

“...Unto The Churches  
Of Galatia”

**A COMMENTARY ON  
PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS**

Copyright © 2004

by  
Brewer Publications

All rights are reserved by the publisher. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without the expressed written consent of the publisher. For more information, address requests to,

Brewer Publications  
308 South Oklahoma  
Elk City, Oklahoma 73644

Typeset by Brewer Publications  
Printed In The U.S.A. By Morris Publishing  
3212 East Highway 30  
Kearney, NE 68847  
1-800-650-7888

# Dedication



## To The Memory Of W. R. Craig...

...at whose feet I sat when I was very young. More than anything else, Billy knew the power of the gospel which he tirelessly preached for most of his 79 years and his greatest work was training young men to preach it also. I was but 24 years old when he became Paul to my Timothy almost 50 years ago. He was my confidant, friend, mentor, and beloved brother in Christ who cried over my sins and rejoiced at my repentance. He loved the Lord, the faith once delivered, and the church for which Jesus died. I loved him much, I loved him long, I love him still, and cherish his influence on my life. "He, being dead, yet speaketh."

## And To Sarah Kelly Craig...

...whose love and devotion to the Lord, her husband, W. R. Craig, and her son, Pat, exemplified all that is best in the soul and character of spiritual Israel's sweetest mothers. Her influence still lives in her son and in the Brewer family who considered her a cherished part of our own for nearly five decades.

# Author's Preface

A commentary is just that—the author's comments upon the Bible. The Bible says what it says regardless of what I *think* it says, and God always *means* what He says regardless of what anyone *thinks* He means. The conclusions I have drawn in this study spring not from my own subjective reasoning, feelings or “think-sos,” but from my study of God's objective Truth. This commentary is based on the King James Version. It was this old Bible which planted the church on the North American continent, which I learned as a child and from which I have preached all of my life. It has stood the test of time and criticism and I abominate and detest the proliferation of so-called “new versions” of the Bible in the last four decades.

The Bible is so simple a child can understand it, but so profoundly deep that the richest and greatest minds of the ages will never plumb its depths. It would be arrogant and delusional for me to claim that this work is the final, scholarly tome on Galatians. I make no claim to “deep scholarship,” nor do I claim to have broken any “new ground.” This work is neither exhaustive nor definitive, but simply the result of my study of Paul's epistle to the churches of Galatia. It is my hope that it will be used as a springboard for further study of the word of God, and if it aids one soul in coming to a better understanding of the truth, then my purpose will have been accomplished.

I express deep and profound gratitude to my faithful brethren who critiqued this manuscript and offered their insights and suggestions while it was in preparation. They are Harrell Davidson of Obion, Tennessee; Gary Colley of Collierville, Tennessee; Robert Taylor of Ripley, Tennessee; Wayne Price of McLoud, Oklahoma; and Marion Fox of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. These men are my dear friends. But more than that, they are beloved and faithful brethren in Christ whose study of the word of God and fidelity to Christ I highly respect and esteem.

And, most of all, I am grateful to Sherlene, the wife of my youth and faithful Christian and mother, whose steadfast devotion to Christ and her family has always been a constant source of encouragement, and without whom I would not want to remain on this earth. Thank you, my dearest, for helping me in our journey to heaven.

Elk City, Oklahoma  
16 March 2004

# Foreword

The pure Gospel of our Lord and Saviour needs to be articulated anew in every generation. Not because there is anything new under the sun, but because every generation needs someone who is equipped that will take the time and set down in order these precious truths. This is not to minimize those ancients of the past who have, with pen in hand, written precious words in commentaries such as this that have guided many of us through the years. Once, as a young preacher, I consulted some of these works, some of which are quoted in this volume, almost weekly with the earnest longing for updated material from a little different perspective. The late brother Franklin Camp, a personal friend and confidant, wrote two volumes entitled *Old Truths In New Robes* because he believed that the Gospel must be adapted to each generation.

Brother Jerry C. Brewer, of Elk City, Oklahoma, has written this commentary on the tersest epistle that the apostle Paul wrote. One in which Paul, by Inspiration, had little of a congratulatory nature to write to the Galatians. Jerry has lovingly and kindly produced this work over a period of time that is a masterpiece in every respect. His love and respect for the late brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr. is evident as he quoted from the illustrious pen of this intellectual giant of the past, as well as a host of others in this work.

Brother Brewer is well qualified to present this work to the brotherhood. He studied Bible at the Elk City School of Preaching where he sat at the feet of some of the all time greats in biblical scholarship. He also earned a degree in Journalism from the University of Oklahoma, at Norman, Oklahoma, thus he knows what to say and how to say it. Additionally, he has been preaching the Gospel for many long years and he is unashamed and unafraid to proclaim the whole “counsel of God.”

Every chapter is a magnum opus! From the “certified Gospel” in chapter one to Christian duties in chapter 6, he excelled. His excellent understanding of the Law of Moses and the faith of Abraham in chapter 3, and the clear precise way he conveyed his clear thoughts stand out. Chapter five will live on and on as he demonstrates with Scripture after Scripture the truth regard-

ing the Holy Spirit. The nature and work of the Holy Spirit has been somewhat problematic in every age. However, in the year of our Lord, 2004, there is a vast chasm among brethren. We are on the brink of facing an apostasy on this subject.

Therefore, it is without reservation that I commend this work to every brother and sister, neighbor and friend through out the entire world. Brother Jerry C. Brewer has done all things well in this great Commentary on Galatians.

***Harrell Davidson  
Obion, Tennessee  
March 10, 2004***

# Outline And Table Of Contents

Introduction.....vi

## Section I.

### **Paul's Defense Of His Apostolic Authority (1:1-2:21)**

A. Salutation (1:1-5).....	1
B. His Rebuke For Their Departure From The Gospel (1:6-10).....	12
C. His Former Life And Call To Apostleship (1:11-17).....	14
D. His First Visit To The Apostles In Jerusalem (1:18-24).....	18
E. His Second Visit To Jerusalem (2:1-10).....	21
F. Paul's Rebuke Of Peter At Antioch (2:11-21).....	28

## Section II.

### **The Gospel Is All-Sufficient To Salvation (3:1-4:31)**

A. Rebuke For Abandoning The Only Means Of Salvation (3:1-10).....	35
B. The Law's Inability To Save (3:11-18).....	43
C. The Parenthetical Nature Of The Law (3:19-29).....	46
D. From Servanthood To Sonship (4:1-7).....	50
E. An Excursus Appealing To Past Association (4:8-20).....	57
F. The Law And The Gospel In Allegory (4:21-31).....	65

## Section III.

### **Duties Enjoined By Freedom In Christ (5:1-6:18)**

A. Embracing The Law Abandons Freedom In Christ (5:1-12).....	70
B. Freedom In Christ Is Not A License To Sin (5:13-26).....	83
C. Our Duties Of Mutual Care And Service (6:1-5).....	116
D. Duty To Support Teachers And Render Benevolence (6:6-10).....	123
E. Final Rebuke Of Judaizers In Galatia (6:11-18).....	128
Works Cited.....	132

## Introduction The Province of Galatia

The region of Galatia was where Paul preached on his first evangelistic tour. On that trip, he preached and met opposition from Jews in the cities of Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium (Acts 13-14). Galatia was populated by a Celtic people, known as Gauls, who had invaded Greece from the North in about 300 B.C. After a time of independence in which the Roman government recognized their kings, they became a part of the Roman empire during the reign of Augustus Caesar.

In Paul's day, the Roman province of Galatia included the old kingdom of Galatia proper, to the north, and also parts of Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Phrygia, which adjoined to the south. Since the letter clearly implies that the churches were all founded in the same general period, Paul could not have been writing to both areas. It is now generally agreed that he was writing to the Southern Galatian churches; Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch, and others in the vicinity. (Martin, p. 452).

### The People of Galatia

The Galatians are described as "susceptible of quick impressions and sudden changes with a fickleness equal to their courage and enthusiasm, and a constant liability to that disunion which is the fruit of excessive vanity" (Conybeare & Howson, 212). These characteristics are seen in Paul's words to them. They had readily received the gospel and would have "plucked out their eyes" for him, but then "so soon removed" from that gospel at the behest of false teachers. They had begun to "run well," but then were "hindered" and "bewitched," and were as anxious to "bite and devour" one another as they were to exchange the gospel for another which was "not another."

The readiness of the Galatians to exchange allegiances was seen early in their history when they came southward. Conybeare and Howson say, "They hired themselves out as

mercenary soldiers. They were the royal guards of the kings of Syria and the Mamelukes of the Ptolemies in Egypt” (p. 213). This propensity was apparently manifested also in their fickleness regarding the gospel and their readiness to listen to false teachers who called Paul’s apostolic authority into question. Of one quick to change without considering solid evidence, it has been said that, “His belief is whatever he reads last.” That seems to be the case with the people of Galatia, or the Gauls.

For the ‘*Galatia*’ of the New Testament was really the ‘*Gaul*’ of the East. The ‘*Epistle to the Galatians*’ would more literally and more correctly be called the ‘*Epistle to the Gauls*.’ When Livy, in his account of the Roman campaigns in Galatia, speaks of its inhabitants, he always calls them ‘*Gauls*.’ When the Greek historians speak of the inhabitants of ancient France the word they use is ‘*Galatians*.’ The two terms are merely the Greek and Latin forms of the same ‘barbarian’ appellation. (Conybeare & Howson, 212).

