

I. SALUTATION

NOTES ON CHAPTER 1 1-5

Let's begin with some comments describing what is occurring in Galatia. The storm is either threatening or already present. In a moment we will read vv. 1:1-5, and we will discover the letter's purpose and the turbulence with which Paul is dealing. Paul is very careful in personal control, if for no other reason that he is writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit. However, we need not overlook the fact that he is agitated and deeply moved; his heart and mind are filled with emotions. He does not hesitate to show those leading the Church astray with what one writer calls "withering denunciation springing from holy indignation". Along with it, however, there is both marked disapproval and an earnest desire to restore the Church.

With that said, we must also remember that in these opening lines there is a measure of restraint. The important elements in these 5 verses are:

- a. the manner in which Paul describes himself;
- b. the manner in which he designates the addressed; and
- c. the qualifying clause by means of which he enlarges his opening salutation.

v. 1 Paul, an apostle

1. He is a sent and commissioned apostle, and he so identifies himself. He clearly declares that his apostleship is not from men. To the contrary it is “through Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead”.

To these first three words Paul adds a significant modifier, one which immediately points to the theme of the entire letter. The uninspired who declare “introduction” do not always “introduce”. Paul’s “Introduction” truly “introduces”.

2. not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead,

1. Paul declares that his apostleship is genuine; thus, the gospel that he proclaims is also genuine. This means that the teaching of the Judaizers is seeking to lead you away from Christ. To accomplish their teaching, they attempted to establish that Paul was not selected by God and did not meet Biblical qualifications. Put differently, they taught that Paul’s commission was never derived from God, but was the pure product of man. However, they had at least one great problem – Paul may have had some commission in the Syrian Antioch church, but that which he might have received there was solely from men.

Unfortunately for them, they must have either failed to read Acts 13:2, or, if they had read it, they hoped that the Galatians would never discover it!

The spiritual atmosphere is charged. It is sultry, sweltering. A storm is threatening. The sky is darkening. In the distance one can see flashes of lightning; one can hear faint muttering sounds. When each line of verses 1–5 is read in the light of the letter's occasion and purpose the atmospheric turbulence is immediately detected. The apostle, though in perfect control of himself, for he is writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is greatly agitated, deeply moved. His heart and mind are filled with a medley of emotions. For the perverters, there is withering denunciation springing from holy indignation. For the addressed there is marked disapproval and an earnest desire to restore. For the One who has called him there is profound reverence and humble gratitude.

Now in these opening lines there is, to be sure, a measure of restraint. The most vivid flashes of lightning and the most deafening peals of thunder are reserved for later (1:6–9; 3:1, 10; 5:4, 12; 6:12, 13). Nevertheless, even now the storm is approaching. This will be shown in connection with each element

of this Introduction: a. the manner in which the addressor describes himself, b. the way in which he designates the addressed, and c. the qualifying clause by means of which he enlarges on his opening salutation.

V. 2 and all the brethren that are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

1. There are three interpretations that have been applied to this verse.

i. all of the fellow-believers at the place from which Paul was writing his letter (based on “brothers” being a common word often used re Christians in general (1 Thess. 1:4; 2:1; 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:5-8; 8:12; etc.).

ii. all those mentioned under ‘i’ (above), plus all of the members of the Galatian delegation that is with me (based on Paul’s having received his information about the situation in the South Galatian churches from some reliable source (cf. 1 Cor. 1:11), perhaps from a delegation sent to him by the officials of these churches, who wanted him to know what was going on and who desired to benefit by his advice).

iii. all my fellow-workers who are with me here (based on favoring a similar text in Phil. 4:21 which refers to Paul’s

assistants in Rome, in distinction from “all the saints”, i.e., “all of Rome’s Christians”. However, it is difficult (not saying “impossible”) to reach that conclusion. When Philippians was written, there was a large number of resident Christians in Rome with a numerically strong church. Paul had not been to Rome at this point.

2. Where then shall we settle? We shall settle by not overlooking the main lesson. That lesson would seem to be this, that even though it is true that Paul alone—not Paul plus these brothers who are with him—authored this letter (note constant recurrence of first person singular.: Gal. 1:6, 10–17, etc.), nevertheless, before composing and sending it he thoroughly discussed with all the brothers the matter with which it was to deal. So unanimous was their agreement with Paul’s proposed method of handling this difficult situation that the apostle writes in the name of all. Moral: when it becomes necessary to send someone a letter of sharp reproof, discuss the matter with others who also have the welfare of Zion at heart, if such can be done without violating any confidences or of coming into conflict with the principles established in Matt. 18. Were this rule always observed, what a difference it would make in the end-product! It is true that Paul was writing under the infallible guidance of the Holy

Spirit. Even so, however, this work of inspiration makes use of means. It operates organically, not mechanically. Besides, Paul's loving heart, filled with intense yearning to reclaim the Galatians, makes use of all legitimate means to attain this end, one of these means being to impress upon the addressed that his own apprehensions concerning the course which they are now beginning to pursue is being shared by all the brothers who are with him.

V. 2 **unto the churches of Galatia:**

1. Paul's normal greeting with commendations such as "beloved of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints and believers, is lacking here. It is not condemnation, but neither is it praise. Paul loves all, commends those who deserve it, but flatters none. Clearly the atmosphere is tense, and is more tense in v. 6 and related issues. However, do not permit this to conclude that Paul has given them up. Far from the case. Paul recognized the autonomy of the local church. Nevertheless, he is also fully aware of the fact that all New Testament Christians everywhere constitute one body of Christ and one church.

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

1. This portion of the letters beginning is similar to those to Rome, Corinth (both letters), Ephesians, and Philippians. This establishes that Paul does not consider the Galatians hopeless, but, to the opposite, he has hope as shown in 5:10a and cf. 4:19-20.

2. Grace brings peace. The latter is both a state, that of reconciliation with God, and a condition, the inner conviction that consequently all is well. It is the great blessing which Christ by his atoning sacrifice bestowed upon the church (John 14:27), and it surpasses all understanding (Phil. 4:7).

God's grace that brings peace is not the "good feeling" that we have while we live a life of sin. It is the cleft of the rock in which the Lord hides his children when the storm is raging. It is the hiding place under the wings, to which the hen gathers her brood, so that the little chicks are safe while the storm bursts loose in all its fury upon herself.

This grace and this peace have their origin in God our Father, and his children have been merited by him who is the great Master-Owner-Conqueror ("Lord"), Savior ("Jesus"), and ("Christ"), and who, because of his threefold anointing "is able to

save to the uttermost them that draw near to God through him”
(Heb. 7:25).

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

1. The language in v. 3 usually, if not always, brings the salutation to a close. This letter is different. Verse 4 is an unusual addition. While Paul doesn’t tell us, could it be that Christ’s self-surrender is stressed to give attention to the grievous nature of the sin of those who teach that this supreme sacrifice must be supplemented by law-works. Christ surrendered himself to sorrow and scorn, but especially to Golgotha. He laid down His life for His sheep. He gave his life down on his own; no one took it from Him. God the Father’s hand made it possible: “Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

2. How wonderful is our rescue.

 i. It concerns those who by nature are enemies of the Rescuer;

 ii. It was accomplished by means of the voluntary death of the Rescuer.

3. Paul states that Christ gave himself that he might rescue us out of this present world dominated by evil.

i. It is the world or transitory era which is hastening to its close and in which, despite all its pleasures and treasures, there is nothing of abiding value.

ii. Over against this present world or age is the coming world, the glory-age, that will be ushered in at the consummation of all things (cf. Eph. 1:21; 1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Tim. 4:10; Titus 2:12).

4. The son gave himself; the Father—our God and Father—“spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (Rom. 8:32). In fact, in the very act of the Son’s self-sacrifice the Father’s will—his decree as revealed in time, his desire—was being accomplished.

i. Therefore the Father loved the Son! (John 10:17, 18; cf. 4:34; 6:38).

ii. Let the trouble-makers bear in mind, therefore, that when they belittle the work of the Son, they make light of the Father also.

v. 5 **to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

1. When the apostle contemplates the Father’s marvelous love revealed in delivering up his own dear Son, the Only-

begotten, for our salvation, Paul's soul is lost in wonder, love, and praise, so that he exclaims: to whom be the glory¹⁶ forever and ever. Amen. When the wicked infiltrators minimize God's work of redemption, Paul will magnify it, calling upon all men to do this with him. So marvelous is this work that it is worthy of never-ending praise; hence, "to whom be the glory forever and ever," literally: to the ages of the ages. With a solemn "Amen" Paul reaffirms his personal gratitude as again and again he ponders God's great undying love, the unfathomable depth of his grace and mercy in Jesus Christ.

II. NO OTHER GOSPEL

NOTES ON CHAPTER 1 – 1:6-10

In Chapter 1:6-10 Paul expresses astonishment that those converted when Paul came preaching in Galatia turned away from the gospel that they had received. Quickly they had turned to "another gospel" which Paul says was "no gospel". Paul has another sermon for them to hear – he declares a curse on those who teach or adopt a faith that is a counterfeit gospel. There is

but one, and that is the one from Christ according to whom Paul had taught them and was now teaching them.

PAUL'S INDIGNANT ASTONISHMENT (1:6-9)

VV. 1:6-9

6 I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel;

7 which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

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

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

V. 6 I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel;

1. Most of Paul's letters contained an introductory salutation followed by words of thanksgiving to God for the life or faith of the church or person receiving the letter.

i. If Galatians is in fact Paul's first letter, some may argue that Paul wrote the letter before he began using introductive salutary messages. That is not likely, however, since the "thanksgiving formula" was a very common practice in Greek letter writing. That said, we must also understand that Paul, in using thanksgiving formulas, used his own way in thanksgiving formulas.

ii. In writing the Galatian churches, Paul was likely impelled by the urgency of the important subject before him.

a. Urgency would surely arise because of the Galatians turning away from that which Paul taught, and his knowing that that means they were turning away from Christ.

b. A person who said that Paul, a man of great knowledge and education, was not sufficiently able of understanding common writing practice, is himself, one who was not nearly as educated and knowledgeable as Paul.

c. Be careful of his writing, not to mention his speech.

2. Paul clearly advised the Galatians that the message from which they had turned did not qualify for and was not even “a different gospel”.

i. Paul “marveled” that they had turned away so quickly.

ii. To be certain that they understood his comments, he added that turning away from that which Paul taught was moving away from Christ.

a. Isa. 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

b. Luke 7:22 And he answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them.

c. Luke 11:5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.

3. This language is conclusive proof that Jesus is the coming one from whom the Galatians dare not turn away.

V. 7 which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

1. The first words of v. 7 are really a part of v. 5. The words establish with no doubt that that which had been turned away from that which Paul had taught was not another gospel.

 i. They had moved salvation from their life and had no salvation to replace it.

 ii. Among other things, Paul's teaching here should encourage all to carefully read the scripture.

 iii. It is still true that one who follows that which God's Word writes by inspiration, leads to salvation; to fail to follow God's Word always leads away from salvation.

 iv. Jesus himself solved the problem: John 12: 48 "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day."

 v. Among the things that we should remember is that we may convert more people by placing Christ's words before them rather than placing before them the words we claim that Jesus said, while throwing a verse or two at them.

vi. Put differently, reading the scripture in teaching is better than quoting or otherwise explaining it; in other words, the Bible is the Bible and because it is, it is the only Book.

2. In the remaining part of v. 7, Paul addresses the trouble workers who were perverting the gospel of Christ.

i. That which they espoused was nothing more than a doctrine of salvation by keeping the Mosaic law, from which Christ had turned Paul away on the road to Damascus.

a. Paul had preached this gospel to the Galatians, and there was no other.

b. The primary matter of the trouble-makers was circumcision.

ii. They likely taught a number of issues, but their premise was to substitute a false foundation for that which God had laid.

iii. Listen to 1 Cor. 3:11 – “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

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

1. V. 8 is not the first time that the concept of declaring that the word of God should not be changed (See, Rev. 22:18-19; which echoes Dt. 4:2).

i. However, we may wonder why Paul expressed his comment so vehemently, saying, “let him be anathema”.

a. Perhaps it was because the false teachers were preaching a salvation by law-keeping, which was at best a delusion.

b. If that which they taught was true, i.e., if the Mosaic law was still in effect as the method of salvation and life, the messianic age had not yet dawned, and Jesus was not the Messiah.

2. Where does this teaching conclude?

i. First, let us recall Paul’s education – he was one of the most intelligent men in the world at that time.

ii. Logically, Paul had to understand that any teaching that led to such an illogical conclusion would conclude that Jesus had been rightly convicted and sentenced because his messianic claims are false.

iii. Any teaching that led to such a conclusion led Paul to logically conclude that such a teacher is to be anathema (English, ‘accursed’).

V. 9 As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema.

1. In modern language, Paul is saying, "I mean business."
 - i. Paul has said it once and is about to say it twice.
 - ii. Paul wants his hearers to understand that he is serious.
2. Paul is so serious that after his first statement he follows with a second.
3. Paul's reason for making and the repeating of his statement was because he strongly desired to impress it more forcibly into the minds of his readers.

Paul is no men-pleaser (1:10)

V. 10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.

1. Paul's consistency had been called into question. Whatever he might do or teach now, it was suggested, he had acted and taught differently at another time. He was suspected, in fact, of adapting his practice and preaching to please his changing company from one time or place to another.

2. Persuading men and women was Paul's constant business.
3. Pleasing men and women was not what he was called to do. He was called to serve Christ: he could not make that his business, and aim to please his hearers at the same time.
4. The implied answer to the question, 'Is it human beings or God that I am trying to persuade now?' seems therefore to be 'Human beings'. Persuading God was a concept entirely foreign to Paul's mind.
5. Paul repeatedly calls himself a 'slave' (δοῦλος) of Christ (Rom. 1:1, etc.), implying that he was unreservedly at Christ's disposal; for Christ's sake, he is also the slave of others (2 Cor. 4:5), implying that he is unreservedly at their disposal in the service of Christ. But a slave cannot afford to aim at pleasing anyone other than his master.

III. Autobiographical Sketch: Paul's independent Gospel (1:11–2:14)

Paul's gospel received by revelation

- VV. 11-12 11 For I make known to you,
brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by
me, that it is not after man.**
- 12 For neither did I receive it from man,
nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation
of Jesus Christ.**

In these two verse Paul is emphasizing that he had received his knowledge and gospel from Christ beginning on the Damascus road. He reviews his Judaistic training and education, the persecution of the church, the radical change that occurred from his conversion and Deity education, consummating with his prompt obedience to the Christ given commission to the Gentiles; not long after, there was a confrontation at Antioch between Peter and Paul

These two verses begin with an autobiographical summary, but don't permit the beginning to be the end; what he has begun is a discussion that continues until 2:14, and is about 1/5 of the letter.

V. 11

1. Paul begins by declaring that which he preaches.
 - i. In his beginning, he doesn't treat the Galatians as less than God's people – he calls them "brethren".
 - a. How often we refuse to call a fallen member of God's family a brother or sister.
 - b. When one goes astray does it mean that God no longer considers that person his child?
 - c. Let's answer with scripture from Luke 15:20-24:

20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.

23 And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

ii. The remaining part of the verse discusses the gospel that he preached to them, and the fact that his gospel did not come from men.

a. Without saying it, this also addresses the false teachers, since that which they espoused came from men and not from God, the Mosaic law having lost its power (Rom. 7:4-6; Col. 2:8-15 {READ}).

b. In both this portion of Galatians and in later chapters Paul discusses circumcision; also in this verse, he is laying the ground for such teaching, and later Paul will declare that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail.

c. That which avails is “faith working through love (5:6).

2. The bottom line of this verse is that Paul was reminding them that he had received the gospel he proclaimed directly from Christ by divine revelation on the road to Damascus, and that he was commissioned to proclaim that gospel to the Gentiles.

V. 12

1. The false teachers surely proclaimed that Paul received that which he taught from men. In this verse, Paul declares that he had neither invented the Gospel nor received from men.

2. Having denied their false claim, Paul declared that that which he had learned had come to him “through revelation of Jesus Christ”.

3. Throughout Paul’s preaching God’s Word, he made it clear that his encounter with Christ on the Damascus road was not some type of mystical experience, but rather a personal encounter that was the beginning of a personal relationship with Christ crucified (1 Cor. 1:23) and Christ Jesus as Lord (2 Cor.4:5).

