hardly any explanation needed for these verses. If we belong to Christ we crucify the flesh. We put it to death. Not as some would practice by literally beating themselves up and torturing the flesh. Rather we do as we learned from the second chapter - “*It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me.*” Why? Because we have been crucified with Christ.

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

If we are living in the Spirit, let us also walk in that same Spirit. The Greek renders the sentence structure as this: *If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit we should also walk.* We either walk in the Spirit of Christ or we walk in the bondage of law.

Verse 26 is an interesting verse - ***Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.***

In other words, we never should say or think of anyone that we have something better than they have in the spiritual realm. That is conceit.

We can be and in fact I have been guilty of this.

We might say - "I go to First Baptist church and it is better than anything else around." We have better deacons, better elders, a better pastor and the people are friendlier than anywhere else"

Whether or not that is the truth is not for us to say. That is not provoking to love, that is provoking to envy. We do not have a thing that has not been provided by God. We did not drum up any of these things by ourselves

If indeed it is true, and I like to think it is true, the bragging rights belong to God, not me. We have nothing that God has not given us.

## LESSON ELEVEN

Gal. 6: 1-18

We now come down to the last chapter of this little epistle and as we do so we should notice that Paul is going to apply some of what he has been teaching. He begins by saying: - ***Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.***

He here speaks about one who has not committed sin of his own will, but has trespassed unwittingly. We are to restore that one in the spirit of gentleness and consider that we also could fall into such temptation. A good example would be our dear brother Peter when he denied the Lord.

Peter was certain that he would never do such a thing as even we might well be minded, but when fear took hold of him, as it does to each of us from time to time, he gave in and denied that he knew the Lord.

We may all say, “I would never do that” but how do we know unless we find ourselves in the same situation or one that is similar. Did Peter shrug his shoulders and say, “So what”? Of course not! When that rooster crowed he realized his folly and wept bitterly.

He thought he was all through and went back to being a fisherman. The second part of the example for restoration is when the Lord had breakfast cooking on the shore and invited Peter to come and dine with him. He gently restored the big man to fellowship and at the same time gave Peter his call to the ministry.

This is not to imply that we ignore sin, but it does mean that we should help the person back to full fellowship with the Lord.

Paul continues in this same vein in verse 2.

***Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.***

If we desire to know a law to follow this would be it. We have touched upon it in an earlier study and that is “*Love thy neighbor as thy self.*” As the scriptures teach, “*Love covers a multitude of sins.*” - As we shoulder one another's burden and work as the body of Christ, and not as an individual we fulfill the law of Christ.

Verse 3 attests to this fact when we read - ***For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.***

It does not matter what position you may hold in the body of Christ, if we get above our raising we deceive ourselves thinking we are somebody when in fact we are nobody. Not a one of us has anything he did not receive from the hand of God. Not a one of us can boast in our gifts or our talent. Nor can we boast in our intelligence. It has all been God given.

In verse 4 and 5 we read:

**4 *But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.***

**5 *For each one shall bear his own load.***

In the KJV we read these verses as: - **4 *But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.***

**5 *For every man shall bear his own burden.***

The word “Load” is changed to the word “Burden” and it does bring some confusion when compared with verse 2 because the word there is “Burdens” in the KJV and “Load” in the NKJV.

This is an unfortunate translation because the words are not the same. - In my interlinear Greek the second verse reads - *One another's burdens bear ye and thus fulfill the law of the Christ.* - The word burden here is “Baros” and means making a demand on ones resources, whether material or spiritual.

If a brother or sister is laboring under a heavy load we are to help them bear that load by using the resources we have available.. A very crude example would be our deacons fund. That fund is there to assist those who find themselves in an unexpected financial situation where they could use some help.

It is however, not there to help you buy a new Cadillac or put a room addition on your house.

The wording from the Greek in the fifth verse reads - *“For each his own load shall bear.”*

Here the word “Load” is the Greek word - “Phortion” and means something carried as a work load. Jesus told his disciples that his yoke is easy and his burden light. That is our word. It is what we might do in the service of the Lord. We bear the

load of our own labors.

As we come to the 6<sup>th</sup> verse we get an important admonition from not only Paul, but from the Lord especially. - **6 *Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.***

Here we are taught that we are to support our pastor. He is the one doing the teaching and overseeing all other teaching. He is the one responsible for our spiritual growth. We are to bring our finances that have been committed to God to the place where we are taught. We are not to give to TV, radio or any other church.

It may be that you have other things you support but the tithe should always come first to the church you attend . Above the tithe is for you to decide with God.

Now when I say tithe - I know right away there are some who may say, “*There is no such thing as tithing in the New Testament.*” To be honest with you, this is exactly right. However, the principle is there and it is a good one to follow. It really amounts to the amount you have committed to the Lord for the support of the local assembly.

I was going to do verse 6 and 7 together because they seem to go hand in hand, but then I thought there is something to be learned if we go one verse at a time. -You have heard this verse many times I am sure therefore it will be familiar to you - **7 *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.***

This admonition is not only for the lost, but for the saved as well. There is much in our lives we may sow and whatever it may be we later on may reap the fruits of what we have sown. If for instance we drink too heavily it may be that even after we come to the Lord we end up with a bad stomach or even a bad liver.

God does not necessarily heal those conditions even though we are saved. It is something we have reaped from the life we have lead.

There have been and even now are men and women in prisons who have been saved while there, yet if they have a life sentence or are on death row, it is what they have sown and now they reap the benefits of a sorry life. For instance Mel Trotter of the Pacific coast mission was not able to eat some of the foods we normally eat. When asked why he replied, “I

have sown to the wind and now I reap the whirlwind.”

He however, was not bitter about it, for he happily and with joy served the Lord he now loved.