These fickle barbarians had a propensity for vacillation and sudden changes of their minds. That was graphically illustrated in their reception of Paul and Barnabas as gods after they healed a crippled man at Lystra (Acts 14:8-18), but when Jews from Antioch and Iconium who opposed Paul’s preaching came to Lystra these Galatians, who had earlier hailed Paul as a deity, were persuaded to stone him and leave him for dead (Acts 14:19). It was that kind of vacillating nature which could easily be turned from the gospel, as Paul addressed in his Galatian epistle. It is our conviction that this epistle was written to those churches which were established on the first preaching tour of Paul and Barnabas through the cities of Attalia, Perga, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Derbe and Lystra in the southern region of Galatia, as recorded by the inspired Luke in Acts 13 and 14.

## I. Paul's Defense Of His Apostolic Authority (1:1-2:21)

### A. Salutation (1:1-5)

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

**Verses 1-2.** The parenthetical statement in verse one is significant. It begins an immediate defense of Paul's apostolic authority which was called in question by Judaizing teachers among the Galatian churches. That authority was not only the basis of *their* faithfulness to the gospel which Paul preached, but of all subsequent generations of Christians. Their salvation depended on the veracity of his claims as an apostle of Jesus Christ. If he was not an apostle, the Judaizing teachers were right. But if his claims were true, the Judaizers were false teachers and the Galatians were in danger of losing their souls. The same is true of men today. If the apostolic claims of the New Testament are not true, then our faith is vain.

The apostles were to be forever the teachers of the world. It was necessary, therefore, that what they taught was infallible. That did not mean they were infallible in their personal conduct, as will be seen in Peter's actions at Antioch, but that what they taught was the infallible word of God. Jesus promised that they would be infallibly guided when they were brought before magistrates. "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. 10:19-20). And on the night He was betrayed, Christ promised that He would send the Comforter—the Holy Spirit—to guide them into

all truth and to recall to their minds all He had taught them (John 14:26; 16:13).

Christ also metaphorically referred to their apostolic authority as His spokesmen when He said, “Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28). That period which Christ called “the regeneration” referred to the gospel dispensation in which He would sit upon David’s throne and the “judging the twelve tribes of Israel” by the apostles would be concurrent with His reign. Their words would be the standard by which the people of God—called metaphorically, “the twelve tribes of Israel”—would be judged and regulated until Christ delivers the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). Hence their authority in the church would extend throughout the gospel dispensation by the word which they delivered in the first century. That word which is the very Word of God, is unchanged and unchangeable and through it the apostles of Christ wield authority as judges of “the twelve tribes of Israel”—the church—today.

They who wield this authority from Christ are a special class of men, as the word *apostle* indicates. Like many New Testament words, there is no special religious significance inherent in it. It is a combination of two Greek words—*apo* which means “away (from something near)” and *stello*, meaning “remove one’s self, withdraw one’s self, to depart” (Strong, 14; Thayer, 587). Rendered into English, the word *apostle* means “one sent,” i.e. one sent on a particular mission with authority and credentials to perform that for which he is sent. Therefore, one who was an apostle of Christ was one sent by Christ for a particular purpose and endowed with authority to accomplish that purpose. That concept is described by another word—*ambassador*—exclusively applied to Christ’s apostles by Paul himself. “Now

then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). An *ambassador* is one endowed by a sovereign power to speak in that power's behalf with the ambassador's words carrying the same weight as if the sovereign head of state himself were speaking.

In his second epistle to the Corinthians, Paul also referred to himself and the other apostles as "earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7). In that letter, Paul also defended his apostleship, saying they had been given the "earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 2:22). This "earnest of the Spirit" is an apostolic term that refers to no one today, and is connected with Paul's statement that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4:7). At one time, the gospel was in the *inspired man* and that's Paul's meaning in using the term "earthen vessels" to describe the apostles. But now we have God's word in the *inspired Book*. Consequently, there are no "earthen vessels" alive today. Those were the apostles who had the "earnest of the Spirit." That Paul referred to apostolic inspiration in the use of these terms can be seen from his use of pronouns in the Second Corinthian letter when he said, "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God: who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1:21-22). That the words "anointed," "sealed," and "earnest" apply to Paul and the other apostles is seen in the contrasting pronouns, "us," "our," and "you" in this passage. The apostles were anointed in Holy Spirit baptism to guide them into all truth (John 16:12-13). The "earnest of the Spirit" was the truth in the inspired man, and the "seal" of the Spirit were the miraculous manifestations of the Spirit in them to confirm their preaching. When Paul said, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels," he didn't refer to the preaching of men today, but to the truth that was in the apostles through Holy Spirit baptism. He

uses the pronouns “us” in 2 Corinthians 5:5, “we” in 2 Corinthians 5:11, “us” in 2 Corinthians 5:18, and “we” in 2 Corinthians 5:20, in reference to the apostles as “ambassadors” for Christ. In all of these passages, Paul refers to inspiration in himself. He is not describing men today. There are no living “ambassadors for Christ” nor “earthen vessels” today. Those terms applied exclusively to men in the age of inspiration.

The application of the terms “earnest” and “seal” to the Holy Spirit’s work belong to the apostolic period when the gospel was being revealed in parts and portions and define two necessary aspects of the gospel scheme of redemption—revelation and confirmation. Purposed from eternity and hidden beneath the types and shadows of the old covenant, the scheme of redemption was a mystery that is now revealed.

...how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words; whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. (Eph. 3:3-4).

The word *mystery* in the above passage does not mean “mysterious” or “mystical.” It means unknowable through human reasoning and wisdom.

The word *mystery* in Revelation comports with the same meaning of the word as used elsewhere in the New Testament - that is, the spiritual truths not discoverable by human reason; understandable, but hidden from human knowledge until revealed. The word has the connotation of secret doctrine, hence prior to revelation it was a hidden thing; but when revealed, it was brought within human intelligence and understanding. ...The word *mystery* did not mean *mysterious*. It meant that which could not be known until it was made known, or revealed, and it meant the gospel plan of salvation. The doctrine of the New Testament is, in this sense, called a mystery. (Wallace, *The Book of Revelation*, 82).

Undiscoverable by human wisdom, God's plan could be known only by revelation which required inspiration, and inspiration required confirmation. The scheme of redemption was revealed in words, (1 Cor. 2:10-13), and confirmed by signs and wonders. (Heb. 2:1-4). Inspiration was the means God used to reveal his plan and miraculous gifts of the Spirit were to confirm that those through whom it was revealed spoke the word of God. This was the function of the Holy Spirit whose work of revelation and confirmation is expressed in the terms "seal" and "earnest."

The "earnest of the Spirit" relates to those gifts of partial revelation of which Paul spoke in 1 Corinthians 13 and is used only in 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5 and Ephesians 1:14. From the Greek word *arrhabon*, it is defined as, "a pledge, i.e. part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest: - earnest." (Strong, 16). That which was given as an "earnest" was not the Holy Spirit, but that which the Spirit gave and that was partial knowledge of God's word. The earnest of the Spirit constituted a partial revelation until the "redemption of the purchased possession" which was the completion of divine revelation.

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

The partial revelation of the gospel, that was imparted to Christians in the first century, was an earnest or pledge of the full revelation to come. That partial knowledge would cease when those parts were gathered into the whole, which Paul styled "that which is perfect." The revelation we now possess in the New Testament is the sum of the parts extant in the apostolic age. The word "perfect" in 1 Corinthians 13:10 means "completeness" and when the parts of the mystery were gathered into the whole, the full price was

paid of which the earnest was a pledge.

The Holy Spirit *was not* the earnest in the hearts of men in the first century, except in a metonymical sense where the cause was put for the effect. When Paul said God had “given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,” he referred to that which the Spirit revealed, not the Spirit himself. Neither is the Holy Spirit an earnest in the hearts of Christians today. Many who so teach contend that the Spirit constitutes a “down payment” or “pledge” from God of eternal salvation. But the full purchase price of anything is paid in the same currency as the down payment. If the Holy Spirit is the pledge or earnest of salvation, then God is making his down payment with a currency other than that which he will issue as the balance of the purchase. Besides, to say that God must make a “down-payment” on salvation is tantamount to saying we cannot trust him to fulfill his pledge to us!

When Paul said God had “given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,” (2 Cor. 1:22), he distinguished between himself and the Corinthians. The pronoun “you” in this passage refers to the Corinthians and the pronouns “us” and “our” refer to Paul. The anointing of the Holy Spirit was Holy Spirit baptism which the apostles received. He made the same distinction in the Ephesian epistle.

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:11-14).

The Ephesians were sealed with the gift of tongues and given the earnest of prophecy when Paul laid hands on

them after they were baptized. (Acts 19:1-6). Paul explains the purpose of the earnest and seal of the Spirit in the Ephesians in the following statement:

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened... (Eph. 1:15-18).