Paul's earlier career (1:13–14)

VV. 13-14 13 For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it:

14 and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

VV. 13-14 (These verses need no separate discussion.)

1. In these two verses Paul speaks of his life as Saul the prosecutor of Christians, and describing how he went beyond reason in persecuting the church of God that resulted in making havoc of it.

2. In v. 14 Paul states that he persecuted more Christians in more places, and that he did so more exceedingly zealous.

 i. But note the last words of v. 14 –for the tradition of my fathers.

 ii. While not using these words, Paul is clearly declaring that he was doing what he did for God.

 iii. Paul loved God as a Jew – but did the wrong things;
 Paul loved God as a Jew – and thought he was pleasing God.

 iv. Most important – The Father and the Son loved Paul, and asked him to turn away from persecuting Jesus, and brought him into a

new life, and once again Paul was being more exceedingly zealous, but this time he did so for his Father and His Father's Son, and for all of God's children, and he did so to lead many souls into God's family.

3. If you wish to know how Paul felt about his life in Christ and his commitment to his Lord, hear his voice in Philippians:

3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe.

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision:

3 for we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh:

4 though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6 as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.

7 Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ,

9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith:

10 that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death;

11 if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

4. If you wish to know how truly happy Paul was as he came to the end of his life, hear his words to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:6-8):

6 For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith:

8 henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

5. If we don't learn anything else from Galatians, let us learn that God loves his children, and even when one has turned away, God wants to bring that person home.

Paul becomes an apostle (1:15–17)

VV. 15 But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace,

16 to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17 neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus.

V. 15

1. Three things are included in this verse:

- i. What happens here is God's good pleasure;
 - ii. God separated Paul, even from his mother's womb; and
 - iii. God called Paul through grace.
2. "From my mother's womb" can mean 'from my mother's womb', 'since my birth', or 'since before my birth'.
- i. Similar language is found in the Old Testament.
 - a. Jeremiah 1:5: Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations.
 - ii. Isaiah 49:4-6: **4 But I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and vanity; yet surely the justice due to me is with Jehovah, and my recompense with my God.**

5 And now saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto him (for I am honorable in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God is become my strength);

6 yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a

light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

iii. Paul's words in Romans 1:4-5 give similar language:

4 who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord,

a. God called Paul through his grace – for a purpose.

b. For their salvation, the Jews depended upon their knowledge of the Mosaic law for their salvation, but if God's grace as received by Paul was the basis of salvation, and not the basis of the Mosaic law, the false teachers were not proclaiming salvation.

5 through whom we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake;

v. 16

1. God's purpose stated by Paul in verse 16 was to reveal His Son to Paul.

i. In a few words, Paul makes a powerful statement; what he proclaims is that the appearance of the risen Christ was real.

ii. The Christ whom he had persecuted, was revealed as the Son of God, and the revelation was the act of God himself.

2. Paul's second purpose in this verse was to enable him to preach Christ to the Gentiles.

i. God has a specific purpose when He revealed His Son to Paul – to enable Paul to preach among the Gentiles.

ii. Paul did not ask for time to think about, but he began to prepare.

a. He obeyed Christ's commands as Christ had sent them through Ananias (See, Acts 9:17-19; 22:12-16).

b. Note that what is proclaimed is tied together; Preaching to the Gentiles is related to God's revealing His Son – conversion and commission come together.

iii. This verse concludes with Paul's immediate undertaking to become prepared to accomplish that which he was sent to do; he was aware that that education would not come from flesh and blood (humans), thus he sought greater sources.

v. 17

1. In this verse Paul makes it clear that he was not seeking education from flesh and blood, but neither was he seeking education by going up to Jerusalem where there were those who were apostles before him.

- i. He went away into Arabia, and again returned to Damascus.
 - a. There is no great disclosure of that which occurred in the three years between his conversion and his first trip to Jerusalem.
 - b. Given Paul's Jewish education before his conversion and his Trinitarian education, it must be admitted that he was prepared to proclaim the gospel by inspiration.
 - c. If that were not the case, Paul would not have possessed that which he needed when he arrived in Jerusalem the first time following his conversion.
- ii. It is true that Paul was in Damascus at one point in time, and, that being true, it was surely his first association with Christian fellowship; however, it must also be remembered that those Christians were his targets for persecution, thus leaving them very doubtful of his claimed conversion.

Paul travels to Jerusalem, meets Cephas (Peter) and James

(1:18–20)

VV. 1:18-20 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days.

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

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

Vv. 18-19

1. This is Paul's first travel to Jerusalem since his conversion.
 - i. Vv. 16 and 17 have already established that Paul did not go to Jerusalem immediately after his conversion, but went to Arabia and returned to Damascus.
 - ii. Here Paul is stating his activity since his conversion, emphasizing his Jerusalem journeys.
2. Paul provided no great discussions, we might say none of his discussions, while in Jerusalem.
 - i. In v. 18 he stated that he went to Jerusalem to visit with Peter with whom he tarried 15 days.
 - ii. In v. 19 he stated that he did not see any other apostles, save James the Lord's brother.
 - a. This does raise the question of whether James the Lord's brother was an apostle.
 - b. 1 Cor. 15:5-7 describes Jesus' seeing apostles. V. 5 says he saw Cephas and then saw twelve; v. 7 says that Jesus appeared to James and then to the twelve.

c. V. 6 describes Jesus appearing to 500 at once; if the use of the term “appeared” by Jesus (or different forms) means that each such person, including James, must be equal to 515 apostles at least.

d. If James, the brother of Jesus, was an apostle, someone should have told him.

e. Read James’ letter – you will discover that James describes himself as “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ”: he does not even call himself a brother of Christ.

V. 20

1. Here Paul draws attention to that which they will read by beginning with an oath – “before God”; that which he states before them with God as his witness is, “I lie not.”

2. It is here that a disagreement arises among historians and commentators.

i. For many years there was only one position – the letter was written on Paul’s second or third journey.

a. If that were the case, the letter would have been written in approximately A.D. 55, rather than A.D. 48-49.

b. However, there are a number of difficulties that accepting that result is difficult.

ii. We will learn more in 2:1-10.

Paul in Syria and Cilicia (1:21–24)

Vv. 21-24

21 Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

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

23 but they only heard say, He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc;

24 and they glorified God in me.

Vv. 21-22

1. In these two verses Paul may be seeking to persuade his readers that there are no suspicious gaps left in his letter.
 - i. Between his visit we discussed in v. 17 and in 2:1-10 that we will discuss shortly, he had no contact with the leaders of the church.
 - ii. Syria and Cilicia constituted one Roman province, and he was unknown by face (they apparently had heard of him).
2. The “churches of Judaea” were those who had been forced to leave Jerusalem after Stephen’s death.

Vv. 23-24

1. Paul continues his letter, describing the reception that he had from those who had reared him, but had heard of his conversion.
 - i. They knew only that which had run them out of Jerusalem, and had only heard that he had changed.
 - a. Fear would likely lead them to lock the door of the house, and the church house if they had one.
 - b. But having no fear, they received Paul with joy, and most importantly, they “glorified God” in Paul.
2. The false teachers in Galatia may have sought to classify Paul as one who had lived to persecute Christians, but how glorious it is to know that he who turned to the Lord, also turned to lead many to the Lord who saved Paul.

Conference in Jerusalem (2:1–10)

VV. 1-10 1 Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me.

2 And I went up by revelation; and I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles but privately before them who were of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain.

3 But not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: f4 and that because of the false brethren privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

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

6 But from those who were reputed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth not man's person)—they, I say, who were of repute imparted nothing to me:

7 but contrariwise, when they saw that I had been intrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision, even as Peter with the gospel of the circumcision

8 (for he that wrought for Peter unto the apostleship of the circumcision wrought for me also unto the Gentiles);

9 and when they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision;

**10 only they would that we should remember the poor;
which very thing I was also zealous to do.**

V. 1

1. This section of Paul's history occurs 14 years after his first journey to Jerusalem.

i. In this verse Paul admits that he had been to Jerusalem (v. 1:18), and he now states that after fourteen years he returned to Jerusalem.

ii. He made every possible effort to be certain that he did not omit any journey that he made to Jerusalem.

2. Accompanying Paul on the journey were Barnabas and Titus.

i. Barnabas was a Levite from the Island of Cyprus, a cousin of Mark, and a wealthy man.

a. We first learn of him when he had moved to Jerusalem and acquired property.

b. He was a gracious man, having been one of those who sold a field and contributed its price to support the poorer members of the church (Acts 4:26ff.).

c. In Acts 11:24 Barnabas is described as "a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and faith".

d. Titus was the second to join in the journey to Jerusalem; although not mentioned in Acts, Paul described him to the Corinthians as “my partner and my fellow-worker” (2 Cor. 8:23).

e. Titus was a Gentile Christian, evidently from Antioch, who had already manifested qualities that prompted Paul to take him along that he might receive some experience.

V. 2

1. Verse 2 is the source of various suggestions of the meaning of “revelation”.

i. Some relate it to the prophecy of Agabus (Acts 11:27-30).

ii. Others relate it to Paul from which he concluded that he was to go to Jerusalem.

iii. Still another was sure that the revelation with the Spirit’s command to the five leading teachers of the church in Antioch, one of whom was Paul, that Paul and Barnabas should be released for missionary preaching of the Gospel (Acts 13:1f.).

2. We can learn from these suggestions.

i. We can learn that many are more interested in making a great new discovery than they are in seeking the true meaning.

a. We can learn that trying to take one passage from one book and trying to find where, if anywhere, it might apply in another book.

b. We can learn that such comparing may not work at all when the types of writing by the two writers involved are quite different.

c. We can learn that the best determination is that involved in the letter or book involved.

3. That said, where do we go from here?

i. We can now know with certainty that the word “revelation” tells us the God was involved.

ii. We can now know with certainty that which Paul is undertaking the will of God.

iii. We can now know with certainty that we don’t need to attempt in any manner to know more; if there was more that we needed to know, it would be in Paul’s inspired letter.

iv. We can now know with certainty that any attempt to determine which of the above suggestions is correct is worthless, because the one we choose may be the biggest mistake.

4. This now takes us to the scripture.

i. Upon this arrival, Paul, pursuant to revelation, laid before them the gospel that he preached among the Gentiles; He did so privately “before them of repute”.

ii. But why was Paul concerned lest by any means he should be running, or had been running in vain?

a. One thing for sure is that he was not seeking the other apostles to approve that which he was preaching; he knew with certainty who it was who gave him his knowledge, and he had no intention to change it, should they either tell him to change it, or merely ask him to change that which he proclaimed.

b. While Paul may have intended to provide the nature of his Gentile preaching to all the apostles, remember that in Paul's first trip to Jerusalem that he went to visit Peter, and also visited James; it is not unreasonable to conclude that that meeting had some discussion of the subject at hand, and that it was thereafter disclosed to all of the apostles, by Peter and/or James.

c. At least this much is true; Paul now had 14 years of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, and thus was able to adduce solid evidence of the effectiveness of his preaching.

V. 3-5

These verses give rise to ideas of Biblical commentators. Since I have little patience in the writing of those whose greatest purpose seems to be to discover something that no one other had ever found. I don't intend to spend much time on it. These writers may be proud of their product, but they fail to realize that when they stretch too far it breaks most of the time. We will look at one example in these verses.

1. Verse 3 is the first reference to “circumcision” in Galatians.
 - i. One man suggested that it is in this spot because it was “probably an afterthought” on Paul’s part.
 - a. However, it is not likely that the source of inspiration forgot its place, nor is it likely that the inspired writer forgot.
 - b. The result should be that the commentary written by a uninspired dreamer should be set aside.
 - ii. Why then was it written?
 - a. Circumcision is one of the basic subjects in this letter; Paul’s commission was to go to the uncircumcised.
 - b. Thus, it was important to bring the subject forth in the beginning.
 - iii. That which follows demonstrates that that is indeed the reason for v. 3.
 - a. The fact that the Jerusalem leaders did not require Titus to be circumcised did not mean that there was no opposition to Gentile circumcision.
 - b. The Judaizers still insisted that the Gentiles still needed to submit to it.
2. Paul continues his discussion in v. 4.

i. He separates the leaders from the Judaizers by calling them “false brethren”.

a. He goes further to charge them with having sneaked in, and came in privily to spy out the liberty that they had in Jesus Christ, with the purpose of bringing us into bondage.

b. When wrong had taken place, Paul was not afraid to speak plainly concerning the wrong of false teachers who have taught false doctrine.

2. With that said, let’s discuss one more example, and the last that we will discuss in this matter.

i. That with which we are dealing is in v. 5.

a. Paul clearly proclaims that the false teachers in v. 4 were given neither a place nor any time to pursue their attempts to destroy the Gentile Christians faith.

b. There are a few who still contend that the common text is incorrect, and that with the negative removed, Titus was indeed circumcised, not by force, but by his own permission.

c. While that is contrary to the greatest number of ancient Biblical writings, there are a few, primarily the Old Latin, that do not contain the negative, thus giving rise to Titus’ circumcision.

d. Whatever the reason, to find a few ancient texts, primarily Old Latin, with no real reason, is beyond reasonable belief.

e. Since Paul is making an important statement here, it is not possible to set it aside as making no difference.

VV. 6-10

1. V.6 - Having laid the groundwork of his second trip to Jerusalem, Paul continues to set forth his message of setting forth his Gospel and the fact that he received nothing from anyone in Jerusalem.

i. It made no difference to Paul whether they were of repute.

a. Whatever they were made no difference to him because he knew that God accepted no man's person (this is much like Peter's "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34b).

b. Another described it "that human distinctions had no weight with God" (I had never heard it, but will never forget it).

ii. Paul was not belittling the reputed or leaders, he was simply impressing on all that he received his Gospel from a higher source; the purpose was not to raise him up, but to hold up his Lord.

2. Vv. 7-8 – Now Paul admits that, while the leaders made no difference in his Gospel, they saw that he had been entrusted with preaching to the uncircumcised, while Peter unto the circumcised.

i. This certainly doesn't mean that Paul would never preach to the Jews, or Peter would never preach to the Gentiles.

a. Read Romans 3:29-30 and you will know that Paul knew there was only one Gospel.

b. A passage like Rom. 9:1-5 reveals how broken-hearted and concerned he was about the salvation of his kinsmen in the flesh.

c. Read Acts 10 and see how the apostle Peter converted the first Gentiles, Cornelius with help from God's having sent not for Paul, but for Peter.

ii. The lesson is that it is all based upon God, His faithful people, and His Word.

Vv. 9-10

1. The trip to Jerusalem reached a climax when James and Cephas and John gave Paul and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, sending "we" to the Gentiles and "they" unto the circumcision.

i. They both pledged cooperation and mutual support in the one task of spreading the Gospel.

- ii. Notice at the beginning of V. 9 that the action was premised on their recognition of “the grace that was given unto me” (Paul).
2. The only thing that was imposed on them was that they should remember the poor, to which Paul responded by informing them that remembering the poor was the very thing he was also zealous to do.

SHORT BREAK TO REVIEW SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T MATTER
WHILE SOME MAKE IT A MAJOR AFFAIR

This title alone should give you an understanding of my attitude toward this part of the lesson. If nothing else, it can teach us how to spend time, work hard, and accomplish nothing.

You ask why I engage in such foolishness. Let me begin by saying that for years, actually centuries, men have argued about which passages in Acts explain what and when events happened in Galatians. Yes, I have reviewed a great deal of information on this subject. I have reviewed the arguments in all directions. And yes, I have reached conclusions.

1. Conclusion 1 – If Acts had never been written there would have been no changes in Paul's letter to Galatia.
2. Conclusion 2 – If there had been only one Galatia, rather than a North and South, a argumentation over whether Galatians was written to the North or the South would never have been needed.

3. Conclusion 3 – Those who spend a great deal of time to explain what they believe about the subject have truly demonstrated that they have learned more and more about less and less until they know absolutely everything about absolutely nothing!.