This segues us into verse 8: ***For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.***

Many of us have sown to the flesh in times past and may now from time to time sow to the flesh or we might even in the future. This will bring no reward when we are at the Judgement seat of Christ. It is there our works are placed on trial. The works of the flesh are wood, hay or stubble which will be burned.

We also may receive gold, silver or precious stones and those are the things sown to the Spirit and they go with us into everlasting life. But the thing for us to remember is, if we belong to the Lord it is our works being judged, not our salvation, because we are told in 1 Cor. 3:15 *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

What exactly the “*Yet so as by fire*” means I am not certain, but I do not think it will be all that pleasant.

Paul does not wish for the Galatians to be completely discouraged so he adds in verse 9 ***And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.***

***10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.***

We sometimes may grow weary in the service of the Lord, especially if we do not see much fruit for our labors, but God will cause us to reap for those works when the time is right.

Also notice, we are to do good to all. That is whomever God causes to cross our path. We should reflect Christ to them. If they have a need and we can supply that need we are to do good, however, we must do good especially to those of the household of faith.

As a parent we are to do good to our neighbor, yet we must remember that our children come first and that is what is meant by *doing good to all and especially to those who are of the household faith.*

Paul is about to bring this letter to a close and he says

11 *See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!*

Usually Paul dictated his letters to someone, usually Dr. Luke, but this time he thought it too important to either wait for Luke or he wanted to make certain the Galatians were certain to notice it was he who wrote the letter and no one else..

There is also speculation as to the exact meaning of what Paul meant by the term, “See what large letters I have used.” Some say he had bad eyesight and that is why he used a secretary, but many used secretaries in those days even as we use them today. If indeed Paul had bad eyesight it could be the reason he used the term “Large letters.”

Back in chapter 4 verse 15 Paul mentioned that the Galatians would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul if it were possible. This is where the thought that Paul had bad eyesight comes from. That along with whatever the thorn in the flesh was seems to bring many to this conclusion. This may be true, but as far as I can tell, it is at best a guess.

Others say that Paul meant the letter was a long letter. It is a bit longer than many of the others, but I do not think this is the meaning because he used the plural “Letters” not letter. There are several other thoughts but, the main point is; Paul wrote by his own hand and as far as I know it is the only one he wrote by his own hand because it was so important for these Galatians to know.. He signed all his letters, but someone else wrote them.

Now as we move to verse 12 we see Paul making a final point concerning the Judaizers.

12 *As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.*

These who troubled the Galatians were making or thought they were making a holier than thou showing by introducing the law to these Gentiles, but the reason was because they had no desire to suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

Their teaching was not only a perversion of the gospel, it was a compromise to the gospel. As long as they continued to follow the law, they were recognized as true Jews and not as rebel rousers that many thought Christians were. They could face their fellow Jews and not be ostracized. Paul continues -

***13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.***

These Judaizers themselves did not keep the law. They were like the Pharisees of whom Jesus said were hypocrites. They kept the traditions of men and they wanted bragging rights on the Galatians. - “See, we have caused the Galatians to be circumcised.”

Paul says - ***14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.***

Paul does not have a desire to brag about his work and his only boasting is in the cross of Christ. He has been crucified to the world. He no longer has a desire for the things of the world nor for legalism.

Why? ***15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.***

It is not whether one is circumcised or not circumcised, it rather is the new creation in Christ. ***“Behold, old things pass away, all things are become new.”*** 2 Cor. 5: 17

Once more in verse 16 he reminds them of the true Israel of God as we read - ***16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.***

The true Israel of God as we have already learned are not only the believing Jews, but the believing Gentiles as well, according to the promise given Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his Seed and that seed is Christ.

***17 From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.***

Paul bears in his own body the marks of the things he has suffered for Jesus sake. He was nearly stoned to death in that region and marks of beatings were upon his body. Yet he is not bragging about these things, he is glorying in the cross of Christ.

Of these Judaizers Paul remarks, ***“From now on let no one give me any grief. It is not the mark of circumcision that counts, it***

*is the mark of a circumcised heart.”*

Finally he closes with these loving remarks.

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

His heart throbs with love for these whom he calls brothers. He gives to them the reminder that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with them all.

He uses the full title of the Lord in this instance.

1. As Lord He owns us. We belong to Him. We were purchased at great price.
2. As Jesus He alone is our Savior. It is by no other means we are saved. It is his person that saves, not the law or the keeping of the law.
3. As Christ He is our mediator, our great high priest, and our eternal King.

Now what is it we should have gleaned from our study in Galatians?

First we should know from chapter one, that if any bring to us a perversion of the truth of the gospel it brings with that perversion a curse.

**8 *But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.***

From chapter two we learned that when Christ was crucified, we also were crucified and our sins were buried with him in that tomb, never to be seen or heard from again.

**20 *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.***

From chapter three we learn how true believers are to live and that by the law no one will see God - **11 *But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."***

From chapter four we learned of the two covenants. The one from Mt. Sinai which is the law or the child of Hagar, Ishmael

and the child of promise through Sarah, Isaac. - **22** *For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.*

**23** *But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,*

In chapter five we learned there is a war going on within our spirit and we must continually fight to determine whom we are lead by.

**17** *For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*

**18** *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

In chapter six we conclude with if one is to glory at all, they must glory in the finished work of Christ and not in the works of the flesh.

**14** *But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

This is the only boast Paul made and it is the only boast we can make.

**15** *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.*

It is the new man given by God. Circumcision has nothing to do with salvation.

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

Once again it is “Peace and Mercy” that is given to those who believe. It is given only to those who are walking according to the rule Paul has been teaching and to the Israel of God who are those blood bought ones who have placed their faith in Christ alone for salvation.

Finally Paul closes this letter with these words:

**17** *Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*

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

And to these things we too say, “Amen.”