The earnest of the Spirit was revelation which came through Holy Spirit baptism, and the seal of the Spirit was the confirmation of that revelation. When gifts of revelation were imparted through the laying on of the apostles' hands, they were accompanied by miraculous powers for confirmation. The genuineness of the earnest of the Spirit, or the gospel that resided in inspired men, was attested by the Spirit's seal of "signs and wonders and divers miracles" upon them. From the Greek *sphragizo*, the word "seal" is defined as, "to stamp (with a signet or private mark) for security or preservation...to keep secret, to attest... The stamp impressed (as a mark of privacy or genuineness), lit. or fig. : - seal." (Strong, 70). This seal or sign was a visible attestation of the authority by which inspired men spoke. Those who claim this seal for Christians today cannot produce any visible sign of it. Their argument is the same one made for the direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit—"I know it because the Bible says I have it." But what is the purpose of a seal of authority? The great seal of a state attests to and confirms the genuineness of documents issued by the state's authority and is visible to all who read them. The seal of the Spirit were the signs worked by inspired men of the first century and visibly attested to their authority from God. The seal of the Spirit was not some invisible thing placed upon them for God's benefit. Why would God have to attest ownership of Christians to himself? Does he not know

them that are his without having some sort of mark placed upon them? The visible seal of the earnest of the Spirit was what Paul called “the signs of an apostle.” (2 Cor. 12:12). That was the sign or seal of his apostleship.

Thus, the apostles of Christ were special ambassadors sent by Christ to carry His message to the world. In so doing, He endued them with authority to speak in His name by sending the Holy Spirit upon them (Acts 2:1-4) and giving them miraculous powers as credentials of their calling. The apostles were, therefore, special representatives of Christ, personally called and commissioned by Him, and through whom the word of God was revealed and preached in the world. Paul had the same authority and credentials possessed by the other apostles (2 Cor. 12:12) and was not inferior to them in any way (2 Cor. 11:5). Like the other apostles, he was an “ambassador,” a “witness” of Christ, an “earthen vessel” containing the truth of God, and he could impart the “seal and earnest of the Spirit.” Paul was an apostle in every sense described by these terms. There has not been a living man to whom those terms applied since the apostles walked the earth and, despite Catholic and Mormon claims, the apostles of Jesus Christ had no successors. The apostolic office which Paul and the others occupied was, and remains, unique.

The apostles of Christ originally consisted of the twelve, which included Judas Iscariot. But after Judas fell and took his own life, their number consisted of the other eleven plus Matthias who was chosen to take Judas’ place. The choice of Matthias was recorded by Luke in Acts one and the qualifications of an apostle are there delineated by Peter. “Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection” (Acts 1:21-22). The choice

of Matthias as an apostle of Christ was made by God and, like Paul, he was not one of the original twelve.

That Paul had not accompanied with the Lord during His personal ministry, and was therefore not an apostle, was probably one of the objections lodged against him by false teachers. It's true that Paul's conversion and call to the apostolic office came some time after the establishment of the church in Acts two. H. Leo Boles notes that the church was confined to Jerusalem for about the first three to five years before the disciples were scattered upon the death of Stephen.

...after the martyrdom of Stephen, the persecuting spirit, which had already so often attempted to silence the apostles, became more decided and even unrelenting...It is probable that the events took place in A. D. 37; this was the year in which Tiberius died and Caligula succeeded him (Boles, 122, 123).

Thus, it was probably at least three years after the church was established that Paul was called to be an apostle, (Acts 26:14-18), but that special call did not negate the authenticity of his apostleship. That's why he called himself, "one born out of due time," saying he was the "last" witness of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:8). Though his call was special and unlike that of the original twelve, his apostleship was nevertheless genuine and his inspired teaching was as authoritative as any other of the apostles, for he too had *seen* the Risen Lord.

The forceful language of the first two verses of the Galatian epistle are designed to negate immediately the spurious charges of Paul's opponents that he was not a true apostle of Jesus Christ, but had gained his knowledge of the gospel from human sources. *Human* authority was *not* the source of Paul's gospel—not of men—nor did he receive it through the teaching of human agency—neither *by* man.

After naming himself as the writer of the letter, Paul in-

cludes others in the salutation in verse two. Who these were is not known, but if the Galatian epistle was written from Corinth in 57 or 58 A.D., as is supposed by Lipscomb and Shepherd (Lipscomb, 183) at least one of those would probably have been Timothy. Suffice it to say that Paul was in the company of faithful co-workers and he subjoins their salutation to his.

It is further noteworthy that Paul does not address these churches as he does others in the New Testament. Even the members of the Corinthian church with all their corruption were addressed as “saints” as were those at Ephesus, Philippi, and Colossae. But the address in this letter is simply, “Unto the churches of Galatia.”

**Verses 3-5.** “Grace be to you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,” was Paul’s customary salutation which he used in his other epistles. The only variation on this salutation is found in the epistles to Timothy and Titus in which he says, “Grace, *mercy*, and peace...” In all the other epistles he joins God and Christ in the extension of grace and peace—two words describing the scheme of redemption revealed in Christ. The word *mercy* is elliptical—not placed in the text of this letter, but understood. God’s grace is the fountain of His mercy which was demonstrated toward man through Jesus Christ, and peace with God issues from man’s appropriation of that grace (Eph. 2:8-10).

This “peace” from God and Christ is that which the angels announced at Christ’s birth. When they said, “glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men,” (Lk. 2:14), they referred not to civil or political peace between nations, but the peace that comes from God when man’s sins are remitted through the blood of Christ. It is that of which Paul wrote when he said, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; By whom also we have access by faith into

this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1-2). The mercy of God extended to man through Christ’s atonement is man’s avenue to reconciliation and peace with God.

Verses four and five conclude the sentence begun in verse three—the kind of complex sentence which characterized Paul’s writings. “...who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” God was willing to send His Son to die for us (John 3:16) and Christ willingly gave Himself (Rom. 5:6-10; Phil. 2:5-8) that we might be delivered from “this present evil world.” The sacrifice of Christ was for the purpose of delivering us from our sins and fitting us to live eternally in the presence of God. Without that singular sacrifice of God’s Son, we would be hopelessly and inexorably lost and without hope in the world.

## B. His Rebuke For Their Departure From The Gospel (1:6-10)

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

**Verses 6-7.** Without further preliminaries, Paul expresses his wonder and amazement that they had so soon been diverted from the gospel which he preached and had embraced a perversion thereof. They had not embraced “another gospel” because there is only *one* gospel. They had been bewitched by Judaizing teachers who enjoined certain aspects of the law—specifically the rite of circumcision—upon the newly converted Gentiles. Their teachings had the effect of diluting the gospel and thus perverting it. They had embraced “another” gospel of a *different* kind rather than “another” of the same kind. My friend, Wayne Price, says this “better renders the use of two different words for ‘another’ in the original language.” Their hybrid gospel, produced by intermingling certain parts of the law of Moses with the gospel of Christ, was powerless to save. It was not another gospel, but a perverted version of the pure gospel Paul had received by revelation and preached to them. As salt added to pure water renders it powerless to quench thirst, so error added to the gospel renders it powerless to save. Error mingled with Truth always results in error and there was never a case of Truth advancing or triumphing through compromise or mixing with error.

**Verses 8-9.** The finality of divine revelation through the apostles of Jesus Christ is forcefully affirmed in these verses—so forcefully affirmed that Paul repeats it for emphasis. The apostles were guided into *all truth* (John 16:13). That leaves no room for latter day revelations such as those

claimed by Joseph Smith in the Book of Mormon or Muhammed in the Qu'ran. Neither do these verses admit of so-called "revelations" to any preacher in our day. Jude's inspired book affirms that the faith has been "once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Paul not only excludes modern revelations through men, but says that even angels are accursed if they "preach any other gospel unto you." Thus is Joseph Smith's claim of revelation from an angel named Moroni refuted. Even if such an angel had existed and given Smith that revelation, that angel is accursed.

**Verse 10.** Paul's questions in this verse are rhetorical. Of course, he didn't seek to persuade men. The word "persuade" means to gain favor, and he never modified his preaching to gain the favor of those to whom he preached. Unlike modern preachers, Paul never considered the "felt needs" of his hearers. He knew exactly *what* they needed—the gospel of Christ—and *why* they needed it—for salvation (Rom. 1:16-17)—and that was the only message he preached. He sought God's favor, rather than man's (1 Cor. 2:1-2).

The answer to his second question—"Or do I seek to please men?"—is obviously, "no." Had he sought to please the men who opposed his gospel, and thus gain their favor, he would not have followed Christ, but reverted back to the dead carcass of Judaism from whence he had been converted. It is obvious from his course of life that if he had sought to please men he certainly would have followed a different course from that which brought him not only opposition, but also persecution and physical injury.

### C. His Former Life And Call To Apostleship (1:11-17)

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

**Verse 11.** Paul is emphatic in his “certification” that the gospel he preached was not received from men, but by direct revelation from Jesus Christ. In the same vein of defending his apostolic authority, he would later write to the Corinthians that he was “not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles” (2 Cor. 11:5). The word “certify” is from *gnorizo* which is derived from *ginosko*. The latter means “perceive, be resolved, can speak, be sure, understand,” meaning more than simply “knowing.” *Gnorizo* means to “certify, declare, make known, give to understand,” and carries the idea of making something known with full assurance. Paul preached a certified gospel—certified by “the signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12). They could be fully assured that his message was from Christ, and this is his thesis in defense of his apostolic authority.

**Verses 13-14.** Paul draws a contrast in these verses between his former life and that which he now lived. He was formerly the most zealous of Jewish persecutors against the church. In fact, our first introduction to him as Saul of Tarsus was at the stoning of Stephen when Stephen's murderers laid their clothes down at Paul's feet and Paul con-

sented to Stephen's death (Acts 7:58; 8:1). Forever afterward, this was a painful memory for Paul who made mention of his culpability in Acts 22:20 and in First Timothy 1:12-15.