4. Conclusion 4.

i. The issue is based upon whether Paul's journey to Jerusalem recorded in 2:1-10 involved the trip mentioned in Acts 11:30 (the famine visit) or the one mentioned in Acts 15:1-29 (the Jerusalem council visit).

a. Paul made three visits to Jerusalem – 1. Gal. 1:18;
2. Acts 11:28-30; 3. Acts 15:2-29.

b. If Acts 11:28-30 does not relate to the famine visit, the Acts 11:30 and Acts 15 must both relate to the Jerusalem counsel visit.

c. To answer the problem we must determine that which we believe to be correct and why we believe it to be correct.

d. Let me quickly add that in such an instance when I tell you what I think is right, I will be giving you my idea, or my choice, or my conclusion, or determination.

e. LET ME PUT IN CAPITAL LETTERS THAT I WILL NOT BE GIVING YOU SCRIPTURE SINCE EITHER ONE OF THEM COULD BE CORRECT; WHICHEVER IS CORRECT MAKES ABSOLUTLEY NO DIFFERENCE IN THE MEANING OF GALATIANS.

f. Neither my opinion nor your opinion make any difference since no Biblical command is violated; it would be sinful if I took the position that my conclusion is Biblical, and that it is God's word.

ii. What then are the reasons for my conclusion that Acts 11:30 relates to the Famine visit.

a. When Paul said that he would go up again to Jerusalem, he was using a term that usually means "second".

b. There are important differences between chapter 2 and chapter 15; Galatians 2 contains a private visit, while Acts 15 describes a public visit.

c. There is no mention of the council's decrees (Acts 15) in Galatians 2; and Galatians 2 seems to indicate that no decrees had been added to Paul's Gospel, but Acts 15:23-29 gives the council's additional directives.

5. My opinion, in case you haven't already decided my decision, is that the journey in Acts 11:30 is the famine journey;

i. Calling it the Acts 11:30 journey (its common designation) omits some important facts.

a. Beginning in 11:27 Luke recorded the coming of prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. Among them was Agabus, who

told them of the famine, which led them to give funds for the poor which led to the journey to Jerusalem.

b. In Galatians 2:1-10 did Paul say anything about Agabus or the famine gifts that he had helped and lead in gathering; absolutely not!

c. How, then, can we connect it to Galatians?

d. It doesn't take a lot of thinking to understand that Paul had other things on his mind, such as dealing with the difficulties facing those in Galata whom he had converted to his Savior.

6. Thus ends this discussion with a strong desire that we will never again have to take any length of time to accomplish nothing.

Conflict at Antioch (2:11–14)

Vv. 11-14

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned.

12 For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision.

13 And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation.

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

1. What we know hear is that Paul preceded Peter's going (v. 11).
2. V. 12 is about Peter, not about James; James name here could be no more than an indication that they came from the Jerusalem congregation; neither here nor elsewhere is any statement or even a suggestion that James sent these men to make demands such as requiring circumcision on Gentile Christians.

- i. In fact, that would be the exact opposite of 1:7-10.
- ii. It is not likely that after Paul left that James told Peter and others who traveled up there to be certain to see that the Gentiles were circumcised, and if they failed to do so you should not eat with them
- iii. That was certainly not Peter's conduct; when he first arrived he ate with Gentiles, but the coming of the men came from Jerusalem precipitated a remarkable about-face in his practice.

a. Some of the original Greek carries the meaning that Peter's conduct was a beginning to withdraw and he eventually "separated himself" from the common meal occasions.

b. All of this occurred because he was afraid of them of the circumcision.

3. The reason that Paul "resisted" Paul was because he was condemned.

i. That is strong language; Paul did not, in fact could not, condemn him; to the contrary, Paul knew that Peter was condemned before he "resisted him to his face".

ii. If Peter's conduct became known even in Jerusalem, it could be that James sent men to investigate the matter.

iii. It is likely that Peter's conduct was spread around and made its way to Jerusalem – V.13 tells us that the rest of the Jews followed Peter, and even "Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation.

4. V. 14 – When Paul saw what was occurring, specifically that "they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel," Paul told Peter before all, "if you, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

- i. While it is certain that minor scruples do not deserve such rebuke, but when the gospel itself is repudiated in the actions of a leader, none is to be spared.
- ii. Paul rebuked Peter before them all – the repair was sought where the damage had been inflicted.

IV. Faith Receives the Promise (2:15–5:1)

Both Jews and Gentiles are justified by faith (2:15–21)

Vv. 2:15-21

15 We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16 yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if, while we sought to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, is Christ a minister of sin? God forbid.

18 For if I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a transgressor.

19 For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God.

20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.

21 I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought.

v. 15

1. V. 15 begins a new paragraph in some Bibles, but not in others.

i. That may be because some consider it to continue Paul's public comments concerning Peter.

ii. That is not said in plain language, but reading v. 15 can certainly lead one to conclude that Peter is still in view.

iii. That thought may come from Paul's saying, "we being Jews by nature" is a term that certainly includes Peter.

iv. In any event, remember that Biblical paragraph decisions are not divine and often considered in error.

2. Actually, the opening words of v. 15 are sufficiently broad to include the religious experience of all the Jewish Christians.

i. "Gentile sinners" is a description difficult to understand.

ii. Some suggest that it may be a description used by the false teachers.

iii. More likely is that fact that it was the usual term applied by self-conscious Jews to the uncircumcised.

v. 16.

1. Paul's answer to this question is in v. 16, which some consider to be one of the greatest passages in Galatians.

i. Important words in v. 16 are:

a. **justified** – a legal term that means sinful man is “acquitted” or “set right with God” or “reckoned righteous”;

b. **by (the) works of law** – designates any religious system, Jewish or otherwise, whose hope for acceptance with God rests on meritorious obedience to formal statutes or laws (In this letter the phrase has specific reference to the Judaizers who demanded circumcision by the Gentile converts of Galatia in order to be in right relationship with God;

c. **through faith in Jesus Christ** – the manner in which God's acquittal is realized since the coming of the church; faith is more than a statement of belief, it is the kind of belief that leads one to follow God's commands to become His child and live a life in accord with His will (For an example, read Acts 22:1-21, which describes Paul's conversion,).

d. **not by the works of the law** – Verse 16 begins with “yet”, meaning that it is related to v. 15, respectively recognizing that the Jews could not be saved by works of the law, a truth that Paul mentions 3 times in v. 16.

2. In the middle of the verse Paul wrote, “even we believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ.”

i. Some consider this the essential message of Galatians (I will not disagree because of its beauty, but I will add that there is a great deal of essential messages in Galatians.).

ii. There are three times in v. 16 that Paul mentions the inability to be saved “by works of the law”, leading some to think that it is related to Psalm 143:2, with some modifications:

And enter not into judgment with thy servant;

For in thy sight no man living is righteous.

V. 17

1. V. 17 is difficult, if not obscure, which leads me to think that I don't know what I need to know, but I will put away all of the subjections, could bes, and possibly meanings, and just consider the text itself.

i. “But if” tell us that v. 17 looks back to V. 16; “if” indicates a possibility is in vision, i.e. that which is about to come.

ii. The first event – “while we sought to be justified in Christ”; this event is understandable because the readers of Paul’s letter certainly remembered that which Paul had outlaid in v. 16.

iii. The second event – “we ourselves were also found as sinners”, is a bit more difficult because the readers should also be remembering that their salvation came because they were “justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law.”

iv. Paul’s two “events” led to a question: “is Christ a minister of sin?”, a question that Paul hastened to answer, “God forbid.”

V.18.

1. V. 18 counters v. 17 – Paul has been laying the groundwork for conclusion.

i. By leading the Jews to abandon the hope of justification by works of the law, Christ was not serving the cause of sin.

ii. To the contrary, the one who reverts to the law, building up again that which he had torn down, proves himself a transgressor.

2. Paul has made his point – the transgression was returning to that which had been tried, found wanting, and had been superseded by faith in Jesus Christ.

v. 19.

1. In v. 19 Paul gives a moving testimony of his own experience, he makes a beautiful statement:

For I through the law died unto the law, that I
might live unto God.

2. Here Paul does not explain how the law served as the instrument of his death.

- i. Romans 7:7-25 may be the best commentary on this verse.
 - ii. Death to law meant that it ceased to have any further claim upon him (cf. Rom. 7:6).
 - iii. The purpose of this was that he might live to God; the strong antithesis of this verse, death to law is prerequisite to life to God.

V. 20.

1. There is no way that I can add a single thought to this verse, and in my opinion neither can anyone else.

- i. It is a powerful dramatic statement of deeply personal religious devotion which intersperses Paul's writings.
 - ii. Identification with Christ in his death on the cross was a vital reality for Paul: hear his statement in Gal. 6:14:

But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross
of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world
hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

2. Paul's death with Christ on the cross finds him still very much alive.

i. But Paul is no longer living his own life; to the contrary, it is Christ who lives in Him.

ii. Now his faith is lived by faith in the Son of God, for He is the one who loved him and gave himself up for him.

V. 21.

1. Verse 21 concludes where we have been and is a final conclusion as a preparation.

i. We have learned the reverting to the works of the law as an access to God is to nullify the grace of God.

ii. It places the truth of the gospel in jeopardy.

iii. If right standing with God were attainable by law, then Christ died for nought.

2. In these final verses Paul has moved beyond personal apologetic to the elaboration of the superiority of the gospel of grace to the legalistic gospel of his opponents; this is the great theme that will engage him in the next two chapters.

The primacy of faith over law (3:1–5)

Vv. 3:1-5

1 O foolish Galatians, who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified?

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

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?

4 Did ye suffer so many things in vain? if it be indeed in vain.

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

V. 1

1. This verse is an appropriate sequel to 2:20-21 that we just discussed; the prior passage used the religious experience of the Jewish converts to refute the return to the law, here he probes the experience of the Gentile converts of Galatia for the same reasons.

i. Paul's frustration with his readers is shown in the derogatory epithet, "O foolish Galatians" (One man rendered it "O you dear idiots of Galatia", but this seems a bit too far.).

ii. This outcry seems to have come forth in light of Paul's conclusion where he had declared his wonderful life in Christ who loved him and gave himself up for him (2:20), and established that a turning away from the gospel by Jew or Gentile logically established that Christ died for naught (2:21).

2. Once Paul addresses his readers asking, "Who did bewitch you..."?

i. The verb here (baskainō) indicates the casting of a spell through the power of an evil eye; listening to Paul's address to his readers in this verse, it may be that Paul is having difficulty in understanding the falling away from Christ.

ii. Unfortunately, some ancient Biblical copiers whose works we included in the King James, chose that some words from Galatians 5:7 would be appropriate in 3:1.

a. It reads: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, **that ye should not obey ^cthe truth**, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"; except for more modern language, the New King James has the same content.

b. Most of those who study the ancient texts that have lives to our day have concluded that the above phrase written in bold is not in the original Gal. 3:1.

3. The verse ends with “before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified.”

i. Paul is struggling (my word) for and disappointed with those whom he had led to Christ; in his life since his conversion he had so completely ruled out the law as a mean of getting right with God that it was scarcely credible that people who had once embraced such a gospel should ever turn to the law for salvation.

ii. Perhaps the only reason that Paul did not add “should never turn back to the law” was because the Gentiles had never been under the law.

Vv. 2-5.

1. V. 2 is not difficult – we only need to read the one thing that Paul wished to learn from those who had fallen away: he wanted to know if they received the Spirit from the works of the law, or from the hearing of faith.

i. Paul would have made a wonderful trial lawyer or debater; his one question had them in a corner because their experience with Paul’s teaching was based on the hearing of faith.

ii. In light of their experience they could give no other answer and, by so doing, they had conceded Paul’s case and the feet of the false teachers was taken from under them and their argument was destroyed.

2. Since they had received the Spirit by the hearing of faith; since faith comes from hearing and what is heard comes from the preaching of Christ, there is neither need or room for the works of the law.

V. 3

1. In verse three Paul has changed from works and faith to flesh and spirit; he begins by asking “Are you so foolish?”

2. Paul is addressing the teaching of the Judaizers, that faith in Christ was the beginning of that which was completed by submission to circumcision, which was a rite of the flesh.

3. The Judaizers did not deny faith in Christ, but they insisted both faith In Christ AND circumcision were necessary for salvation and right relationship with God.

v. 4

1. V. 4 tactfully expresses the hope that, however threatening, the cause in Galatia was not yet lost.

2. The fourth question elaborates somewhat upon the question asked in v. 2 – the Spirit received by faith-hearing as Paul preached the Gospel had been at work in the lives of the Galatians, and they had seen many manifestations or spiritual gifts.

V. 5

1. V. 5 raises another question; Paul brings God Himself upon the scene, bringing before the Galatians the One who supplied to them the Spirit, and Who worked miracles among them.
2. Paul would not have appealed to mighty works accomplished by the power of the Spirit and experience by the Galatians if in fact they had experienced nothing of the kind; that the introduction of the gospel to new territories was regularly accompanied by miraculous healings and other 'signs and wonders' is attested throughout the NT.
3. Paul is making an appeal to the Galatians experience; Paul's preaching was indeed followed by miraculous signs, whereas presumably nothing of that sort accompanied the activity of the agitators.

THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM (Vv. 6-9)

Vv. 6-9

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.

7 Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham.

8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed.

9 So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham.

1. Like an old song, Verses 6-9 “go together like a horse and a carriage”; they are opening a door through which Paul can bring a lesson that will teach the Galatians that long before the works of the law arose, salvation by faith was quite old.
2. It begins with v. 6, in which Paul declares that Abraham, an honored man in Jewish history, “believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness”, that is, that Abraham was blessed without the works of faith or circumcision.
3. The conclusion from v. 6, found in v. 7, is that those who are of faith are sons of Abraham, and clearly accomplished without the Mosaic law for at the time it did not exist.
4. V. 8 explains it all: the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, ‘In thee shall all the nations be blessed.’
5. V. 9 gives the conclusion – ‘So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham’.

NOTES ON CIRCUMCISION

In Gen. 15:6 and again in Galatians 3:6, we are told that Abraham declared that believed in Jehovah (God) and it was

reckoned to him for righteousness. At that time Abraham was not circumcised and had never been told to do so.

Unfortunately, the Jewish world had never accepted the fact that Abraham had obtained righteousness without circumcision. As far as the Judaizers and Jews thereafter were concerned, Gen. 15:6 doesn't count. Their position is that Gen. 17:11 established that Abraham was not righteous until God's requirements including circumcision was performed.

God did a number of things in connection with Abram, as he was then called, following Gen. 15:6 – the major act was to create a covenant with Abram (Gen. 17:2):

- i. God told Abram that he would be a father of many nations (17:4).
- ii. God changed his name to Abraham (17:5).
- iii. God promised to make him exceeding fruitful, would make nations of him, and that kings would come out of him (17:6).
- iv. God would establish his covenant with him, and with his seed after him and his generations for an everlasting covenant to Abraham and his seed after him (17:7).
- v. God promised to give Abraham and his seed all of Canaan of an everlasting possession (17:8).

vi. As a token of the covenant God required that every man child must be circumcised and Abraham, even at 90 years of age, had to be circumcised.

vii. Follow on 17:10-11 and you will discover that every male was circumcised as a sign of the covenant; 17:12-13 includes all bought from foreigners as well as offspring; 17:14 requires that any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin will be cut off from his people.

All of that is certainly true, but nowhere in it did God finally declare that Abraham was now righteous. But the Judaizers continued to believe and teach:

i. Abraham was justified before God by responding to his call with obedience (moving from Haran).

ii. However, it was not until he submitted to circumcision was his faith perfected (Gen. 17:1).

iii. All of the nations of the earth will be blessed in Abraham (Gen. 12:3), but this is so only of those who submit to circumcision as the seal of the covenant (Gen. 17:10-14); they alone are his seed, who will share in the blessings promised to him.

iv. Since this includes Gentiles as well as Jews, the Galatians need to perfect their faith by being circumcised. LET US NOW SEE HOW PAUL REBUTS THESE CLAIMS WITH ARGUMENTS DRAWN FROM THE SAME PASSAGES USED BY HIS OPPONENTS.

The curse of the law (3:10–14)

Vv. 10-14

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

11 Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for, The righteous shall live by faith;

12 and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them.

13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

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

V. 10

1. At this point Paul carries the attack to his opponents.
 - i. The Judaizers were claiming that the blessings of Abraham were upon the basis of the works of the law.
 - ii. Paul counters by declaring that “as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse”.
 - a. Paul is concerned to stress the unfulfillable character of the law: by the standard of the law everyone is ‘under a curse’ because no one is able to keep it in its entirety.
 - b. Those who understood the law understood that the works of the law provided no salvation.
 - c. Paul’s present message of this law is from the Mosaic law, written in Deut. 27:26 toward the end of his life:
Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.
 - d. David, Psalm 143:1-2 -- Hear my prayer, O Jehovah; give ear to my supplications: 1 In thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. 2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant; For in thy sight no man living is righteous.
 - e. Habakkuk 2:3-4 - 3 For the vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hasteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not

delay. **4** Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the righteous shall live by his faith.

iii. Paul's position is that there are none who render the law with perfect obedience which is necessary to escape its curse: Romans 3:9, 19, 23 – **9** What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin; ... **19** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, ... and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God: ... **23** for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God;

V. 11

1. We have already heard Habakkuk's message in Hab. 2:3-4, but here Paul brings it forth in v. 11.

i. V. 11 has its original setting against the background of the threat from God's raising up the Chaldeans invasion (Hab. 1:6).

ii. Habakkuk was dismayed that God would permit this wicked nation to swallow up a people more righteous than the Chaldeans (1:13).

2. After teaching the condition of those who had returned to the works of the law, in v. 11 Paul makes it very clear that the righteous shall live by faith.

V. 12.

1. Having established that the righteous shall live by faith, Paul now moves in v. 12 to remind the Galatians that the law is not of faith.

2. The conclusion now falls upon the Galatians who have turned away: He that doeth them shall live in them. i.e., if they choose to bow before the works of the law they are obligated to live according to those rules, none of which provides righteousness or salvation.

3. In these verses (10-12) Paul has placed before them a crushing refutation of the Galatians who wanted to accept circumcision; not only would they obligate themselves to obey the law that they could not fulfil, they were also falling under its curse, and thus have no path to salvation.

Vv. 13-14.

1. Vv. 13 and 14 are beautiful verses that should pierce our hearts; it is certainly a soft pillow that Paul has laid before them to make them both comfortable and beautiful.

2. Paul knew the Old Testament and brought it before them: "his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt

surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is accursed of God; that thou defile not thy land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance” (Deut. 21:23).

3. What is it that Christ has done?

i. He has redeemed us from the law (secure release for one at the cost of the deliverer).

ii. Since this passage is directed to those who seek justification before God by obedience to the Mosaic law, it appears to apply to the Jews and the proselytes.

iii. However, it could also include the Gentiles who had followed the Judaizers and adopted circumcision.

4. How did Christ do it?

i. Christ did it by becoming a curse for us: “Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

ii. Again, Paul appeals to scripture, Deut. 21:23; it describes the hideous practice of hanging the body of a criminal on a tree, and he is to be buried the same day.

iii. In this passage Paul finds scriptural support for his claim that Christ became a curse in our behalf; in the death he died he took the curse of the law upon himself.

5. Why did Christ do it?

- i. The answer is found in two purpose clauses in v. 14.
 - a. The first one addresses the blessing of Abraham as it relates to the Gentiles.
 - !. Paul has already introduced Gen. 12:3 into his argument as evidence of God's intention to include Gentiles in his blessing on Abraham (3:8).
 - !!. Now he states that the purpose of Christ's death on the cross is to make the blessing of Abraham available to the Gentiles.
 - b. The second clause centers in the promise of the Spirit through faith; in 3:2 he spoke of this as something that had already happened in the experience of his readers.

The priority and permanence of the promise (3:15–18)

Vv. 15-18

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one maketh it void, or addeth thereto.

16 Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17 Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years

after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect.

18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise.

Vv. 15-18

1. The question before us in these verses is, “What is the relation between the Mosaic law on the one hand, and the covenant of God with Abraham on the other hand?”

i. This is another issue in Paul’s debate with the Judaizers which needs to be resolved; once again he relies on scripture by affirming the priority of the promise.

ii. The two essential points in Paul’s discussion of the covenant are:

a. it antedated the giving of the law by over four centuries; God never intended that the law should abrogate or amend it.

b. It has its fulfillment in Christ.

2. What we are dealing with here is a covenant that was the gracious offer of a sovereign God to a man, and not a contract equally dependent upon both parties.

i. In v. 15 Paul begins by saying that he is going to use an illustration from everyday life, showing that what is true between men in their contractual agreements is even more true of God in his covenantal relationships with man.

ii. When a human contract is made and ratified, no one annuls it or adds to it; the everyday flow of human affairs proceeds on the basis that participants will stand by their solemn agreements.

3. V. 16 steps aside from v. 15 just a bit; Paul's purpose here is to clarify God's covenant with Abraham.

i. First, he wants them to understand that God did not make promises that were made to Abraham "and to his seeds."

ii. Then, setting promises made to Abraham, he emphasized that God made a promise to "thy seed," which is one, who is Christ.

iii. Paul makes it clear that Christ is the seed of Abraham to whom the promised was made.

4. If you wish to look at the promises made to Abraham, you might look at Gen. 13:15 and 17:7-8.

5. In v. 17 Paul applies the illustration from v. 15; if men can be counted upon to honor their contractual agreements, how much more can God be trusted to secure his covenantal promises.

i. God made a covenant with Abraham, ratified it, lasted over four centuries before the giving of the law.

ii. God did not intend for the law to annul the covenant that he had ratified by Himself, so as to make the promise void.

iii. The Judaizers regarded circumcision as essential for inclusion in the covenanted community; they looked upon the law as the final revelation of God's will for his people.

iv. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah of Jewish hope, but that it did not remove the necessity for circumcision and keeping the law.

v. These remained mandatory for those who would inherit the blessings of God's promise to Abraham.

6. In v. 18 Paul counters the Judaizers by asserting that law and promise are antithetical terms (cf. 2:21 and 3:12).

i. To attempt to conjoin the promise and the law is to misunderstand the role of the law.

ii. Rather it is inheritance and promise that belong together.

iii. This is conformed in that God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise.

7. In the event, you haven't picked it up, we are fixing to step into a discussion of the purpose of the law.

The purpose of the law (3:19–22)

Vv. 19-22

19 What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator.

20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law.

22 But the scripture shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Vv. 19-21.

1. In these verses Paul intends to answer his question in v. 19, “what then is the law”; he then proceeds to answer his question.

i. The law is not greater than the promise.

a. The account of the giving of the law is impressive (Ex. 19); there were thunders and lightnings, and the people were trembling with fear.

b. Even Moses was shaking in his sandals (Heb. 12:18-21); it was a big show compared with the giving of the covenant to Abraham (Gen. 15).

c. Of course, the Judaizeers were impressed with these emotional externals, But Paul points out that the Law is inferior to the covenant of promise in two ways.

2. First, the law was temporary (19a).

i. It was added until the seed should come.

a. It is obvious that a temporary law cannot be greater than a permanent covenant.

b. When you read the covenant with Abraham, you find no “ifs” in the words, but the blessings of the law were dependent on the meeting of certain conditions.

c. Furthermore, the law had a terminus – til the seed should come.

ii. With the death and resurrection of Christ, the law was done away and now its righteous demands are fulfilled in us through the Spirit (Rom. 7:4; 8:1-4).

3. Second, the law required a mediator (vv. 19b-20).

i. When God gave the law to Israel, He did it by means of angels and through the mediation of Moses; Israel received the law by the disposition of angels (Acts 7:53).

ii. This means that the nation received the law third hand; from God to angels to Moses; but when God made his covenant with Abraham, He did it personally without a mediator.

iii. God was revealing to Abraham all that He would do for him and his descendants.

iv. A mediator stands between two parties and helps them to agree; but there was no need for a mediator in Abraham's case since God was entering into a covenant with him, not Abraham with God.

v. God is one (v. 20), therefore, there was no need for a go-between.

vi. The Judaizers were impressed by the incidentals of the law – glory, thunder, lightning, and other essentials.

vii. The law was temporary and required a mediator; the covenant of promise was permanent, and no mediator was required.

viii. There could be but one conclusion: the covenant was greater than the law.

4. The law was given to reveal sin (v. 22).

i. Here we get to see the way that law and grace cooperate in bringing the lost to Jesus Christ – law shows the

sinner his guilt, and grace shows him the forgiveness he can have in Christ.

ii. The law is holy and just and good (Rom. 7:12), but we are unholy, unjust, and bad – the law does not make us sinners; it reveals to us that we already are sinners (Rom. 3:20).

iii. The law is a mirror that helps us see our dirty faces (See James 1:22-25 to understand the “dirty faces” comment.); it is grace that provides the cleansing through the blood of Christ.

iv. V. 22 declares that all things are under sin, Jews and Gentiles alike, but since all are under sin, then all may be saved by grace; put differently, God does not have two ways of salvation – He has but one, faith in Jesus Christ.

Liberation from the law (3:23–25)

Vv. 23-25

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

24 So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

25 But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor.

1. V. 23 begins with “before faith came”, which could leave the understanding that faith did not exist before the coming of Christ.

i. This does not suggest that faith did not exist until Christ came; we know that is the case because Paul has been arguing that Abraham was justified by faith – in fact, any time a person has been rightly related to God, it has been on the basis of faith (Heb. 11:1-2).

ii. In fact, in you wish to follow the existence of faith in the Old Testament, read the all of Hebrews 11.

iii. If we go back to v. 22, we will see that Paul had just spoken of the “promise of faith in Jesus Christ”; clearly, he speaks of salvation in Jesus Christ, something that had never been possible before.

iv. What Paul had in his mind was the fact that “before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.”

2. V. 24 turns on the light by revealing that the purpose of the law was to be our tutor to bring us unto Christ that we might be saved by faith.

i. “Tutor” is the common English translation; however, the Greek word means more than helping a child in education; The

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says that it
“Denotes the upbringing and handling of the child which is
growing up to maturity and which thus needs direction, teaching,
instruction and a certain measure of compulsion in the form of
discipline or even chastisement.”

ii. One writer said, “It is not as a Teacher that Paul thinks
of Christ, but as a Redeemer: the Christian life is not an advanced
education, but a deliverance from death unto life.”

3. V. 25 cleans the table as it were, there is no more need for
the Guardian, we will call him; we are free from the Mosaic law,
and Christ has made us free.

Jews and Gentiles one in Christ (3:26–29)

Vv. 26-29

**26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God,
through faith.**

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

**28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither
slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all
one in Christ Jesus.**

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

Vv. 26 – 29

1. In these 4 verses Paul reaches a beautiful conclusion (not necessarily his only conclusion), for it leaves beautiful thoughts in his readers' minds and prepares space for helpful encouragement and instructions for the future.

i. In v. 26, he begins by telling them that they are all sons of God, through faith.

a. After all of the difficulties that Paul had to overcome, and all of the corrections that he had to make as a result of the Judaizers, what a wonderful thought he put in their heart – they are sons of God.

b. How blessed we are to be a child of God; we should never forget it and always thank Him for it.

ii. In v. 27, Paul told them how they became children of God – “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

a. “as many of you” means this many and no more.

b. “as were baptized” means they were immersed.

c. “into Christ” is the blessing that comes from being baptized (Paul assumes that they remembered believing, confessing, and repenting).

d. This verse alone clearly establishes that baptism is essential for salvation, but millions of people still turn away from the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins.

e. They are like and perhaps have heard the same radio preacher I heard as I was traveling years ago who said, “if you just read Acts 2:38 you would conclude that baptism was essential for salvation, but now let me tell you what it means.”

f. So, let us see how it works: in the first place we read the Bible, but the preacher wants us to listen to him explain it; the explanation has to be different from the Bible or his “telling what it means” would not be necessary.

!. Does that preacher have a son who died for you and then aroused from the grave?

!!.. Did that preacher inspire a book called the Bible?

!!!. Did that preacher know that God did all of those things and inspired the Bible that the preacher didn't believe what it said and that God's Bible needed his explanation?

2. Vv. 28-29 are absolutely beautiful, for it declares that once we have been baptized into Christ, we are all one.

i. This does not mean we are all men or all women, or all of any one thing, except, we are one in God.

a. It doesn't change the nature of anyone or change their duties in life, it just makes us all brothers and sisters.

b. What it does is to throw away any thought or belief that this one is better than that one or these or better than those; Paul has washed away all thoughts of that nature, and has established that we all, with no attention to color, education, opportunity, will never think that you and I are better than others.

iv. V. 28 ends with "for you are all one in Christ Jesus"; what a wonderful thought; what a wonderful blessing -- join with me and just look around you and see your blessing.

v. V. 29 binds it all: "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."

From slavery to sonship (4:1–7)

Vv. 1-7

4:1 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything,

2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,

5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

NOTES

1. Among the blessings of the Christian experience is *adoption* (Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). We do not enter God’s family by adoption, the way a homeless child would enter a loving family in our own society. The only way to get into God’s family is by *regeneration*, being born again.

In the New Testament, adoption is used only for placing in sonship towards God and occurs only in Paul (including Eph.). The choice of the word shows already that the sonship is not regarded as a natural one but as a sonship conferred by God’s act – in other words, God places a believer as an adult son. It is true that we are children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, but every child of God is automatically placed into the family as a SON or

DAUGHTER, and in that position, we have all the legal rights and privileges of a son or daughter of God our Father.

It is true that a new born Christian may be a “spiritual babe” who needs to grow (1 Pet. 2:2-3); but as far as his position is concerned, he is an adult son who can draw on the Father’s wealth and who can exercise all the wonderful privileges of sonship.

We enter God’s family by regeneration, but we enjoy God’s family by adoption. The Christian does not have to wait to begin enjoying the spiritual blessings he has in Christ; “So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God” (Gal. 4:7).

Vv. 1-2

1. In 4:1, Paul begins a new explanation of that which he had just said – “I mean” is about the same as saying, “let me put it this way.”

i. Paul takes a different analogy from those used in 3:22-26 to set forth the contrast between the previous period of spiritual immaturity and the new life of full-grown freedom,

bringing it up to date by including the theme of inheritance, introduced in 3:29.

- ii. The law has been compared to a prison-warden and as a slave-attendant; now it's role is compared to that of the guardian and trustees appointed to take care of a minor and his property.

2. V. 2 again describes the position of the young.

- i. In Roman law the heir, until he came of age at fourteen, was under the control of a tutor, nominated by the father in his will; then, until he reached the age of twenty-five, he was under a curator.

- ii. Until the date set by the father came, the curator governed the child's inheritance.

Vv. 3-5

1. In v. 3, Paul states that the Jews were like little children, in bondage to the elements of the world.

- i. "Elements" means the basic principles, the ABCs.

- ii. For some 15 centuries, Israel had been kindergarten and grade school, learning their spiritual ABCs so that they would be ready when Christ would come.

- iii. Then they would get the full revelation, for Jesus Christ is "the Alpha and the Omega" (Rev. 22:13); He encompasses all

the alphabet of God's revelation to man – He is God's last word (Heb. 1:1-3).

iv. The law, then, was not a step to maturity, but a step back into childhood; the law was not God's final revelation, it was the preparation for that final revelation in Christ.

v. A person must know the ABCs, but one who sits in a library reciting the ABCs instead of reading the great literature that is all around, is showing immaturity at best, and not maturity and wisdom; under the law the Jews were children in bondage, not sons enjoying liberty.

2. In vv. 4-5 Paul lets his readers know that it doesn't have to be that way, because "when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

i. The "fullness of time" refers to that time when the world was providentially ready for the birth of the Savior.

a. From the historical point of view, the Roman empire itself helped prepare the world for Jesus' birth.

!. Roads connected city with city, and all cities ultimately Rome.

!!. Roman laws protected the rights of citizens, and Roman soldiers guarded the peace.

!!!. Thanks to both the Greek and Roman conquests, both Latin and Greek were known across the empire.

b. Christ's birth in Bethlehem was not an accident: it was an appointment – Jesus came “in the fullness of time.”

ii. The fullness of time having come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law.

a. The ancient promise was that the Redeemer would be of the “woman's seed” (Gen. 3:15); and Jesus fulfilled that promise (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25).

b. Paul tells us who came – God's Son; he has told us when He came and how he came.

iii. Now he explains why He came: “to redeem them that were under the law (v. 5).

a. “Redeem” is the same word Paul used in 3:13; it means “to set free by paying a price.”

b. One could purchase a slave in any Roman city, either to keep the slave or to set the slave free.

c. Jesus came to set us free, so to go back into the law is to undo the very work of Christ on the Cross.

d. He did not purchase us to make us slaves, but to make us sons.

e. Under law, the Jews were mere children, but under grace, the believer is a son of God with an adult standing in God's family.