So zealous and sincere was Paul the persecutor, that "beyond measure" he persecuted the church. The phrase "beyond measure" is translated from *hyperbole*. It is from this word that we derive our English word "hyperbole" which describes an exaggerated form of speech that is excessive. The Greek term means "supereminence, abundance (far more) exceeding, beyond (out of) measure," (Strong, 74). Paul's persecution of the church was obsessive—one which sought to fully eradicate Christianity from his world. So excessive was his persecutory work that he stopped at nothing—not even murder—in his efforts to stamp out the religion of Jesus Christ. In persecuting the church beyond measure, he said he also "wasted it." The word "wasted" is from *portheo* which means "to sack, to ravage, to destroy" (Strong, p. 59). His intent was not merely to weaken or relegate the church to a minor position in the Jewish world but to destroy it completely, and this he attempted by arresting, imprisoning, and killing those who followed the Lord. That sordid work is described by Luke in Acts, chapters 8 and 9.

The eminent and active agent in this persecution was Saul. ...We cannot help observing how frequently strong expressions concerning his share in the injustice and cruelty now perpetrated are multiplied in the Scriptures. In Luke's narrative, in Paul's own speeches, in his earlier and later Epistles, the subject recurs again and again. He 'made havoc of the church,' invading the sanctuaries of domestic life, 'entering into every house;' and those whom he thus tore from their homes he 'committed to prison... And not only did men thus suffer at his hands, but women also—a fact three times repeated as a great aggravation of his cruelty. These persecuted people were scourged—'often' scourged—'in many synagogues.' Nor was Stephen the only one who suffered

death, as we may infer from the apostle's own confession. And what was worse than scourging or than death itself, he used every effort to make them 'blaspheme' that holy Name whereby they were called (Conybeare & Howson, 80).

It was Paul's unparalleled zeal and obsession with eradicating Christianity that "profited" him in the Jews' religion. A member of the strictest sect of the Jews, the Pharisees, (Acts 26:5; Phil. 3:5), Paul advanced in prominence beyond his peers in the political and social structure of Judaism. This was because he was 'exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.' "Fathers" here is not a reference to Abraham, Moses, or any of the worthies of the Old Testament. Paul uses the phrase "my fathers" instead of "our fathers." His reference was probably to his teachers among the Pharisees, among whom the chief was Gamaliel at whose feet Paul had been brought up in the strictest sense of Pharisaic traditions (Acts 22:3). Neither the ancient fathers of the old economy, nor the law of Moses demanded such zeal against the Lord's Anointed. In fact, the Old Testament prophets had all pointed to Christ and His work of redemption. The "fathers" of whom Paul speaks here are those Pharisees under whom he was tutored and whose "traditions" were condemned by Jesus in Matthew 15:1-9 and Matthew 23.

**Verses 15-17.** Here now, Paul contrasts his present life with his former. God had separated him from his mother's womb, but he contrasts this with his call to apostleship. The separation from his mother's womb simply means the same God Who is the Author of physical life, also called Paul to salvation (spiritual life) and apostleship by His grace. This has no reference to any calling from the time of his birth, but only that both his physical and spiritual life derived from the same Source.

Paul's call to salvation by grace took place in the same manner as our call to salvation by the grace of God. To

Titus, Paul wrote that “...the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Tit. 2:11-12). Paul’s call to salvation came through the gospel, as did ours (2 Thess. 2:14). It was *told* him what to do by Ananias in Damascus. He was not saved on the Damascus road, but upon his obedience to the gospel as Ananias preached in Acts 22:16. It was that same grace of God that also called Paul to apostleship—“To reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the heathen.”

“Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood,” is Paul’s declaration that his knowledge of the gospel was not transmitted to him through human agency. As an apostle of Jesus Christ, he received the same thing the other apostles received on Pentecost—power from the Holy Spirit to be a witness for Christ (Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4; 1 Cor. 15:1-10). Not only did Paul not confer with human teachers to receive the gospel, but he did not even go to Jerusalem to visit the other apostles. He went, rather, into Arabia and afterward returned to Damascus. Thus, there was no opportunity for him to receive any teaching from the other apostles in Jerusalem at that time. In fact, it was not until three years later that he went to Jerusalem, and then only for 15 days. This indicates that his knowledge of the gospel was independent of the other apostles, and confirms his claim of a divine call to the apostolic office.

#### D. His First Visit To Apostles In Jerusalem (1:18-24)

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which he once destroyed. And they glorified God in me.

**Verses 18-20.** This first visit to Jerusalem was after he returned from Arabia and three years after he was converted. The account of this visit is in Acts 9:23-31. Luke's abbreviated account does not relate the trip to Arabia, but the phrase "after many days were fulfilled," (Acts 9:23), indicates a long period of time, which would probably include the Arabian hiatus, his return to, and subsequent preaching in, Damascus. With the Jews at Damascus determined to kill their former leader in the persecution of Christians, the brethren there helped Paul to escape, at which time he made his way back to Jerusalem. This visit lasted about two weeks, and Paul spoke with none of the apostles except Peter and James, "the Lord's brother." Paul had already preached Christ as the Son of God in the synagogues in Damascus and confounded the Jews, (Acts 9:20-22), preaching the word of God which had been revealed to him *without* the tutelage of any of the other apostles. Paul's statement that, "behold, before God I lie not," is simply his assurance to the Galatians of the things which he is relating.

**Verses 21-24.** After his two week visit to Jerusalem, during which he stayed with Peter, he returned to his home region of Cilicia by way of Syria. The city of his nativity, Tarsus, was in Cilicia and that is the region in which he preached after his second visit to Jerusalem. Moreover, he says he was unknown by face to brethren in Judea. He did

not preach there and consequently had no opportunity to learn his gospel from any of those brethren. They had only *heard* that he who was once their persecutor was now preaching the faith he once sought to eradicate. Paul's statement in verse 23 that he "now preacheth the faith which he once destroyed" ought to be more closely scrutinized. What was the message Paul preached? Here it is styled "the faith," but in verse 8 he told them he had preached the gospel. Hence, the two terms are synonymous. To preach the faith is to preach the gospel.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

While the gospel which Paul preached at Corinth consisted of three fundamental facts—the death, burial and resurrection of Christ—those things did not, and do not, constitute the whole of the gospel. Paul said the Corinthians received the gospel, were saved by it, and stood in it. What did he mean by that?

The gospel of Christ is not the mere recitation of three facts. The gospel also contains commands to be obeyed (Mk. 16:15-16) and promises to be received and enjoyed. The facts of the gospel move men to obey its commands and the obedient receive its promises. That is what the Corinthians did (Acts 18:8). They were taught the facts of the gospel by Paul and were saved when they obeyed a form of that doctrine, (Rom. 6:17-18). This is done by hearing, believing and obeying the gospel.

Moreover, when Paul told these same Corinthians to, "stand fast in the faith," (1 Cor. 16:13), he meant for them to stand fast in the gospel. So "the faith" in First Corinthians

16:13 is equated with “the gospel” of First Corinthians 15:1, and in standing in it they had the assurance that their sins were forgiven and that they possessed God’s promise of eternal life to come.

After his conversion, and before he was known “by face” to the churches in Judea, Paul said those churches “...had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which he once destroyed” (Gal. 1:23). What had the Judean churches heard about Paul’s message? That he, “now preacheth the faith...” What did Paul tell the Corinthians he had preached to them? The gospel. Hence, to preach the faith of Jesus Christ is to preach the gospel of Christ and the phrase “the faith” comprehends not only the fundamental facts of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection, but every tenet of Truth revealed through Jesus Christ, and styled “the faith” in the New Testament. To stand fast in the faith is to stand fast in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to preach the faith is to preach the gospel with all of its facts, commands and promises. Every command and every promise of the gospel grows out of the basic facts of Christ’s atoning sacrifice, his burial in Joseph of Arimathea’s new tomb, and God’s declaration of His Sonship by the resurrection from the dead.

The fact that Paul had been converted to the faith of Jesus Christ and now preached it was the basis of the Judean brethren glorifying God in Paul. God is glorified only by obedience to His will. Paul himself was not the source of their glorifying God, but his obedience to the gospel and subsequent preaching of it. In His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (Jn. 17:4). God is glorified when His will is done, and that is how God was glorified in Paul.

## E. His Second Visit To Jerusalem (2:1-10)

Then fourteen years after I went again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person: for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles;) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

**Verses 1-2.** Fourteen years had intervened since Paul's first visit to Jerusalem, during which interval he had preached the gospel among the Gentiles. This was prima facie evidence that his message was independent of the other apostles, and that his revelation came from Christ without the intermediation of any of those in Jerusalem. He had not consulted with them, nor had he received instructions from them. In fact, he had preached the gospel among these very Galatians, during that interval, on his first preaching tour which was launched from the church at Antioch (Acts 13-14). Following that tour, the question of circumcision was

raised by certain Judaizing teachers who had come to Antioch from Judea (Acts 15) contending that, “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved,” (Acts 15:1), which precipitated Paul’s second visit to Jerusalem. Did the Gentiles have to be circumcised as the Law of Moses required in order to be saved?