VV. 6-7

1. In Vv. 6-7 Paul tells his readers (including us) what we are – sons and heirs.

i. Once again, the entire Trinity is involved in our spiritual experience: 1) God the Father sent his Son to die for us; 2) God the Son sent His Spirit to live in us.

ii. Like the Prodigal Son, the Galatians wanted their Father to accept them as servants, when they were really sons.

2. For example:

i. The son has the same nature as the father, but the servant does not.

a. As a son, we become “partakers of the divine nature.”

b. The law could never give a person God's nature within; all it could do was reveal to the person a desperate need for God's nature, so when the believer goes back to the law, he is denying the very divine nature within, and is giving the old nature (flesh) opportunity to go to work.

ii. The son has a father, while the servant has a master.

a. No servant could ever say "Father" to his Master.

b. One who is a child of God has a Father to whom he may cry, "Abba Father".

c. "Abba" is an Aramaic word that is the equivalent of our English word "papa"; this shows the closeness of the child to the Father – no servant has this.

iii. The son obeys out of love, while the servant obeys out of fear.

a. For the family of God our Father, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5).

b. The Judaizers told the Galatians that they would become better Christians by submitting to the law; but the law can never produce obedience – only love can do that.

iv. The son is rich, while the servant is poor.

a. Since we are both “sons and heirs,” having been adopted as adults in the family, we may begin drawing on our inheritance immediately.

b. God has made available to us:

the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7; 2:7);

the riches of His glory (Phil. 4:19);

the riches of his goodness (Rom. 2:4);

the riches of his wisdom (Rom. 11:33ff);

and, all the riches found in Christ (Col. 1:19; 2:3).

2. The son has a future, while the servant does not.

i. In one sense our adoption is not yet final, for we are awaiting the return of Christ.

ii. Christians have experienced the first stage; we have been purchased by Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

iii. We are awaiting the second stage: the public declaration at the return of Christ when “we shall be like Him”

(1 John 3:1-3) 1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

No turning back! (4:8–11)

VV. 8-11

8 Howbeit at that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage to them that by nature are no gods:

9 but now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again?

10 Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years.

11 I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain.

1.What really happened when the Galatians turned from grace to Law?

- a. To begin with, they abandoned liberty for bondage.
- b. When they were ignorant sinners, they had served their false gods and had experienced the tragedy of such pagan slavery.
- c. But then they had trusted Christ and been delivered from superstition and slavery; now they were abandoning their liberty in Christ and not going back into bondage.
- d. They were “dropping out” of the school of grace, and enrolling in the kindergarten of Law.
- e. They were destroying all of the good work that the Lord had done in them through Paul’s ministry!

2.The phrase in v, 9, “*weak and beggarly rudiments*,” tells us the extent of their regression – they were giving up the power of the Gospel for the weakness of Law, and the wealth of the Gospel for the poverty of the Law.

a. The word for “weak” carries the idea of incompetence; it is used to describe the lame man, sitting at the gates of a dead religion, powerless to help himself, and passed by constantly by the priests and servants of the Jewish religion (Acts 4:5-22).

b. The word “beggarly” means to be destitute, in want; it is usually translated “poor”.

!. Jesus used it to describe the wretched condition of Lazarus, whom He depicted as a “beggar”, full of sores, and eagerly but vainly desiring to be fed with the crumbs from the rich man’s table (Luke 16:19-21).

!!. Such was legalistic Judaism – far from being able to enrich anyone, it was a beggar itself, utterly impoverished and destitute of any means whatsoever of imparting spiritual life and godliness to a human soul.

c. The Law never made any body rich or powerful; on the contrary, the Law could only reveal man’s weakness and spiritual bankruptcy!

d. No wonder Paul weeps over these believers, as he sees them abandon liberty for bondage, power for weakness, and wealth for poverty.

e. To go back to that kind of thing would be like a strong, grown man, who was accustomed to eating prime rib and roast beef, going back to mush, mashed peas, and baby food.

f. How were they doing this – by adopting the Old Testament system of religion with its special observations of “days, and months, and times, and years” (Gal. 4:10).

a. The Sabbath was for the nation of Israel before the resurrection of Christ; it was mandated as part of the Mosaic Law (Ex. 20:8-11), and severe penalties were attached to the Law for those who violated it.

b. The Jewish rabbis, not content with the simple and beneficial provision of a weekly Sabbath, succeeded in turning the whole thing into a weekly nightmare by adding to it countless petty rules and regulations, the keeping of which made the Sabbath a burden rather than a blessing.

c. The Lord rose from the dead on a new day, the first day of the week; something is most significant about the way Matthew, in his “Jewish” gospel, introduces the story of the Resurrection, “Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week” (Mat. 28:1), the women came to the tomb.

d. The day of Resurrection, the first day of the week became not just a mandatory rule, but a day on which believers find their rest in Christ; God rests in Christ, and so do we (Mat. 11:28-29; Heb. 4:1).

Personal appeal (4:12–20)

Vv. 12-20 12 Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong.

13 You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first,

14 and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.

15 What then has become of your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me.

16 Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?

17 They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them.

18 It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you,

19 my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!

20 I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

1. In these verses, Paul makes a beautiful plea, that some call a balance between rebuke and love – he turns from spanking to embracing as he reminds his readers of their love for him and his love for them.

i. Paul tries to make it plain that he is not speaking as he does out of a sense of personal resentment, as though he were offended by their giving up his teaching in favor of someone else's; he has already protested that even if he himself were to bring them a different gospel from that which he originally preached to them, he would fall under the divine curse.

ii. He is anxious that they should enjoy the same open feeling of friendship and confidence toward him as he cherishes for them.

2. Vv. 13-15 have created more guessing than knowledge.

i. It begins by explaining why Paul stopped and preached at Galatia – He had a bodily ailment.

a. Is there anyone among us who can tell us exactly what Paul's problem was; let me give you the most common ones – He had eye problems (v. 15, 6:11); malaria, contracted along coastal lands in Pamphylia from which he sought recourse in the higher altitudes of southern Galatia; epilepsy; and his thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

0. MY ADVICE IS TO CHOOSE ONE IF YOU MUST, AND THEN IMMEDIATELY FORGET IT.

b. Paul did not tell us; the Galatians did not tell us; the Bible does not tell us.

c. If it had been important we would have been told, so we shall now proceed and not waist time.

d. Whatever it was, the Galatians neither scorned nor despised Paul, in fact they accepted him as they would have accepted an angel of God, as Christ Jesus (v. 14).

ii. In v. 15 Paul asks, “what has become of your blessedness?”

a. He continues by saying that at that time they would have given him their most precious possessions -- their own eyes.

b. This doesn’t establish that eye problems was his bodily ailment; if it could be established otherwise (which it has not been), there would be a special force in his choice of words here.

3. V. 16 begins with another question – “Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth.

i. There is more rhetoric than inquiry here – it is the sort of question that an offended friend asks when feeling his hurt most deeply.

a. It is doubtful that the Galatians regarded Paul as an enemy, and it is just as doubtful that Paul felt that the

Galatians regarded him as an enemy; “by telling you the truth” is the important part of the question.

b. In telling them the truth, Paul is their best friend.

ii. The truth that he is now telling them is the same as that which he told them when he first came among them, and on that occasion, it won their friendship for him.

a. The truth that he is now telling them is nothing other than the good news of divine grace.

b. If it is true, then the ‘other gospel’, brought by the Judaizers, was false.

4. Vv. 17 and 18 go together well.

i. V. 17 says in plain language that the Judaizers act like they want to make the Galatians feel big and important, while really wanting all to think that they are really the Big Shots.

ii. Those people, says Paul to his converts, want you to count yourselves as exclusively their followers, enrolled members of their school.

iii. It is always good, he goes on, to be courted with honorable intentions, as you were ‘courted’ by me when I was

present with you; but as it is, no sooner had my back been turned than you let someone else come and ‘court’ you with dishonorable intentions!

5. Vv. 19-20 close intense expression of concern for their spiritual welfare and his dismay for their defection.

i. In 3:1 he addressed his readers as “O foolish Galatians!”

In 3:15 and 4:12 he termed them “brethren.”

But here he calls them “my little children.”

ii. He invokes the metaphor of birth pangs to describe the anguish he feels, and that pain will continue until they are in Christ (a kind way of saying that turning back to the law turned them away from Christ).

iii. In verse 20, Paul is telling his readers that his letter is a poor substitute for the visit that Paul would like to make to Galatia.

a. He expresses his longing to see them.

b. He fears to alter the tone with which he addresses them, but confesses the perplexity that they have caused them.

A lesson from scripture (4:21–5:1)

4:21-5:1

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

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman.

23 But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise.

24 Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar.

25 Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

26 But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

**27 For it is written,
“Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear;**

break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor!

**For the children of the desolate one will be more
than those of the one who has a husband.”**

**28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of
promise.**

**29 But just as at that time he who was born according
to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the
Spirit, so also it is now.**

**30 But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the
slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman
shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.”**

**31 So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of
the free woman.**

**5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm
therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.**

Introduction to these verses

1. It has been said that when children are little, they step on your toes; but when they're grown, they step on your heart.

i. This is what Paul was experiencing as he tried to help the Galatian believers with their confused spiritual lives.

a. Paul apparently had travail when he first came to proclaim the Gospel to the Galatians, as evidenced by 4:19 where he stated the he was again in travail.

b. But now the Galatian Christians were falling back to the law and a 'second childhood experience; and Paul had to travail over them again.

c. He longed to see Christ form in them, in the same manner that we, as parents, long to see our children mature in the will of God.

d. Since the Judaizers appealed to the law, Paul accepts their challenge and uses the law to prove that Christians are not under the law; He takes the familiar story of Ishmael and Isaac (Gen. 16-21) and draws from it basic truths about the Christian relationship to the Law of Moses.

ii. The events actually happened, but Paul uses them as an allegory, which is a narrative that has a deeper meaning behind it.

a. Perhaps the most famous allegory in the English language is *A Pilgrim's Progress*; in an allegory, persons and actions represent hidden meanings, so that the narrative can be read on two levels, the literal and the symbolic.

b. Paul's use of Genesis in this section does not give license to find "hidden meanings" in all the events of the Old Testament; should we take that approach to the Bible, we can make it mean almost anything we want it to mean; such conduct gives rise to much of the false doctrines that have arisen.

c. Paul was able to proceed because the Holy Spirit inspired him to discern the hidden meaning of the Genesis story.

d. We must always interpret the Old Testament in light of the New Testament, and where the New Testament gives us permission, we may search for hidden meanings; otherwise, we must accept the plain statements of Scripture and not try to "spiritualize" everything.

2. The easiest way to grasp the historical account is to trace briefly Abraham's experiences as recorded in Gen. 12-21, using his age as our guide; we will trace the events on which Paul is basing his argument for Christian liberty.

To The Lesson

75 -- Abraham is called by God to go to Canaan; and God promises him many descendants (Gen. 12:1-9).

i. both Abraham and Sarah wanted children, but Sarah was barren.

ii. God was waiting until both of them were "as good as dead: before He would perform the miracle of sending them a son (Rom. 4:16-25).

85 – The promised son has not yet arrived, and Sarah becomes impatient.

i. She suggests that Abraham marry Hagar, her maid, and try to have a son by her; this act was legal in that society, but is was not in the will of God.

ii. Abraham followed her suggestion and married Hagar (Gen. 16:1-3).

86 – Hagar becomes pregnant and barren Sarah gets jealous!

i. Things are so difficult in the house that Sarah throws Hagar out, but the Lord intervenes, sends Hagar back, and promises to take care of her and her son.

ii. When Abraham is 86, the son is born, and he calls him Ishmael (Gen. 16:4-16).

99 – God speaks to Abraham and promises again that he will have a son by Sarah and says to call his name Isaac; later, God appears again and reaffirms the promise to Sarah as well (Gen. 17-18).

100 – The son was born (Gen. 21:1-7); they name him Isaac (laughter), as God commanded.

i. But the arrival of Isaac creates a new problem in the home: Ishmael has a rival.

ii. For 14 years, Ishmael has been his father's only son, very dear to his heart.

iii. How will Ishmael respond to the presence of a rival?

103 -- It was customary for the Jews to wean their children at about the age of three, and to make a great occasion of it.

- i. At the feast, Ishmael starts to mock Isaac (Gen. 21:8ff) and to create trouble in the home; there is only one solution to the problem, and a costly one at that – Hagar and her son have to go.
- ii. With a broken heart, Abraham sends his son away, because this is what the Lord tells him to do (Gen. 21:9-14).

ON THE SURFACE, THIS STORY APPEARS TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN A TALE OF A FAMILY PROBLEM, BUT BENEATH THE SURFACE ARE MEANINGS THAT CARRY TREMENDOUS SPIRITUAL POWER.

ABRAHAM, THE TWO WIVES, AND THE TWO SONS REPRESENT SPIRITUAL REALITIES; AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TEACH US IMPORTANT LESSONS.

vv. 21-23

1. In these verses Paul explains the meanings that lay behind these historical events; to keep them in mind, view the hand-out of today:

THE OLD COVENANT

Law

THE NEW COVENANT

Grace

Hagar the slave

Sarah the free woman

Ishmael, conceived

Isaac, conceived

after the flesh

miraculously

Earthly Jerusalem,

Heavenly Jerusalem,

in bondage

which is free

2. Paul begins with the two sons, Ishmael and Isaac (Gal. 4:22-23), and explains that they illustrate our two births; the physical birth that makes us sinners and the spiritual birth that makes us the children of God.

i. As you think about this, you might want to read Gen. 21:1-12, and you will discover some wonderful spiritual truths about your salvation.

ii. Isaac illustrates the believer in several particulars.

a. He was born by God's power – in fact, God deliberately waited twenty-five years before He granted Abraham and Sarah their son.

b. Isaac was "born after the Spirit" (Gal. 4:29), and, of course, the Christian "is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:6).

c. Isaac came into the world through Abraham (who represents faith (Gal. 3:9).

iii. Isaac brought joy.

a. His name means “laughter”, and certainly he brought joy to his aged parents.

b. Salvation is an experience of joy, not only to the believer himself, but also to those around him.

iv. **Hagar was Abraham’s second wife**; God did not begin with Hagar, but with Sarah.

a. When God delivered Israel from Egypt, it was on the basis of grace and not law, for the law had not yet been given.

b. Like Hagar, Abraham’s second wife, the law was added (Gal. 3:19)’

c. Hagar performed a function temporarily, and then moved off the scene, just as the law performed a special function and then was taken away (Gal. 3:24-25).

3. **Hagar was a slave**; five times she is called a “handmaid” (ASV, or “bondwoman” NKJV, Gal. 4:22-23, 30-31); Sarah was a “freewoman,” and therefore her position was one of liberty, but Hagar, even though married to Abraham, was still a servant.

i. Likewise, the Law was given as a servant.

ii. What then is the Law (Gal. 3:19); "...through the law cometh the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20b).

iii. Since v. 23 begins this thought, we will add it here even though it goes to v. 25 which is not in the group before us, the law was a monitor to control men and intimately lead them to Christ; the law was never intended to be a mother.

4. **Hagar was not meant to bear a child.**

i. Hagar's marriage to Abraham was out of the will of God, it was the result of Sarah's and Abraham's unbelief and impatience.

a. Hagar was trying to do what only Sarah could do, and it failed.

b. The law cannot give life (Gal. 3:21), or righteousness (Gal. 2:21, or the gift of the Spirit (Gal. 3:2), or a spiritual inheritance (Gal. 3:18).

c. Isaac was born as Abraham's heir (Gen. 21:10), but Ishmael could not share in this inheritance.

ii. The Judsizers were trying to make Hagar a mother again, while Paul was in spiritual travail for his converts that they might become more like Christ.

iii. No amount of religion or legislation can give the dead sinner life – only Christ can do that!

5. **Hagar gave birth to a slave**; Ishmael was a wild man (Gen. 16:12), and even though he was a slave, nobody could control him, including his mother.

i. Like Ishmael, the old nature (the flesh) is at war with God, and the law cannot change or control it.

ii. By nature, the Spirit and the flesh are contrary, the one to the other (Gal. 5:17), and no amount of religious activity is going to change the picture.

iii. Whoever chooses Hagar (law) for his mother is going to experience bondage (Gal. 4:8-11, 22-25, 30-31; 5:1).

iv. But whoever chooses Sarah (grace) for his mother is going to enjoy liberty in Christ.

v. God wants His children to be free (Gal. 5:1).

6. **Hagar was cast out.**

i. It was Sarah who gave the order for Hagar's departure (Gen. 21:9-10). And God subsequently approved it (Gen. 21:12).

ii. Ishmael had been in the home for at least seventeen years, but his stay was not to be permanent; eventually he had to be cast out – there was not room in the household for Hagar and Ishmael with Sarah and Isaac; one pair had to go.

iii. It is impossible for law and grace, the flesh and the Spirit, to compromise and stay together.

a. God did not ask Hagar and Ishmael to make occasional visits to the home; the break was permanent.

b. The Judsizers in Paul's day, and perhaps in our own day, are trying to reconcile Sarah and Hagar, and Isaac and Ishmael; such reconciliation is contrary to the word of God.

c. It is impossible to mix law and grace, and God's gift of righteousness and man's attempt to earn righteousness.

Final Comments On These Verses

Thank God, the Christian is set free from the curse of the Law and the control of the Law. We can cast out the Law (the bondwoman) and her son. It may pain us deeply, as it did Abraham; but it must be done. To attempt to mix Law and grace is to attempt the impossible. It makes for a frustrated, barren

Christian life. But to live by grace, through faith, gives one a free and fulling Christian life.

What is the secret? The Holy Spirit, who gave us God's Word. And it is this secret that Paul will share in the closing "practical" chapters of the letter. Meanwhile, you and I need to beware lest Ishmael and Hagar have crept back into our lives. If they have – let us cast them out!

V. Christian Freedom (5:2–12)

The law demands total commitment (5:2–6)

V. 2-6

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing.

3 Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace.

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

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love.

1. The dire consequences for failing to renounce and reject the legalistic perversion of the gospel of Christ, are described in ultimate terms in vv. 2-4.

i. Not since 1:8-9, with the exception of 4:30, has Paul invoked such ominous categories of divine judgments; there it was pronounced upon the false teachers; here it is directed to those who seem ready to abandon God's gracious call in Christ (cf. 1:6).

ii. "Behold, I Paul" is a very emphatic way of calling attention to what he is about to say; added to the emphatic use of the personal pronoun "I" and the insertion of his name, the exclamatory particle achieves a remarkable impact.

iii. Later, those listening to the reading of this letter in the churches would sharpen their hearing for what he is about to say.

2. Now that they listen closely, Paul says "unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing."

i. "I, Paul" speaks with the authority of an apostle of Jesus Christ—the apostle of Jesus Christ, so far as his Galatian

readers are concerned—but he does not expressly invoke his apostolic authority in giving them the serious warning which immediately follows.

a. ‘This is Paul speaking to you’—Paul whom you know, Paul your friend and father in Christ, not ‘the brothers who are with me’ (1:2) but I, Paul, myself.

b. Others had apparently undertaken to say what Paul believed or practiced in the matter of circumcision (cf. v 11); here is Paul’s own account.

ii. In vv 2 and 3 it is indicated explicitly for the first time that the Gentile Christians of Galatia were being urged to accept circumcision; this might have been inferred from earlier references to circumcision in the letter, and its Galatian recipients knew from the outset what Paul was getting at, but only now does he say so in so many words.

a. He wants them to know that receiving circumcision will mean that Jesus will profit them nothing.

b. He wants them to know beyond the shade of a shadow of an intimation of a doubt that if they receive circumcision they

become debtors to obey the entire Law, which, we know, is impossible.

c. But wait a minute, did Paul not keep them all – “as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless” (Phil. 3:6).

d. Paul’s reply to such a declaration of intent could have been rather, ‘Even if you keep it all, there is no salvation that way; I speak from personal experience.’

3. V. 4 is among the saddest of the verses – it reveals that those who would be justified by the law, were severed from Christ, and fallen away from grace.

i. I can’t help but feel that Paul had tears running down his cheeks when he wrote these verses, for he was writing to those that he loved – but he loved them enough to tell them that which they needed to hear.

a. Being severed from Christ means Hell is their new home if there is no change.

b. Falling away from grace means there is no salvation for their eternal home.

- ii. But let us not end in despair – Vv. 5 and 6 have hope:

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

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love.

- a. Paul will not leave them with no hope.
- b. Paul says that they who believe in Christ are enabled by the Spirit, through faith, to wait confidently for the hope of righteousness.
- c. This reference to ‘love’, after the mention of ‘faith’ and ‘hope’ (v 5), completes the ‘primitive Christian triad’ of graces—faith, hope and love, ‘the quintessence of the God-given life in Christ’ (quintessence -- A thing that is the most perfect example of its type).

Stern words for the trouble-makers (5:7–12)

Vv. 7-12

7 Ye were running well; who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth?

8 This persuasion came not of him that calleth you.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

10 I have confidence to you-ward in the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

11 But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? then hath the stumbling-block of the cross been done away.

12 I would that they that unsettle you would even go beyond circumcision.

1. In v. 7, Paul uses an athletic metaphor for their spiritual progress; when Paul had left them he recognized that they were making progress as new children of God, and he now inquires of them who it was that led them away from the truth (I think that it was not that he did not know, but that he wanted their minds to identify who had led them astray).

i. In verse 8 Paul hastens to tell them that Christ, the one who called them, was not the one who persuaded them to change.

ii. 'He who calls you' is, of course, God: the present tense is used here because there is no emphasis on the time at which he called them, as there is in 1:6, where Paul expresses astonishment at their defecting so quickly from him who had originally called them.

iii. If the persuasion does not come from him who has called them, it is implied that it comes ultimately from those who put obstacles in their path and led them to the law.

2. In v. 9, Paul has not changed the subject – he fears that the presence of the Judaizers in Galatia would prove to be an evil influence that permeates all of the churches there.

i. Thus, he quotes a proverb – a little leaven leavens the whole lump; this is the same saying that he quotes in 1 Cor. 5:6, where he expresses fear regarding the evil contagion of a case of flagrant immorality in the church.

ii. Indeed, with the single exception of Matthew 13:33 (and its parallel in Luke 13:21) yeast is always regarded in the New Testament as a symbol of evil.

3. We come to verses 10-12 – In v. 10, Paul’s converts may still have been wavering at the time his letter was going to reach them; they may already have been persuaded by the Judsizers. But even so, there was hope—good hope, Paul persuaded himself—that his letter would make them change their minds and rely on free grace as they had done before. The Judaizers were no converts of his—more probably they were his settled opponents—and he could expect to make no impression on them by his arguments. Yet some of them might read his letter, or learn of its contents, and a word of warning for them would not come amiss.

i. They could indeed have had an outstanding leader, or they may have invoked some impressive authority in Judaea. In any case, whoever troubled them by trying to impose circumcision on them would have to endure the judgment such conduct incurred.

ii. In v. 11 Paul looks them straight in the eye, and asks, “But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?” – followed by another question: “then hath the stumbling-block of the cross been done away.”

iii. This argument, not obviously related to anything in the immediate context either before or after, can be explained only as a reply to some allegation which was being made about Paul, and to which (he suspected) his converts might be disposed to pay heed. The allegation was apparently to the effect that Paul, a Jew, 'still' preached circumcision.

a. Some hold that those who represented Paul as still preaching circumcision honestly believed that he did so: it was only recently that he had disclosed the law-free character of his gospel to the 'pillars' in Jerusalem, and that at a private meeting (2:2), so that others were still unaware of it.

b. It is easy to see how preposterous was the charge that he still preached circumcision; but his contemporaries may not always have seen the situation so clearly; perhaps he was accused of being a trimmer: of recommending circumcision on some occasions and forbidding it on others.

c. Such an accusation might spring from his essentially neutral attitude towards circumcision. Circumcision per se, he held, was neither here nor there (cf. v 6): a Jewish believer had no need to remove the mark of circumcision, any more than a Gentile believer needed to receive it (1 Cor. 7:18-24).

d. True, even in the matter of Timothy's circumcision, Paul could not be said to preach circumcision; but his critics could have claimed some colorable ground for insisting that he was not always so totally opposed to circumcision as he appeared to be in his dealings with the Galatians. To claim this would be to overlook, whether inadvertently or deliberately, a fundamental distinction: the Galatians were Gentile believers for whom circumcision was not an ancestral custom, and they were being urged to accept it in order to secure the approval of God.

4. In v. 12 Paul's charges against the Judaizers became serious – the message, plainly explained is, “they had better go the whole way and eunuchs of themselves.”

i. Paul was writing to a people who lived in an area where there were pagan religions in which self-emasculation was practiced.

ii. It was the frenzied rite of sacrifice whereby a man entered the priesthood of the cult-goddess.

iii. Paul places Jewish circumcision on practically the same level with pagan emasculation.

iv. If circumcision is efficacious, then excision ought to be even more so!

VI. Flesh and Spirit (5:13–26)

The way of love (5:13–15)

13 For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another.

14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

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

OPENING COMMENTS TO THIS SECTION

At the close of an important speech to Congress on January 6, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt shared his vision of the kind of world he wanted to see after the war was over. He envisioned four basic freedoms enjoyed by all people:

Freedom of speech;

Freedom of worship;

Freedom from want; and

Freedom from fear.

To some degree, these freedoms have been achieved on a wider scale than in 1941, but our world still needs another freedom, a fifth freedom –MAN NEEDS TO BE FREE FROM HIMSELF AND THE TYRANNY OF HIS SINFUL NATURE.

The Judaizers thought they had the answer the Law, but Paul has explained that no amount of legislation, i.e., Law, can change man's basic sinful nature. It is not Law on the *inside* that makes the difference. What we need is another power within, and that is the power that comes from the Holy Spirit of God!

How does it come? If it doesn't come from miracles, from whence does it come – listen to Paul's letter. There are at least 14 times in his letter to the Galatians that Paul mentions the Holy Spirit. The paragraph that we are about to undertake, vv. 13-15, is perhaps the most crucial in the entire closing selection of Galatians; for in it Paul explains three ministries of the Holy Spirit that enable the believer to enjoy liberty in Christ.

1. Paul begins by explaining our calling: we are called for freedom; the Christian is a free person (v. 13a).

i. We are free from the guilt of sin because we have experienced God's forgiveness,

ii. We are free from the penalty of sin because Christ died for us on the cross.

iii. We are free through the Spirit, from the power of sin in our daily life.

iv. Jesus Christ bore the curse of the Law – listen to it – **“Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.”**

With that done, he ended the Law’s tyranny once and for all.

v. We are “called into freedom” because we are “called into the grace of God” (Gal. 1:6).

2. Having explained our calling, Paul then issues a caution: **“only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh”** (V. 13b).

i. The Judaizers had it all figured out – surely you must follow the Law (“the flesh,” circumcision), because failure to follow their lead would land them in hell.

ii. This is the fear of all people who do not understand the true meaning of the grace of God; they say, “If you do away with rules and regulations, you will create chaos and anarchy.”

iii. It is certain that such a result may occur, however, if it does occur it will be because men fail of the grace of God (Heb. 12:14-15 – **“14 Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord:**

15 looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness

springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled....”)

iv. If there is a “true grace of God,” there must also be a false grace, and Jude proclaims that there is: **“4 For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 4).**

3. Finally, this leads to a commandment: **“but through love be servants one to another” (13:c).**

i. The key word, of course, is LOVE; the formula is “liberty + love = service to others.”

a. The Holy Spirit gives us the love we need (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:6, 22 – the first “fruit of the Spirit” is love).

b. Apparently, the Galatian believers were struggling in this kind of love because Paul told them what would happen **“if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (Gal. 5:15).**

ii. This is a picture of wild animals attacking each other; this, in itself, is proof that law cannot force people to get along with each other.

iii. No matter how many rules or standards a church may adopt, they have no guarantee of spirituality.

iv. Unless the Holy Spirit of God is permitted to fill hearts with His love, selfishness and competition will reign.

v. The Holy Spirit does not work in a vacuum; He uses the Word of God, prayer, worship, and the fellowship of believers to build us up in Christ.

a. The believer who spends time daily in the Word and in prayer, and who yields to the Spirit's working, is going to enjoy and will help build up the church.

b. Read 2 Cor. 3 for Paul's explanation of the difference between a spiritual ministry of grace and a carnal ministry of Law.

Walking by the Spirit (5:16–18)

Vv. 16-18

16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would.

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

1. In these verses a conflict is seen – just as Isaac and Ishmael were unable to get along, so the Spirit and the flesh (the old nature) are at war with each other.

i. “The flesh” does not mean “the body”; the human body is not sinful, it is neutral.

ii. If the Holy Spirit controls the body, then we walk by the Spirit; but if the flesh controls the body, then we walk in the lusts (desires) of the flesh (v. 16).

iii. The Spirit and the flesh have different appetites, and this is what creates the conflict.

2. These opposite appetites are illustrated in the Bible in different ways.

i. For example, the sheep is a clean animal and avoids garbage, while the pig is an unclean animal and enjoys wallowing in filth (2 Pet. 2:18-22).

ii. When the rain ceased and the Ark settled, Noah released a raven, and it never returned (Gen. 8:6-7); but when Noah released a dove (a clean bird), it came back (Gen. 8:8-12).

a. Our old nature is like the pig and the raven, always looking for something unclean on which to feed.

b. Our new nature is like the sheep and the dove, yearning for that which is clean and holy.

c. It is no wonder that a struggle goes on within the life of the believer.

iii. Paul is not denying that there is victory; he is simply pointing out that we cannot win this victory in our own strength and by our own will.

NOTES ON V. 17

In v. 16 Paul urges the Galatians ever to walk with what is Spirit, and assures them that they will, indeed, not carry out any craving in them of that which is still flesh in them. It is this context which makes v. 17 different from Rom. 7:15, etc., where the victories of the flesh are recorded. These are not denied here, but here the victories of the Spirit are the subject. The fact that the flesh is also active is stated, but what it accomplishes beyond its cravings is not mentioned. This is also true in regard to v. 24. This makes plain that Paul does not mean here that what we may want according to our spirit is always blocked by our flesh. In the believer, the Spirit does, indeed, dominate; he has crucified the flesh (aorist, v. 24).

The verb ἀντίκειται cannot mean that God created the Spirit and the flesh for the *purpose* that we should not do what we want. This view assumes the activity of three forces: we and our will, the flesh, and the Spirit. God has then arranged it so that we never

get to do our will, but must do either what the flesh or the Spirit dictates. A strange psychology! Regeneration renews, liberates, and frees the will. The spirit = the liberated will. This liberated will is still hampered by the flesh which ever seeks to obtain control again in order once more to usurp the throne. The flesh does not succeed; we only need to keep on walking with the Spirit.

3. V. 18 summarizes it well – “But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

i. The solution is not to pit our will against the flesh, but to surrender our will to the Holy Spirit.

ii. This verse literally means “but if you are willingly led by the Spirit,” or “if you are to be led by the Spirit,” “then you are not under the law.”

a. The Holy Spirit writes God’s Law on our hearts
(Heb. 10:14-18 – **14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.**

15 And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us; for after he hath said,

**16 This is the covenant that I will make with them
After those days, saith the Lord:
I will put my laws on their heart,
And upon their mind also will I write them;**

then saith he,

17 And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

iii. We should sing with David, **“I delight to do thy will, O my God; Yea, thy law is within my heart”** (Psalm 40:8).

iv. Being led by the Spirit, and walking by the Spirit are the opposites of yielding to the desires of the flesh.

The works of the flesh (5:19–21)

Vv. 19-21

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties,

21 envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

1. These three verses list the **“works of the flesh that are manifest”** (all that or needed for his purpose, but I am sure many others could be included).

i. We could spend a great deal of time discussing the meaning of each of these words, however, I am assuming that each one of us understands the meaning of each of these words.

ii. I am fairly confident that Paul was listing sufficient works of the flesh for his purpose, that he intended to include not only the listed words, but also all of their brothers, sisters, and cousins, as evidenced by “such like.”

iii. Paul is making a point – if you practice any of these things, including one or more or all, you will not inherit the kingdom of God.

iv. The expression ‘kingdom of God’ has not appeared earlier in the letter, but Paul could evidently assume his readers’ familiarity with it, no doubt because it had figured in his original preaching to them.

a. “shall not inherit the kingdom of God”

The Kingdom of God usually refers to the reign of God over the lives of His people. But here the “kingdom” appears to embrace more than God’s sovereign dominion, for Paul speaks of this kingdom as the object of our inheritance. This is reminiscent of Peter’s instruction to practice the deeds that characterize the divine nature (2 Peter 1:5-11):

5 Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge;

6 and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness;

7 and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.