There was no uncertainty in Paul’s mind about the question. He knew the answer and could have easily asserted his apostolic authority at that time. But he says he “went up by revelation.” That means he was instructed of the Lord—it was revealed to him that he should go up to Jerusalem. Hence, he went, not to learn from the other apostles, but to communicate “unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles” and to settle the question—the answer to which he already knew.

The fact that those “certain men” came down from Judea lent an air of credibility to their teaching. After all, they had come from Judea where the apostles were and if their teaching on circumcision came from those apostles, then it must be a part of the gospel. This question stirred a great deal of trouble in the church at Antioch and to settle it once and for all Paul was instructed to go to Jerusalem and communicate to the apostles there what he had been preaching for fourteen years among the Gentiles. Acts 15:2 says Paul and Barnabas and “certain other of them” were directed to go to Jerusalem. Among those was Titus, a Greek preacher of the gospel

Paul’s first meeting in Jerusalem with the apostles was a private one in which he reported what he had been preaching “to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.” Thus, Paul’s communication was exactly opposite from that claimed by his enemies among the churches of Galatia. He did not receive anything from the apostles at Jerusalem, but rather communicated his message “unto them,” who were “of reputation.” Those

of reputation were the apostles of Christ at Jerusalem and were recognized as such. His report to the other apostles was not to receive their approval, but to lay to rest this question about circumcision. Paul did not doubt that he was preaching the gospel of Christ, but made a report to the apostles in private before making the same report to others.

**Verses 3-5.** While Paul had Timothy circumcised among these same Galatians on his second preaching tour (Acts 16:1-3) he refused to have Titus circumcised at Jerusalem. Timothy's circumcision was not an act required by the gospel, but because Timothy's mother was a Jew. His circumcision was not a religious rite, but a matter of expediency—the practice of a custom which would have gained the favor of the Jews in those places. On the other hand, Titus was not of Jewish heritage and to compel him to be circumcised in order to be saved—as these teachers contended—would have yielded to the false doctrine which they sought to bind upon all Gentile converts. They were attempting to put new wine into old bottles—to attach certain tenets of the Law of Moses to the teaching of the gospel.

In verse 4, Paul styles these men as “false brethren,” or false teachers, who “came in privily.” Like all false teachers, they did not—at the first—openly declare their intent or their message, but worked as “grievous wolves” as Paul had told the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:29). No false teacher will march into a congregation of Christians and openly declare his intent to lead them away from the truth. Like him whom they follow, Satan's ministers are nefarious, subtle and secretive.

They came as ‘spies’ into an enemy's camp, creeping in ‘un-awares,’ that they might ascertain how far the Jewish Law had been relaxed by the Christians at Antioch, their purpose being to bring the whole church, if possible, under the ‘bondage’ of the Jewish yoke. It appears that they remained some considerable time at Antioch, gradually insinuating

or openly inculcating their opinion that the observance of the Jewish Law was *necessary to salvation*. It is very important to observe the exact form which their teaching assumed. They did not merely recommend or enjoin, for prudential reasons, the continuance of certain ceremonies in themselves indifferent, but they said, 'Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, *ye cannot be saved*.' Such a doctrine must have been instantly opposed by Paul with his utmost energy. He was always ready to go to the extreme verge of charitable concession when the question was one of peace and mutual understanding; but when the very foundations of Christianity were in danger of being undermined, when the very continuance of 'the truth of the gospel' was in jeopardy, it was impossible that he should 'give place by subjection,' even 'for an hour.'" (Conybeare & Howson, 183).

Paul's response to these false brethren was immediate and swift. The "hour" was the smallest unit of time used by the Jews. That is seen from Matthew's account of the healing of the woman with an issue of blood (Matt. 9:22). She was "made whole from that hour," meaning the instant or moment Jesus spoke the words she was healed. That's the import of Paul's statement in verse 5. He instantly opposed the false doctrine enjoined by the Judaizing teachers. There was no hesitation on his part that would have allowed them to continue to pervert the gospel and lead brethren astray, and that ought to be the reaction of every faithful elder and preacher today who faces false teachers and their teaching. To accept the teaching that Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to be saved would have brought them into bondage under the law, a subject with which Paul later deals in this epistle in the allegory of Sarah and Hagar.

**Verses 6-8.** "Those who seemed to be somewhat" in verse 6 were the leaders in the Jerusalem church, especially the apostles. The account in Acts says, "But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5). These were false brethren whom McGarvey called the "no-whats" and

who, like many people within the body of Christ today, brought along a lot of baggage from their former lives which they should have discarded. There is a lot of denominational baggage in the church today that has been brought in by half-converted members, causing no little amount of dissension and trouble among us. Paul said those strutting Pharisees may have “seemed to be somewhat,” but whatever they were, it made no matter to him for God does not regard persons, but character. God did not regard those men who were apostles before Paul as superior to him, but considered them on an equal plane.

He then continues, saying, those “who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me.” Paul received nothing new from these men in conference. They neither added anything to his message, nor took anything from it. His apostolic claims were vindicated in the meeting and the false teaching of the Judaizers was refuted. When the other apostles heard Paul’s report, they acted contrary to the claims of the Judaizers and gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. The “gospel of the uncircumcision” which was committed to Paul and the “gospel of the circumcision” which had been committed to Peter did not refer to two gospels. That’s the very notion Paul refuted in Galatians 1:6-9. There is only *one* gospel, and only one source of it—God—who committed its preaching among the Gentiles—uncircumcision—to Paul, and among the Jews—the circumcision—to Peter. The source of inspiration and apostolic credentials is noted in verse 8. The same God who “wrought effectually in Peter” was also “mighty” in Paul toward the Gentiles. Both preached the same message of salvation through faith in Christ and that message—the gospel—is God’s power to save all men of every race and color upon the face of the earth (Rom. 1:16-17).

**Verses 9-10.** The “grace” which Cephas, James, and John—pillars in the Jerusalem church—perceived in Paul

was the work of God in him, and which he related at the meeting in Jerusalem. Some commentators believe there were two meetings in Jerusalem when Paul and Barnabas went there. The first, they say, is related in Acts 15:4-5 in which the two met with the church, its elders, and the apostles. The second was a more public meeting after the Judaizers rose up and contended that Gentiles had to submit to circumcision, and is recorded in Acts 15:6ff. That comports with Paul's account in Galatians, in which he says he communicated his message to them "privately" (Gal. 2:2) and later had a "conference" with them.

In that public meeting, Peter spoke first, recounting his experience at the house of Cornelius, and telling his auditors that God "put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9). he concluded his speech by a plea not to place the yoke of the law upon the Gentiles "which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." After Peter's speech, Paul and Barnabas arose and declared "what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them," (Acts 15:12), and then James arose to offer a summation of, and conclusion from, what Peter, Barnabas, and Paul had said.

In his summation and conclusion, James did not correct anything said by Paul and Barnabas, but offered his stamp of approval upon their work, apostolically vindicating Paul's claims. Thus, was given to them the right hand of fellowship and approval of their work by the apostles in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem apostles, so praised by the Judaizers who denied Paul's apostleship, gave their full endorsement to the gospel which Paul preached—the same gospel of salvation they too proclaimed. And not only did they endorse his apostleship, but they also wrote a letter to the Gentile churches, disavowing the work of the Judaizers.

Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls,

saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment: it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth (Acts 15:24).

By both the letter written from the apostles at Jerusalem, and the oral testimony of Judas and Silas, Paul's claims were vindicated to the Galatians.

### F. Paul's Rebuke Of Peter At Antioch (2:11-21)

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas was also carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

**Verses 11-13.** There is no indication from Paul as to the time of Peter's visit to Antioch, but it was probably after Paul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem, and prior to their second preaching tour. While at Antioch, it appears from Paul's narrative that Peter enjoyed free association with the Gentile Christians in that city before Jewish brethren made a visit there from Jerusalem. While Peter conducted himself "in full consistency with the spirit of the recent decree and with his own conduct in the case of Cornelius," (Conybeare & Howson, p. 194), his conduct underwent a drastic change upon the arrival of the brethren from James.

Whether they were really sent on some mission by the apostle James, or we are to merely understand that they came from Jerusalem, they brought with them their old Hebrew repugnance against social intercourse with the uncircumcised, and Peter in their society began to vacillate. In weak compliance with their prejudices, he 'withdrew and separated himself' from those whom he had lately treated as brethren and equals in Christ. Just as in an earlier part of his life he had first asserted his readiness to follow his Master to death, and then denied him through fear of a maid-servant, so now, after publicly protesting against the notion of making any difference between the Jew and the Gentile, and against laying on the neck of the latter a yoke which the former had never been able to bear, we find him contradicting his own principles, and 'through fear of those who were of the circumcision' giving all the sanction of his example to the introduction of *castes* into the church of Christ. Such conduct could not fail to excite in Paul the utmost indignation (Conybeare & Howson, 194).

Peter was ever impetuous and mercurial. It was he who, upon seeing Moses and Elijah conversing with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration, suggested building "three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias" (Matt. 17:4). He had implored the Lord to bid him come walking on the water but after beginning to do so, allowed his fear to overcome him and began to sink (Matt. 14:28-31). And, it was he who, after vowing his undying allegiance to Christ, denied the Lord three times and afterward wept bitterly for his sin (Matt. 26:33-35, 69-75).