10 Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble:

11 for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

b. The gift of the Spirit here and now is the first instalment (Rom. 8:23) and guarantee (2 Cor. 1:22) of that coming heritage.

WHAT IS IT TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION

Our last lesson was titled “Walk with the Spirit.” It dealt with the kind of lifestyle into which the Spirit of Christ would guide us. Paul’s “But I say, Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh”, naturally comes out of the Spirit into love of the

brethren. The desire of the flesh is subordinated to the Spirit. What is it, then, to walk by the Spirit?

1. IT IS NOT SUBJECTIVISM.

A. God's love for us steers us away from a course directed by our feelings, as though our feelings are the Spirit's urgings.

B. God, knowing the propensity of man to follow his own heart into error, has warned us to be directed by His Word (Numbers 15:37-40).

C. He has warned us that a way that seems right could nevertheless be the course of death (Proverbs 14:12), and that we cannot determine God's intended course for man by some existential experience (Jeremiah 10:23).

2. IT IS FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT'S TEACHING.

A. However God may guide us through our Christian lives In answer to prayer, by agents other than by God's Word, whether by the ministration of angels (Heb. 1:14), or by the Holy Spirit – such providence is providential.

B. But acts of God's providence are to be distinguished from acts of revelation.

1. By the special work of revelation upon the apostles and New Testament prophets, the Holy Spirit made known the gospel and God's will for mankind.

2. Then by the special means of inspiration, He had the revealed Word written into permanent record.

3. This Word claims to be sufficient (2 Cor. 2:5-6; 2 Tim. 3:16-17) and final (Jude 3) as the means of our instruction.

4. Again, we must echo the wisdom of God, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death (Proverbs 14:12).

C. It is by the means of the Word, the New Testament, that He saves us, bears His fruit in our lives, and directs us into our Christian walk.

1. THE SPIRIT SAVES US BY THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL.

a. Both Christ and Paul tell us that the Holy Spirit has a part in our new birth (John 3:5; Titus 3:5); yet Paul said of the Corinthian Christians, "for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15).

b. Is it, then, by the Spirit or by the gospel that God saves us; it is, of course, by the Spirit's gospel.

!. James tell us that according to God's own will, we are regenerated by His Word, or as James wrote it, "that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creations." (James 1:18).

!!. The apostle Peter writes that "having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth.

c. Obviously, the Spirit saves us by His Word;
We are also saved by faith in Christ.

But knowing comes by hearing the Word of Christ (Romans 10:17), it is conclusive that the Spirit saves sinners by the Word of the gospel as it produces faith in Christ.

d. The Spirit both directs us into Christ by His Word and directs us to walk in Christ by His Word.

2. THE SPIRIT BEARS HIS FRUIT BY HIS WORD.

a. Paul tells us that "**22** the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** meekness, self-control; against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23).

!. How does the Spirit produce this fruit?

!!. We know that the Spirit teaches us in other New Testament passages to observe each of these named

fruits as characteristic of Christ, to be with all lowliness and meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another in love (Eph. 4:1-2), to exercise self-control (2 Peter 1:6), to be faithful (Revelation 2:10), etc.

b. Does the Holy Spirit add something of His own to the production of this fruit when we obey Him?

!. While the Bible does not explicitly say so, it seems so.

!!. We know the Scripture that God gives us growth and development when we cooperate with Him (Eph. 4:11-16).

c. Is this growth providentially accomplished by the Spirit working within?

! Ephesians 3:14-21 seem to lead us to think so, “**14** For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,

15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

16 that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man;

17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

19 and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.”)

!! But the Spirit initiates that fruit-bearing by His teaching by God’s Word.

3. THE SPIRIT GUIDES US BY HIS WORD.

A. We must make a distinction between what the spirit does and what we do.

a. The Spirit personally indwells God’s people (Gal 4:6; Rom. 8:9); He intercedes for us when we pray (Rom. 8:26), strengthens us in the inner man (Eph. 3:16), and will one day raise His own from the dead (Rom. 8:11. THIS IS WHAT THE SPIRIT DOES.

b. But walking in the Spirit is what we do.

! Apart from, the revelation of the Spirit's Word, we know nothing of the gospel or of God's will for us in Christ.

!! To walk by the Spirit is tantamount to walking in the light of His Word as is 1 John 1:7, "but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

B. Paul has already said that what we do by the Spirit we do by faith (Gal. 5:5: "For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness").

a. Since faith comes by hearing the Word, what we do by the Spirit through faith we do by His Word.

b. When Paul tells us to "walk by the Spirit", he tell us to walk according to His teaching.

Christians today must be cautious not to equate Scriptures that speak of the indwelling Spirit with the Spirit's guidance due to that indwelling.

The indwelling Spirit guides us to be sure, but we know that He indwells us and what His directives are only by His Word.

God tells us that there is more than our own obedience working in our behalf (for example, the intercession of the Spirit

during prayer and His strengthening of our inner man), but we have no authority to substitute the objective Word of God with some spiritual existentialism as a revelation from the Spirit.

3. IT IS NOT TO BE LED UNDER A LEGAL LAW

A. No Scripture speaks of man's inability to keep the law.

a. Man may deduct that conclusion; he may marshal Scriptures for a theology by which he claims to "prove it," but no Scripture states it.

b. To the contrary, Moses writes after a restatement of the law to Israel, "**11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off.**

12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?

13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?

14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

B. Scripture does teach, however, that man is unable to come into a right relationship with God through the law because of man's sin and the law's nature to condemn the sinner.

a. The Holy Spirit, then, will not lead the Christian under the law to his condemnation (Gal. 5:18).

b. The law is an unbearable yoke to sinful men who would appeal to it for justification precisely because of man's sin and the law's nature to condemn it, but not because man is unable to keep it.

c. God is not responsible for man's sins by giving him a law unable to be observed.

1. Man is morally responsible for his sins.

2. He is guilty before God.

d. But while one sin brings condemnation, God's love provides redemption from sin conditioned on our faith and obedience in Christ and our willingness to wage a sincere struggle against the flesh.

C. While walking by the Spirit is not sinless perfection, God nevertheless accounts the faithful Christian walk as a perfect fulfillment of the law's requirement:

“1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.

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

4 that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1-5).

D. This is the astonishing message of the gospel of salvation by faith and obedience in Christ.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (5:22–26)

Vv. 22-26

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.

24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

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

26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

1. Having just been introduced to the work of the flesh, we are now introduced to the fruit of the Spirit in vv. 22 and 23.

i. It is one thing to overcome the flesh and not do evil things, but quite something else to do good things.

a. We might be able to boast that we are not guilty of adultery or murder, but can we see the beautiful graces of the Spirit in our lives?

b. “Negative goodness” (that which we haven’t done) is not enough in a life; there must be positive qualities as well.

ii. The contrast between works and fruit is important, and it begins with the fruit of the Spirit.

a. First, we need to understand the word “fruit”.

!. Fruit is the final product of planting and watering.

!!. The bottom line is that fruit appears only after hard and continuing labor.

!!!. Paul wants his readers to understand the fruit.

b. Paul does not deal with the fruit of the spirit as many things, but as one; he describes the fruit (singular), not the fruits (plural) of the Spirit.

c. What are the fruits Paul listed?

!. LOVE – agape love, which is well known in scripture, and Paul has already spoken of love as the expression of faith In v 6, (“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love), and) and of practical neighborly love as the fulfilment of ‘the whole law’ (vv 13f.).

1. 4 Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil;

6 rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth;

7 beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

2. Love is not listed alone, but it is listed first, and is surely there to remind us that before all things we should love one another.

!!. JOY – Paul says, “**Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice**” (Phil. 4:4).

1. He also said, **“10 For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life; 11 and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation”** (Rom. 5:10-11).

2. When Jesus was preparing his apostles for that which was about to happen, that is Calvary, he told them the difficulties they would endeavor, but he encouraged them by saying, **“11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full”** (John 15:11).

3. Where this joy of the Spirit is, there the heart inwardly rejoices through faith in Christ, with full assurance that He is our Savior, our salvation, and our teacher; outwardly, it expresses this joy with words and gestures.

4. Also, the faithful rejoice to see the gospel spread abroad that many may be won to the faith.

!!!. PEACE – That Christians may be peaceful and quite both to God and to man.

1. Much can be said about peace, but one of the best statements by humans was by Edward H. Bickersteth:

I have led it here (page 123 in our book), listen closely to it's beauty and read along:

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin:

The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed:

To do the will of Jesus, this is rest.

Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round:

On Jesus bosom naught but calm is found.

Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown:

Jesus we know, and He is on the throne.

It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease,

And Jesus call us to heav'n's perfect peace.

!!!!. LONGSUFFERING – We know what a short-tempered person is like; he blows up at the slightest provocation; a long-tempered person is the opposite – he has forbearance and plenty of patience.

1. Long-suffering has been described as the capacity of self-restraint in the face of provocation.

2. The person who has developed the fruit of long-suffering does not rush to retaliate or avenge a wrong he had suffered.

3. Surly, God's children can be long-suffering since God, Himself, has given us the example:

Rom. 2:4 -- 4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

1 Pet. 3:20 – “20 that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water:”.

iv. GENTLENESS – The word used for *gentleness* is the usual word for kindness or goodness of heart; it is goodness in action.

a. The kindest man who ever lived was Jesus; even Peter, describing Jesus said, “He went about doing good” (Acts 10:38).

b. If those who are children of God, and brothers and sisters of Christ will be true followers of the gospel;

they will not be sharp and bitter, but they will be gentle, mild, courteous, and fair-spoken, which would encourage others to delight in their company, and we can truly mean it when we sing, “we will follow the steps of Jesus.”

v. KINDNESS (GOODNESS) – The word used for *kindness* or *goodness* refers to that which is characteristically or constitutionally good in itself and beneficial in its effect.

a. Gentleness, kindness, and goodness are in the same family of virtues, kinfolds so to speak; however, the word for *goodness* is said to be made of sterner stuff.

b. Doing what is *good* might on occasions call for a tougher stand than would be implied simply by the word *gentleness*.

c. For example, the Lord’s inherent and essential goodness, for instance, moved Him to use vigorous actions in cleansing the temple (Matt. 21:12-13).

d. Paul says it would be difficult to find anyone who would die for a righteous man, “**7** For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure [perhaps] for the good man some one would even dare to die” (Rom. 5:7).

e. Perhaps it is this particular quality of genuine goodness for which we long the most, especially as we

get older; we can look back over our lives and see so much that has been spoiled by its lack.

f. We would give anything to be able to go back to this or that particular incident and be able to relive it.

g. To have been good, genuinely good, whereas we gave way to lust, temper, pride, envy, or whatever it was that we did or said.

h. The fact is that we were not good; but then we, “so learned Christ”, dedicated our lives to our Savior.

i. We must remember that *goodness* is not just a negative quality, a list of the things that we do not do; it is also an active, positive expression of the life of the Lord Jesus in us.

j. It can be wrought in us only as we, in our humanity, make ourselves available to the Lord Jesus, in all of His deity, so that He, in His incomparable goodness, can be available to us to live His life in us by His Spirit.

vi. **FAITHFULNESS** – the word for faithfulness may mean either the act or attitude of believing (πιστεύειν), i.e. faith, trust, which is its most frequent sense in

Paul's letters, or the quality of being worthy of belief—faithfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty.

a. This can be either the act or attitude of believing trust, or else the quality of faithfulness, dependability, and loyalty.

b. Sometimes “faith” is simply the everyday, ordinary faith that every human being exercises in in a thousand ways in the commerce and contacts of normal life.

c. Faith is woven into the very fabric and texture of our lives.

!. Faith has no particular virtue in itself.

!!. What is important is the *object* of our faith; faith can be misplaced and the result is disaster.

!!!. Ordinary, everyday faith becomes saving faith, securing, and sanctifying faith when it is placed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

vii. **MEEKNESS** – The word Paul uses is a word not readily translatable into English; the word *gentleness* has been suggested.

a. In English the word *meekness* is often equated with *weakness*; the common notion is that meek people are weak people who cannot defend themselves.

b. But *meekness* in Scripture is the prerogative of strength, not weakness.

c. The Lord Jesus described Himself as meek: **“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls”** (Matt. 11:29).

d. Meekness as a fruit of the Spirit is much discounted by most people, but it is a trait eminently to be cultivated.

!. Jesus promised, **“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”** (Matt. 5:5).

!!. No quality could be regarded as less desirable than meekness according to this world’s standards, but those who follow the steps of their Savior could conquer the world in meekness.

viii. **SELF-CONTROL** – The word here, which some translate as *temperance*, means strength, and some describe it as the trait of resolutely controlling one’s own desires.

a. You may recall Paul in chains before Felix where he sought not only to clear himself, but he also went after the soul of Felix; Paul “reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment”, and Felix trembled (Acts 24:25).

b. On many occasions Christ showed his self-control, and there is no better example than to follow Him to Calvary.

!. See the dignity with which he submitted to the soldiers who were to drive the nails through His hands and feet.

!!. Listen to Him pray earnestly for their forgiveness.

!!!. See Him provide for his mother, and hear Him promise the dying thief that he would “this day be with him in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

!v. Not once did He lose His sublime self-control.

v. His mind, heart, and will were under the control of His spirit, right down to the moment when He sovereignly dismissed that spirit, bowed His head, and died.

c. Temperance! Self-control! It is listed as a fruit of the Spirit.

!. This is not a result of the mind, the emotions, and the senses being brought under the control of the human will; it is a result of the human will being brought under the control of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit thereby energizes the human will to produce this fruit of the Spirit, self-control.

!!. Such a person is loving, full of joy, calm, and peaceful, come what may.

!!!. Such a person is patiently submissive to God at all times and under all circumstances.

!v. He is gentle, good, completely dependable, strong, and quite above reacting to provocation.

2. What is Paul's reason for telling us the fruit of the spirit?

a. Recall the last words of v. 23 and you will understand that he is teaching us to understand that **“against such there is no**

b. In verses 24-26 Paul tell us how we can cultivate such fruit.

3. Before we reach these verses, let us consider some thoughts that will prepare us.

a. A machine in a factory works, and it turns out a product, but it could absolutely never manufacture fruit.

b. Fruit must grow out of life, and, in the case of the believer, it is the life of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:25).

c. When you think of works you think of effort, labor, strain, and toil; when you think of fruit you think of beauty, quietness, the unfolding of life.

d. Love begets more love; joy helps to produce more joy; Jesus is concerned that we produce fruit . . . more fruit . . . much fruit, because this is the way we glorify Him.

e. THE OLD NATURE CANNOT PRODUCE FRUIT; ONLY THE NEW NATURE CAN DO THAT!

4. Let us conclude this chapter with more of an observation, an understanding, and a hope, than a verse by verse of vv. 24-26.

24 And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.

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

26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.

a. Here are the verses.

b. What shall we say?

A. We say that we understand that if we are (I am) of those of Christ Jesus, I have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts (desires) thereof.

!. The truth is that it isn't so much what we say, as it is what we do – there is a crucifixion of the evil and an adoption of the good.

!!. The truth is that we don't get there by saying, we get there by doing.

!!!. This is not to say that we have earned anything, for that is impossible; it is that God's grace has been bestowed for those who believe and obey His Word and His Will.

!v. If I am among those who have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof, I will live by the Spirit and walk by the Spirit.

a. Those who belong to Christ and acknowledge his lordship (cf. Rom. 14:8), and have made a clean break with what they formerly were (cf. Rom. 6:6), have been delivered from the 'present evil age' (1:4) and have become a new creature (6:15).

b. It is the cross of Christ that makes this clean break.

B. V. 26 closes chapter 5, but opens the door to chapter 6:1-10.

VII. Mutual Help and Service (6:1–10)

Vv. 1-10

1 Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

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

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

4 But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor.

5 For each man shall bear his own burden.

6 But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

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

8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life.

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

10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

1. We are sailing on the last chapter, chapter 6. It has taken a while for us to arrive; however, I believe that we will enjoy the trip that the Lord has provided for us.

i. The journey has hopefully brought us closer to our Father and His Son and Spirit, and closer to each other.

ii. If we will adopt the remaining 18 verses, they will help us reach up to become lives that we never thought were possible.

iii. With that said, let us begin.