Like Paul, Peter was an inspired apostle, but that infallibility in preaching did not extend to their personal lives. Paul himself appears to have fallen prey to the intimidation of "those of James" (Acts 21:24). Probably few Christians today are fully aware of the intense pressure these Judaizers could exert. As creatures of free will, the apostles were still subject to the temptations that are common to all men, and Peter allowed fear of what others would say to lead him to sin. In essence, Peter was leading a double life and that

made him a hypocrite. Before the brethren came from Jerusalem, he was content to treat the Gentile Christians as equals—as indeed they were (Gal. 3:28)—but changed his conduct upon the arrival of the Judean brethren. So great was Peter’s influence that he caused others to dissemble with him—including Paul’s closest associate, Barnabas!

Peter was not simply yielding a non-essential point through a tender consideration for the consciences of others. This would have been quite in accordance with the principle so often asserted by his brother-apostle, that ‘it is good to neither eat flesh nor drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth or is made weak.’ Nor was this precedent a prudent and innocent accommodation to the circumstances for the sake of furthering the gospel, like Paul’s conduct in circumcising Timothy at Iconium (sic [Paul came to Derbe and Lystra where Timothy was, JB]), or, indeed, like the apostolic decree itself. Peter was acting under the influence of a contemptible and sinful motive—the fear of man; and his behavior was giving a strong sanction to the very heresy which was threatening the existence of the church—namely the opinion that the observances of Jewish ceremonies was necessary to salvation. (Conybeare & Howson, 195).

**Verse 14.** If Peter was the Pope, as Catholics claim, Paul was treading on mighty thin ice when he publicly rebuked him to his face. Such a thing is unheard of among the Pope’s inferiors and would not be countenanced. But, of course, Peter was never a “pope.” Peter’s dissimulation was evidently a public act, as Paul’s rebuke was a public one.

Many people today do not believe *any* rebuke can be made without first going privately to talk to the person who is rebuked, and they offer Matthew 18:15 as proof of their contention. But Jesus does not refer to public preaching or conduct in Matthew 18. The subject there is a private matter between two brethren. It is certain that Jesus did not violate His own teaching when He publicly denounced the Pharisees in Matthew 23. His rebuke of them was as public

as their teaching and conduct, and Paul's rebuke of Peter's conduct was as public as the conduct itself.

It is worthy of note that Paul's rebuke of Peter was, in essence, a rebuke of all of those who separated themselves from the Gentile brethren. "...when I saw that *they* walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto *Peter* before them all..." They were *all* guilty of this sin, but because he was the one whose example they followed, *Peter* was *specifically* addressed by Paul because of Peter's position as an apostle and the one who influenced them. Of all men, Peter should have known better. Such is reminiscent of James' exhortation, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (Jas. 3:1).

Not only was Paul's rebuke swift, but it was sharply pointed as well. Its essence was that Peter should practice what he preached. Peter was right in his pronouncements at the meeting in Jerusalem, but his practice belied his teaching. By his actions, Peter preached a different doctrine than that which he set forth at Jerusalem. What he did indicated that he believed there was indeed a difference between Jews and Gentiles, and that because the Jews were superior, the Gentiles must conform to Jewish mores and customs. The inconsistency of Peter's actions are shown by Paul who pointedly asked, "If you who are born a Jew can live according to the customs of the Gentiles, and not of the Jews, why would you now force the Gentiles to keep the ordinances of the law?" This was the very thing against which Paul preached and against which Peter himself had spoken at Jerusalem.

**Verses 15-16.** Paul continues his address to Peter, saying, "Even we who are Jews by birth and of the seed of Abraham recognize that no one can be justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we have believed in Christ that we might be justified by the

faith and not by works of the law.” “These sentences contain in a condensed form the whole argument of the Epistles to the Galatians and Romans” (Conybeare & Howson, p. 196).

If the law has been nailed to the cross—and it has—why then observe those things which only serve to bring back the old animosities between Jew and Gentile? Peter’s position is precisely that of modern millennialists who believe the Jews are still God’s chosen people today. Denominational preachers, who claim to see God’s handiwork in every upheaval in modern Palestine, would have us believe that He still has a special people in a special land and that the Gentile world is somehow inferior to, and different from, those who inhabit the modern state of Israel.

**Verses 17-18.** If we seek justification by Christ, and not through the law, we commit sin by attempting to bind tenets of the law on others and, in so doing make Christ a “minister of sin by a gospel which fails to save Gentiles from sin” (Wallace, *Commentary on Romans, Galatians and Ephesians*, 102). Moreover, Paul says, “...if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.” To embrace the practices of the law of Moses is to repudiate the gospel of salvation for all men. It was that very thing which the Hebrew writer argued against, saying, “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (Heb. 10:26). The sacrifices of the law of Moses had no efficacy for remitting sins (Heb. 10:4). Therefore, for the Hebrews to return to that system—to sin wilfully—meant that they were without a remedy for sin, for without the shedding of blood, there is no remission (Heb. 9:22).

**Verses 19-21.** One is dead to the law *through* the law. I believe Paul is saying what he later expands upon in Galatians 3—the end or purpose of the law was to bring men to faith in Christ and to *the faith* of Christ that man might be justi-

fied. The law was never given to justify man, for Paul said, “for by the works of the law shall no man be justified.” Everything in the law foreshadowed and pointed to Christ and His work of redemption and our subsequent salvation through Him. The law brought only condemnation, but its end, or purpose, was salvation through Christ.

Paul was not literally crucified with Christ. His statement in verse 20 simply means he was dead to his old life and the sins which stained his soul, including his adherence to the law of Moses. He, like every man who obeys the gospel of Christ, had died to his old life and been baptized into Christ in the likeness of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5). But Paul’s death was not physical. It was a spiritual one in which he was as separated from the things of his past life as the soul is from the body at death. Yet, in that state, Paul was alive—alive in Christ—having put away his former life and allegiance to the law of Moses, and he now lived. But his new life was not governed by his own passions, but by Jesus Christ who lived in him.

Just here, let it be observed that Paul said “Christ liveth in me.” Surely no one would be so foolish as to affirm that Jesus Christ literally inhabited Paul’s body, yet there are those who take the same kind of statement about the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, and affirm that He literally inhabits, and controls the actions of the physical bodies of Christians. How did Christ live in Paul? Paul himself answers that question in the same verse. “The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” To live “by the faith of the Son of God” is to live by the teachings of Jesus Christ. The phrase “the faith” means that body of truth delivered through inspired men in the first century. It was that same body of truth to which Jude referred when exhorting his readers to “earnestly contend for *the faith* which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). When one

studies, learns, obeys, and lives daily by “the faith,” he can truthfully say, “Christ liveth in me.” It is the word of God through which Christ lives in us, through which the Holy Spirit lives in us, and through which God lives in us. Thus Paul concludes that to return to the law or to attempt to bind a part of it upon Gentile Christians would constitute a frustration of “the grace of God.” If justification comes by the law, it is no more of grace and if righteousness comes through the law of Moses then Christ died in vain.

## II. The Gospel Is All-Sufficient To Salvation (3:1-4:31)

### A. His Rebuke For Abandoning Their Only Means of Salvation (3:1-10)

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

**Verses 1-5.** Like the Hebrew Christians addressed in the epistle to the Hebrews, these Galatians were being enticed to abandon the only means of their salvation—the truth of the gospel, and Paul now rebukes them with a series of questions. That they had been “bewitched” and failed to obey the truth is a concept that should arrest our attention in verse one. In a postmodern age which denies objective truth as a means to salvation, most people today have embraced an egalitarian form of grace in which no one will be lost. In fact, universal salvation is a nigh universal belief among modern denominationalists, and among some folks in churches of Christ. The idea that there is an objective body of truth which must be obeyed in order to secure salvation is a fundamental tenet of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In fact, the gospel itself is that objective truth and obedience to it is absolutely necessary if one is to be saved. Paul said Christ will come at the end of the world and take vengeance on those who “obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,” (2 Thess. 1:8).

To obey the gospel is to obey the truth, and obedience to the truth is something that must be continual. That’s the implication of Paul’s questions in Galatians 3:1. They had rendered primary obedience to the Gospel, as he noted in Galatians 3:26-27, but here he says they had been bewitched “that ye should not obey the truth.” There are two words translated “bewitched” in the New Testament. The first, *existemi*, is used twice regarding Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8 where it is said that, he “bewitched the people of Samaria,” (Acts 8:9), and “that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries” (Acts 8:11). This word means, “to put (stand) out of wits, i.e. astound or become astounded, insane: amaze, be (make) astonished, be beside self (selves), bewitch, wonder” (Strong, p. 30). The other is *baskaino*. This is the word used by Paul in this passage and means, “to malign, i.e. (by extens.) to fascinate (by false representations):—bewitch” (Strong, p.18). The former describes the reaction of the Samaritans to Simon’s performance of magic and the latter describes the Galatians’ response to the fair words and smooth speeches of Judaizers who had maligned Paul and his teachings. Those false teachers had bewitched or fascinated them by their false representations and led them away from the gospel of Christ by perverting it. That perversion took the form of the addition of precepts from the law of Moses to the gospel and therefore made it into something which cannot save.

The kind of false teaching to which the Galatians were subjected is the most nefarious and most dangerous. Like the serpent in Eden, those teachers may have begun their sordid work of planting doubts in the fickle Galatian minds

by asking, “Yea, hath Paul said?” They continued their subversion of the truth by charging that Paul was not really an apostle—that he had learned what he preached from the apostles at Jerusalem and from others. Thus, they were able to lead the Galatian brethren away from the truth and remove them unto another gospel. Of the fickle and vacillating Galatians, it could be said, as with many whom we all know, that their beliefs and convictions consisted of “the last thing they read, or heard.”

Paul said, as if it had been before their eyes, “Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you.” This referred to his preaching in Galatia. As he told the Corinthians, “For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” (1 Cor. 2:2), so he had set forth the crucified Christ in his preaching to the Galatians. That was also the message Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch on the Gaza road when he, “began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus,” (Acts 8:35). The crucified, buried, resurrected, ascended, and crowned Jesus is set forth before the eyes of all who hear faithful men proclaim the gospel.

In verses two through four, Paul asks a series of logical questions designed to make the Galatians think about their condition. The first is, “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” A consideration of this question and an honest answer to it should have immediately shown them the folly of their course in following the Judaizing teachers. Paul’s question here relates to the miraculous gifts of the Spirit extant among the churches of the first century. Did these gifts come through the law of Moses? Of course not. They were conferred by apostolic hands of men who had received Holy Spirit baptism and in whom resided the very words of the faith. None of the Judaizers who sought to bind circumcision upon the Gentiles conferred a single miraculous gift in any church of the first

century. This fact alone should have convinced them that the Judaizers were false teachers and their characterization of Paul as a pseudo-apostle was also false.

He next asks, “Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh?” They had things exactly reversed. It was the fleshly law of Moses that was to bring men to the faith of Jesus Christ—from a fleshly system to a spiritual one. But these Galatians had begun with the spiritual, and now reverted back to the fleshly. They sought perfection from an imperfect system that had never been theirs in the first place and that effort was, and is, doomed to failure. The word “flesh” is sometimes used in reference to the law of Moses, and I believe that is its use in verse three.

...Galatians 3:3 establishes the fact that ‘in the flesh’ [In Romans 7:5, JCB] is used in reference to Judaism: ‘Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?’ The gospel received through miraculous gifts of the Spirit to Paul, an apostle, and the gifts of the Spirit which the Galatians had received, is that which is indicated by the phrase, ‘begun in the Spirit.’ The word ‘Spirit’ here is really equal to the gospel, which was received by the revelation of the Spirit. ‘Are now made perfect by the flesh’—the law which was carnal, or fleshly, is that which is signified by the phrase, ‘by the flesh.’ Judaizing teachers were seeking to persuade Gentile Christians who had accepted the gospel to also be circumcised and to keep the law. These false teachers were insisting that the gospel was not sufficient. They were teaching Gentiles that in order to be saved, they must accept circumcision and the law. The phrase, ‘made perfect by the flesh,’ is a synonym for the law, or the Judaistic system. This was an argument that Paul answered not only in the Galatian letter, but also in the Roman letter (Camp, 229).

“Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain?” Do the hardships which you have suffered at the hands of persecutors—including the Jews of Galatia—because of your fidelity to Christ mean nothing? Have you suffered persecution in

vain, since you now seem to embrace those very things which your persecutors teach?

Are the ministration of the Spirit to you and the working of miracles things that came through the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Paul told the Corinthians that “the signs of an apostle were wrought among you” (2 Cor. 12:12, cf. 1 Cor. 9:2). The signs of an apostle were God’s confirmation that those men were who they claimed to be. Those signs were not simply miracles. Others were empowered to work miracles, but only an apostle could lay hands on another and *impart* those miraculous gifts. That is evident from the visit of Peter and John to Samaria to impart spiritual gifts. Philip the evangelist had preached in Samaria and worked miracles, but he had no power to impart spiritual gifts to others (Acts 8). Of all miraculous gifts, the ability to impart those gifts to others belonged only to an apostle of Jesus Christ, and Paul clearly tells them that it was *he*, not the Judaizing teachers who imparted spiritual gifts among the Galatian churches. Of all the evidence submitted, this should have convinced them beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was what he claimed to be and that the Judaizers were false teachers.

**Verses 6-10.** Here begins a discourse on the Abrahamic covenant and its connection with the faith of Jesus Christ. Abraham never lived under the Mosaic law, but was justified by faith—something the law could never do. Notice that Paul does not say “Abraham believed *in* God,” but that, “Abraham *believed* God.” When Moses disobeyed God’s instruction to speak to the rock at Kadesh and struck it twice with his rod, God told him he would not enter Canaan, “Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel...” (Num. 20:12). Moses believed *in* God, but *did not believe* God. One may profess belief *in* God, but if one does not *obey* God, he is an unbeliever. In this sense, Moses was an unbeliever.

Faith in God is not mere mental assent, but a willingness to do whatever God says. That is amply illustrated in Hebrews chapter eleven. The faith of those worthies listed there was one which moved them to action. “By faith Abel offered...” (Heb. 11:4). God told Abel what to offer, and Abel did what God told him, for “faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Likewise, “By faith, Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear and prepared an ark to the saving of his house” (Heb. 11:7). God instructed Noah to build an ark, and gave him the specifications for it. Noah obeyed God and built the ark according to His instructions and it was said of him, “Thus did Noah according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22). That was acting “by faith.” So it was with Abraham’s faith. He heard God’s voice and acted upon the commands God gave him. Thus, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” Many years ago, in commenting on Hebrews 11, Gary Colley taught us preacher boys in the Elk City School of Preaching that “faith is doing what God says because God says to do it.” No other kind of faith is acceptable to God, and no other kind of faith will make one righteous.

Thus Paul says those who are of faith are Abraham’s children. The true descendants of Abraham are those whose faith leads them to obey the voice of God, not those who are his fleshly descendants. That the Israel of God today consists of those who are Christians is seen in Romans 6:6-9, Galatians 6:16, and in James’ epistle addressed to the “twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (Jas. 1:1). As fleshly Israel—the twelve tribes—constituted the people of God in the Old Testament, so spiritual Israel—the church—constitutes His people in our age. This shows the progression from the fleshly to the spiritual, planned by God, and consummated in this last age of the world. For the Galatians

to embrace the tenets of the Mosaic economy—even in a single thing like circumcision—would obligate them to keep the whole law of Moses, and would negate the work of Christ in fulfilling that law and taking it out of the way.

And because Abraham obeyed God—“believed God”—the gospel was preached in prospect in God’s promise that through him all nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3). The gospel, like God’s entire scheme of redemption, has existed in various forms. It existed in the seed promise of Genesis 3:15, in the prophecies of the Old Testament, in the preparatory work of John, and in its perfected form as Peter preached on Pentecost in Acts two. The gospel consists of three basic facts—the death, burial and resurrection of Christ—of commands to be obeyed, and of promises to be enjoyed. The gospel must be obeyed in order for one to be saved (2 Thess. 1:9) but one does not obey facts. Hence, the gospel contains not only the facts of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, but commands to be obeyed. Those are faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. One who thus obeys the gospel enters into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27), where all spiritual blessings are (Eph. 1:3) is saved from past sins (Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16) and entertains the hope of eternal life to come (Tit. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25). Therefore, Paul concludes that the blessings of God come upon “they which be of faith.” These, he says, “are blessed with faithful Abraham” who was justified or made righteous by his faith, not by observing the law of Moses. God’s promise to Abraham was made *centuries before* there was a law of Moses and its fulfillment is apart from that law.

Contrasting the promised blessings through Abraham with the demands of the law of Moses, the apostle says those who seek justification by works of the law are cursed. The reason? That is stated in Deuteronomy 27:26 from which Paul quotes in verse 10. Everyone who who fails to keep the *entire* law is cursed, and that includes all men, for none

ever lived who kept the law perfectly—save Jesus Christ. Hence, for the Galatians to embrace the law of Moses which Christ fulfilled and abrogated would be to bring the curse of that law upon themselves. No Jew was ever sinless under the law, nor could these Gentiles keep it without sinning. The law provided no remedy for sin, only penalties for violating it. Only through Christ has God provided the remedy for our sins and given us the hope of eternal life in that world to come.

### **B. The Law's Inability To Save (3:11-18)**

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Paul says the conclusion that no one can be justified by the law is inescapable. First, no man ever kept the law perfectly, without sin, and, second, it was God's intent that justification would come to men through faith. That last point, Paul says, is evident from the pronouncement of God Himself through the prophet Habbakuk (Hab. 2:4). That's also the same terminology employed by Paul in describing the gospel system of faith in Romans as God's means of justification (Rom. 1:16-17). The law of Moses is not a system of faith. It is a system of works and the only way the law would justify would be for a man to live a sinless life and never violate a single one of its precepts. God's promise in Leviticus 18:15 was that, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord." To "live in them" meant that one who kept all of God's commands would live, but no man ever kept them perfectly. This constituted the curse that Paul describes in verse 10. Since none could keep the law perfectly, all were under the curse of death for violating it.

But God has provided a remedy, making Christ a curse for us in His work of redemption. That is affirmed in Paul's quotation from Deuteronomy 21:23. Christ kept God's law perfectly. Therefore, He was not under its curse and thereby became the perfect, sinless sacrifice for sin. In His death, Christ was made a curse for us and thus removed the law. In so doing, He removed the curse, and made possible the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that the Gentiles ("all nations") would be blessed in Christ, through faith—not through works of the law. It should be noted that the inability of the law to save man rested with man himself. It was *he* who could never keep the law perfectly. Had one been able to do so, God would have saved him, but God gave the law of Moses to demonstrate the enormity of sin and man's utter inability to save himself—a lesson which the Jews of Jesus' day, and many people today failed to learn.