2. Paul concludes the main body of his letter with a series of loosely connected commands.

i. Actually there are seven imperatives in these opening 10 verses, and each one deals with some practical aspect of the Christian life; they may be regarded as an elaboration upon walking with the Spirit about which we learned in 5:25.

ii. The general teaching of 5:13–26 is now applied to some more specific situations. If mutual envy and provocation are to be renounced, mutual aid is to be fostered.

a. One form of aid is that given to a member of one of the churches who may fall into some ‘transgression’.

b. The precise force is uncertain: it may mean that he finds himself inadvertently involved in some wrongdoing, or it could mean that he is detected in it by someone else.

c. The wrongdoing may fall under the heading of one of the ‘works of the flesh’ (5:19–21); it will certainly be inconsistent with the fruit of the Spirit; whatever form it takes, the offender must be rehabilitated, and not made to feel like a pariah, despised, rejected, and outcast.

d. Paul impresses on them that one test of true spirituality is a readiness to set those who stumble by the wayside on the right road again in a sympathetic and uncensorious spirit; similarly in Rom. 15:1 Paul calls on those who are spiritually ‘strong’, to show their strength by consideration for those who are spiritually weak, to the point of restricting their own liberty on their behalf.

iii. The fallen has been brought home, and it is now time to *bear one another’s burdens*.

a. Paul pleads for the reinforcement of those who bear heavy burdens; in the Greek text it is the reciprocal pronoun, rather than the verb, which appears first in the sentence, which is a position of emphasis: “One another’s burdens bear.”

b. To do this is to fulfill the law of Christ – what can that mean in this context?

!. First, understand that God takes care of His people.

!!. One of the ways that God takes care of his people is to call upon His children who have to help his children who do not have.

!!!. Understanding this is as simple as the 1,2, 3s – all of God’s children who have must help to bear the burdens of God’s children who are in need.

3. In v. 3 we are told not to think that we are really something when the truth is that we are absolutely nothing; the Greek emphasizes the issue by its chosen language – the form of the words says that the one who claims he knows something when he knows nothing, knows absolutely nothing.

i. Like other gnomic sayings of which this section provides several examples, this one is not thrown out at random,

but is relevant to the situation in the Galatian churches: it is a warning against spiritual pride.

ii. The Galatians were not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think (cf. Rom. 12:3); if they did, they would be inhibited from fulfilling ‘the law of Christ’ by bearing one another’s burdens or restoring those who had been overcome by some sudden temptation.

4. In v. 4, Paul is stressing personal responsibility; it is not for one Christian to assess or judge another; each one is answerable to God for his own (Cf. 1 Cor. 4:3–5, where he takes little account of other people’s estimate of his service: ‘it is the Lord who judges me’).

i. The Christian’s self-examination is conducted in the light of the law of Christ—especially the law or standard which is embodied in the person of Christ (Cf. 1 Cor. 15:24-28).

ii. Put plainly as Paul did, a man should “prove his own work.”

a. The Judaizers were guilty of boasting about themselves, their achievements, and their converts (Gal. 6:12-14).

b. They usually did this by comparing themselves with others (12 **For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend themselves:**

but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding (2 Cor. 10:12).

c. But such comparisons are sinful and deceptive; it is easy to find someone worse off than we are, so that our comparison makes us look better than we really are.

d. Christian love would lead us not to expose a brother's failures or weaknesses, no matter how much better it would make us look.

iii. Bottom line – a man should prove his own work.

a. If I do my own work in the light of God's will, and not in the shadows of somebody else's achievements, I can then take pride in myself without comparing myself with someone else.

b. We conclude with v. 5, "for each man shall bear his own burden."

5. But we can't stop here, lest we misunderstand by thinking that something has gone wrong – in v. 2 we are to bear one another's burdens, while in v. 5 we must bear our own burden.

i. The answer is that there are two different Greek words used of "burden."

a. In v. 2 is a word meaning 'a heavy burden', and in v. 5 the word used described "a soldier's pack'.

b. If my car breaks down, my neighbor can help drive my children to school, but what he cannot do is to assume the responsibilities that only belong to me as their father – that is the difference.

ii. Conclusion -- It is wrong for me to expect somebody else to be the father in my family; that is a burden (and a privilege) that I alone can bear.

5. Just as *one another* is a key phrase in the Christian vocabulary, so is the word *fellowship* (translated “communicate” in v. 6).

i. The Greek word has now worked its way into our English vocabulary, and we see the word *koinonia* here and there in classes, sermons, and publications (Gal. 2:9. ‘right hand of fellowship’; Phil. 3:10, Paul’s request that he might ‘*share* his sufferings.’)

a. In the New Testament, *koinonia* often refers to the sharing of material blessings with one another (Acts 2:42; 2 Cor. 8:4; Heb. 13:16; (Greek text).

b. It is this that Paul has in mind in these verses.

ii. Because Paul did not want his hearers to whom he preached and to whom he now writes, to think that he was only interested in making money, he often earned his on livelihood; but

let us also remember that Jesus taught that the laborer was worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7), and Paul echoes His statement (1 Cor. 9:11-14).

6. But we must realize the spiritual principle that lies behind this precept – God does not command believers to give simply that preachers and teachers and missionaries might have their material needs met, *but that the givers might get a greater blessing* (vv. 7-8).

i. The basic principle of sowing and reaping is found throughout the entire Bible – God has ordained that we reap what we sow.

a. Were it not for this law, the whole principle of “cause and effect” would fail – the farmer who sows wheat can expect to reap wheat; if it were different, there would be chaos in our world.

b. But God has also told us to be careful where we sow, and Paul deals with that here; He looks on our material possessions as seed, and he sees two possible kinds of soil – the flesh and the Spirit.

c. BUT ONCE WE HAVE FINISHED SOWING, WE CANNOT CHANGE THE HARVEST!

6. SO, LET US LOOK AT THE END OF THIS PARAGRAPH BY LOOKING AT VV. 9 AND 10.

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

10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

i. *In due season we shall reap if we faint not*, but behind this promise is a peril; getting weary in the work of the Lord, and then eventually fainting and stopping our teaching.

a. Sometimes spiritual fainting is caused by a lack of devotion to the Lord; even a church that was first commended by the Lord could and did fall away – listen to the Lord’s description of it’s history: **“2 I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false;**

3 and thou hast patience and didst bear for my name’s sake, and hast not grown weary.

4 But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love.

5 Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent (Rev. 2:2-5).

b. But how easy is it for us to work for the Lord, and then permit the spiritual motivation to die; like the priests of Israel that Malachi addressed, we serve the Lord but complain, “Behold, what a weariness is it” (Mal. 1:13).

ii. But the promise Paul gives us will help to keep us going: In due season we shall reap.

a. The seed that is planted does not bear fruit immediately; there are seasons to the soul just as there are seasons to nature, and we must give the seed time to take root and bear fruit.

b. How wonderful it is when the plowman overtakes the reaper (Amos 9:13 – Amos’s final words picture a glorious prosperity, when the seasons will run together so that sowing and reaping are without interval, and there will be a continuous supply of fresh produce, “Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt (Amos 9:13).

c. Each day we ought to sow the seed so that one day we will be able to reap (**Psalm 126:5-6; 5 Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! 6 He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him).**

d. But we must always remember that the Lord of the harvest is in charge, and not the laborers.

iii. Sharing blessings involves much more than teaching the Word and giving of our material substance – it also involves doing good unto all men (v. 10).

a. There are those in this world who do evil; in fact, there are those who return evil for good.

b. Many in the world will give good for good and evil for evil.

c. But the Christian is supposed to return good for evil (Rom. 12:18-21) and do this in a spirit of Christian love; actually, the good works that we do are spiritual sacrifices that we give to the Lord, “So that with good courage we say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me’” (Heb. 13:6)?

iv. We are to do good to all men (v. 10).

i. We no longer need to wonder how to let our light shine – Paul just told us.

a. It is not only by words that we witness to the lost, but also by our works; in fact, our works pave the way for our verbal witness; our works win the right for us to be heard.

b. It is not a question of asking, “Does this person deserve my good works?”; the question is, “Do we deserve what God did for us in Christ?”

c. Nor should we be like the defensive lawyer who tried to argue, “Who is my neighbor?”

d. JESUS MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT THE QUESTION IS NOT “WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR,” BUT “TO WHOM CAN I BE A NEIGHBOR.”

v. As we do good to all men, we must give priority to the household of faith, our brothers and sisters.

i. This doesn’t mean that the church should become a clique with the members isolated from the world around them, and doing nothing to help the lost.

ii. Rather, it is a matter of balance – certainly the believers in Paul’s day would have greater needs than would the ‘outsiders’, since many of the believers suffered for their faith.

iii. Furthermore, a man always cares for his own family before he cares for the neighborhood (1 Tim.5:8).

vi. We must remember, however, that we share with other Christians so that all of us share with other Christians so that all of us might be able to share with a needy world.

i. The Christian in the household of faith is a receiver that he might become a transmitter.

ii. As we abound in love for one another, we overflow in love for all men; this is how it was meant to be.

The true ground of boasting (6:11–16)

Vv. 11-16

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

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

14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

1. It was Paul's custom, after dictating a letter, to take the pen and write his own farewell – the standard signature was “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

i. But so concerned is Paul that the Galatians get the message of this letter that he takes the pen and writes an entire concluding paragraph with his on hand, “See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand” (v. 11).

ii. Why did Paul write this paragraph, and why did he use such large letters?

a. The Holy Spirit inspired him to add these closing words to give one more contrast between the Judaizers and the Spirit-led Christians, to show that the Spirit-led believer lives for the glory of God, not the praise of man.

b. Recall when Paul started “I Pall say” and it seemed that Paul was saying in modern language, “I want you to listen”, it may be that he wrote in large letters for emphasis: “DON’T MISS THIS!”

iii. Some believe that Paul’s thorn in the flesh was some kind of eye trouble, and this would mean that he would have to write in large letters so that he himself would be able to read what he had written.

a. Paul is making it clear that he has something important to write in conclusion, that he is not simply going to end the letter in some conventional manner.

b. But if he did have eye trouble, his willingness to write this closing paragraph with his own hand would certainly appeal to the hearts of his readers.

2. V. 12 really shows the true nature of the Judaizers – they are more interested in in themselves than in the Galatians; they want the Galatians to adopt circumcision in order that they will not have to endure persecution for the cross of Christ.

i. If the Judaizers could persuade the Gentile Christians to accept circumcision, that might preserve the Jerusalem church and Judean churches from being linked with uncircumcised Gentiles.

ii. Recall Paul's statement in **5:1 -- 11 But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed**; but can we also fail to have the right attitude toward the cross of Christ?

iii. We are prone to look at the cross (and the crucifixion) in a sentimental way – we wear crosses on our lapels or chains around our necks.

a. But to the first-century citizen, the cross was not a beautiful piece of jewelry; it was the lowest form of death and the ultimate in humiliation.

b. The proper Roman citizen would never mention the cross in polite conversation – it stood for rejection and shame.

iv. When Paul gave himself to and trusted Christ, he identified himself with the cross and took the consequences.

a. To the Jew the cross was a stumbling block, and to the Gentile it was foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18-31).

b. The Judaizers, emphasizing circumcision rather than crucifixion, won many converts; theirs was a popular religion because it avoided the shame of the cross.

v. The word “force” in v. 12 (ASV), carries with it the idea of strong persuasion, to the point of force; in Gal. 2:14, the same Greek word is translated in the ASV as “compel.”

a. While it may not mean to force against one’s will, it is still a strong word – it indicates that the Judaizers were great persuaders; they had a “sales talk” that convinced the Galatian believers that legalism was the way for them.

b. Whenever Paul presented God’s Word, it was in truth and sincerity, and he used no oratorical tricks or debater’s skills (See 1 Cor. 2:1-5 and 2 Cor. 4:1-5 to see how Paul presented God’s Word to his listeners.

c. PAUL WAS NOT A POLITITION; HE WAS AN AMBASSADOR!

vi. Should you wish to describe the Judaizers, “hypocrites” is an appropriate word – they want you to submit to the Law, but they themselves did not and could not obey the law (v. 13).

a. The Judaizers belonged to the same group as the Pharisees about whom Jesus said, “They say and do not” (Matt. 23:3).

b. Of course, Paul is not suggesting that the Judaizers should keep the Law, because keeping the Law is neither possible nor necessary.

c. Rather, he is condemning them for their dishonesty; they had no intention of keeping the Law, even if they could.

d. Their reverence for the law was only a mask to cover their real goal; winning more converts to their cause.

e. Bottom line, they wanted to report more statistics and get more glory.

3. Finally, we come to vv. 14-16; Paul continues to come back to the cross; he has nothing of which to boast, except in the Lord Jesus Christ, “by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

i. Recall Gal. 2:21: “...if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought” – the wounds of Calvary certainly make Christ a “marked Man,” but those wounds mean liberty to those who will trust Him.

ii. The Judaizers boasted in circumcision; but Paul boasted in a crucified and risen Savior – he gloried in the cross!

a. This certainly doesn’t mean that he gloried in the brutality or suffering of the cross.

b. He was not looking at the cross as a piece of wood on which a criminal died’

c. He was looking at the cross of Christ and glorying in it.

4. Why would Paul glory in the Cross?

i. First. Jesus was mentioned at least 45 times in the Galatian letter, which means that one third of the verses contain some reference to Him; the person of Jesus Christ captivated Paul, and it was Christ who made the Cross glorious to him.

a. The Judaizers did not glory in the Cross, and the reason was because they did not glory in Christ.

b. It was Moses – and themselves – who got the glory.

c. They did not really know the Person of the Cross.

ii. Paul knew the power of the Cross.

a. For Paul, the Cross meant liberty from self (Gal. 2:20), from the flesh (Gal. 5:24), and from the world (Gal. 6:14).

b. In the death and resurrection of Christ, the power of God is released to give believers deliverance and victory – it is no longer we who live; it is Christ who lives in us and through us.

c. As we yield to Christ, we have victory over the world and over the flesh.

d. There is certainly no power in the Law to give a man victory over self, over the flesh, or over the Law; quite the contrary, the Law appeals to the human ego (Look what I've done for God), and encourages the flesh to work.

e. And the world doesn't care if we are religious just so long as the Cross is left out.

f. In fact, the world approves of religion – apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

g. So, the Judaizer inflates the ego, and pleases the world; the true Christian crucifies all three - self, flesh, and the law.

iii. Paul knew the purpose of the Cross – to bring into the world a new people of God.

a. For centuries, the nation of Israel had been the people of God, and the Law had been their way of life, all of which was preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ (Gal. 4:1-7).

b. Now that Christ had come and finished His great work of redemption, God had set aside the nation of Israel and brought into the work a “new creation” and a new nation, and it is called “the family of God.”

c. While God has finished with the nation of Israel, He still pleads for them and all of His creation to once more be

gathered together as God's people, bowing before, surrendering to, and obeying the will of God and of Jesus Christ His Son, the Messiah, from the new birth to Christ's coming again, to bring God's children home'

d. Until the Lord returns, God is calling out for both Jews and Gentiles to be "a people for his name" (Acts 15:13b-14), and in Christ there are no racial or national distinctions (Gal 3:17-29).

5. The bottom line is that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, BUT A NEW CREATION (v. 15)!

i. Believers today are not Abraham's children in the flesh, but they are "Abraham's seed" through faith in Jesus Christ.

a. Now that Christ has come and finished His work of redemption, God has set aside the nation of Israel and brought into the world a "new creation."

b. What a rebuke to the Judaizers.

!. They wanted to take the church back into Old Testament Law, when that Law could not even be kept by the nation of Israel.

!!. That nation was set aside to make way for God's new people – it's called the church.

ii. V. 16 has a great blessing for those who faithfully follow Jesus: **“And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.”**

6. VV. 17-18 – Paul is not claiming that he bore the wounds of Calvary on his body – rather he is affirming that he has suffered for Christ’s sake (something the Judaizers never did), and he had on his body the scars to prove it.

i. When you read 2 Cor. 11:18-33, you have no difficulty understanding this claim of his, for in many ways and in many places Paul suffered physically for Christ.

a. In one sense, Paul was “branded” for Jesus Christ – it was not a temporary mark that could be removed, but a permanent mark that he would take to his grave.

b. It was a practice in Paul’s day to brand slaves, so everyone would know who the owner was; Paul was the slave of Jesus Christ, and he wore His mark to prove it.

ii. So Paul comes to the end of his letter; and he closes just the way he began, “GRACE.”

iii. Not the “Law of Moses,” but THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOUR SPIRIT, BROTHERS. AMEN.