Beginning the last part of this section, Paul uses an illustration from law regarding covenants, or contracts—"...I speak after the manner of men..." In a legal illustration he shows that a contract or covenant, once confirmed and probated, cannot be altered. It can neither be disannulled, nor can additions be made to it. From this premise, he refers to God's promise to Abraham in which He said, "and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18), and demonstrates that the Abrahamic covenant was neither annulled, nor superseded by the law of Moses because God confirmed it (Heb. 6:13-18).

If there was ever any doubt in Jewish or Gentile minds about what God meant when He made the promise to Abraham, it is forever dispelled by the inspired Paul in verse 16. The promises made to Abraham's *seed* were just that—to his *seed*. They were not given to many, as the Jews and Judaizing teachers supposed, but were fulfilled in a single person—Jesus Christ. God ever had Christ in mind as the

fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise: “And to thy seed, which is Christ.”

Reverting back to his legal illustration in verse 15, the apostle then says that the law of Moses, given 430 years after the promise, could not disannul or make void God’s promise to Abraham. If salvation came by the law of Moses, then the promise of God that the Gentiles (“all nations”) would be blessed through Christ was voided. But the word “nations” which the Holy Spirit chose to give Paul in verse 8 is *ethnos*, meaning, “a tribe; spec. a foreign (non-Jewish one), Gentile, heathen, nation, people” (Strong, p. 25). Hence, Paul’s argument that God would justify all men through the gospel of Christ as he stated in Romans 1:16-17. “Therefore, the law given from Mount Sinai did not supersede the promise to Abraham, and since Gentiles have justification in the promise, neither circumcision nor [the] law can be essential to their justification” (Wallace, p. 107). That gives rise, then, to the question posed in verse 19 and Paul’s explanation in the verses following.

### C. The Parenthetical Nature Of The Law In God's Scheme (3:19-29)

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

**Verses 19-20.** In view of what has just been said, the question is posed, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" If the promise is by faith, and the giving of the law 430 years after the promise did not bring justification, or annul that promise, what was the purpose of the law? That question is answered in this section in which Paul indicates that the law was a "parenthesis" between the promise to Abraham and the fulfillment of that promise in Christ. He says the law was "*added*." It came in *beside* the promise, but was *neither* an *addition* to the promise, *nor a part* of the promise. The law was added "because of transgressions." It served to preserve the race of Hebrews and separate them from the heathen influence of ancient society, in order to bring the seed of Abraham—Christ—into the world. The law was necessary to make known the gravity of transgressions and punish evildoers in order to keep the Hebrew race from being swallowed up in the heathenish practices of their neighbors. It was a temporary measure in God's scheme, and

when the Hebrew writer referred to it as a faulty covenant (Heb. 8:7), he did not mean that God's work was faulty. The meaning is that God never intended for the law of Moses to be the means of justification for all men—that it was a temporary measure which would serve its purpose, then be fulfilled and taken away.

The law given at Sinai was “ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator.” It was given through intermediaries and the mediator was Moses. One who mediates stands between two alienated parties. In the case at Sinai, those parties were Israel and God. Jehovah did not speak directly to the children of Israel, but through His mediator Moses. But the *promise* was given *directly* to Abraham. There was no intermediary. That's the meaning of verse 20. Moses stood between Israel and God at Sinai, but the promise to Abraham was a single transaction from God to the Patriarch. The implication is that the promise is superior to the law in that it needed no mediator. A mediator is not a mediator of “one” but God is one without a mediator in giving the promise to Abraham.

**Verses 21-22.** Since the law was given *after* the promises to Abraham, is it then superior to them, or does it replace them? The clear answer is “no”. Righteousness is by faith, not by the law. Therefore, if a law could have been given which brought justification, then righteousness would have come by that law. But that was not possible, because *all* have sinned (Rom. 3:10, 23). Justification is righteousness, and the law of Moses had no provision for making men righteous. That provision is through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

There are only two ways a man can be righteous. First, by never committing a single sin, for sin separates from God (Isa. 59:1-2), and second, by having his sins forgiven, or being justified. When one is justified, it is as though he had never sinned, but justification only comes through the

faith of the gospel. The gospel is God's means for making man righteous (Rom. 1:16-17). That was God's purpose from the beginning. The law of Moses is not against God's purpose, but was added to further that purpose. As Abraham was justified by faith, so shall all be who believe and obey God, walking in the same steps of faith as that venerable Patriarch.

**Verses 23-25.** The law was a system of restraint to train and tutor the Jews in obedience to God. It was a fleshly law that pointed to a spiritual end and those who kept the law understood this. Among those who hardened their hearts and refused to keep the law of Moses were those to whom Jesus spoke in John, chapter five.

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. ...Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? (Jn. 5:39-40, 45-47).

When Jesus said "Search the Scriptures" in John 5:39, he was not giving a command to study. His words are in the form of a declarative statement. The American Standard Version renders it thus: "Ye search the Scriptures because ye think that in them ye have eternal life..." They thought they could obtain eternal life through the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They failed to understand the purpose of the law of Moses and consequently rejected and crucified Jesus. Moses' law was never intended to be a permanent system, but, as a "schoolmaster," to bring them to Christ and the system of faith He revealed. The law was their tutor, but they refused its tutelage, and the Judaizing teachers who troubled the churches of Galatia were of that same ilk. They failed to see the law's purpose, and consequently perverted the gospel by attempting to attach parts of the law to it as conditions of salvation.

**Verses 26-27.** The words of this epistle are directed to those who had already become Christians—both Jew and Gentile—and when Paul said, “For ye are *all* the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,” he meant there was only one standard for making both righteous. God did not, and does not, make a distinction between those who receive circumcision and those who do not. *All* are the children of God by faith in Christ, and he goes on to delineate how both Jew and Gentile are *made* the children of God by faith. That is accomplished in baptism—“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” The phrase, “as many as,” means every person who has believed and obeyed the gospel is a child of God whether he is circumcised or not. He later emphasizes that point in Galatians 5:6. One who has been *baptized* into Christ is a child of God “*by faith* in Christ Jesus” and anything more or less required of him for salvation is a perversion of the gospel—including the doctrine that one is saved by “faith only.” One does not believe *alone* into Christ. Wayne Price, who teaches Greek in the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies, says the Greek word *eis* is used “20 or more” times in the book of John where it is rendered “on,” “in,” “unto.” Among those passages are John 3:16; 7:31; 11:26; and 12:11. “The translators were right in rendering it as ‘on,’ ‘in,’ ‘unto,’ etc., because the idea of “into” in all places doesn’t fit. The basic idea of *eis* is movement toward an end or target. Yet, obviously, mere belief alone does not put one in Christ (Jn. 12:42) hence, obedience is necessary (Matt. 7:21ff.)” (Price, *Personal Note*, Feb. 2004). Baptism is the act that puts one *into* Christ and in which the penitent believer “puts on Christ.” When one does that, he is a child of God “by faith in Christ Jesus.”

**Verses 28-29.** Though the Judaizers among the Galatian churches would make a difference between a circumcised Christian and one who hadn’t been circumcised, Paul says

no such difference exists. there are no religious or racial differences in Christ (“...neither Jew nor Greek”). There are no social castes in Christ (“...neither bond nor free”) and there is no difference in the sexes (“there is neither male nor female”). Not only were the Judaizers dividing the churches religiously, but their doctrine would have made a difference between male and female. Had circumcision been required to be saved as they contended, women would have been exempt from that rite. The conclusion is that all who are the children of God by faith in Christ—those who have put on Christ in baptism—are *one* in Him, and God puts no difference between them. That was the conclusion of the apostles after Peter preached to Cornelius and his house, and that remains the conclusion today (Acts 15:9). As Abraham was justified by faith, those who are the children of God by faith today are the spiritual seed of Abraham. They are the sons of God by faith, Abraham’s seed, and heirs of eternal life as the children of God. To enter Christ by baptism is to enter the sphere of salvation “by faith.”

#### D. From Servanthood To Sonship (4:1-7)

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

**Verses 1-2.** Paul again uses a legal illustration of what he is about to write. This time it is of minor children and their status before their majority. He reminds his readers that the heir of a household has no more status than a

servant in that household until he reaches the age of majority. The minor child is trained “under tutors and governors” until such a time as he is deemed fit to inherit his father’s estate—“...the time appointed by the father.” In this way, he progresses from servanthood to sonhood in all the legal ramifications of those two terms.

**Verses 3-5.** Now, Paul makes the application of what he has just said in verses one and two. “Even so *we*, when we were children...” He contrasts the former condition of those under the law of Moses with their current status as “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” As children, those under the law were “in bondage.” The law of Moses could not make one free. That is the subject Paul discusses when he says,

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:2-4).

Under the law of Moses, the Jews were in bondage and served God in the spirit of servanthood. God was never addressed as “our Father” under the Mosaic covenant, but with various terms such as, “Almighty God,” “Lord of Hosts,” “Jehovah,” and “The Lord God.” That was the language of servants.

“But when the fulness of time was come” refers to the statement in verse two which says, “the time appointed of the Father.” In his legal illustration, the father had an appointed time when his son would become a man and inherit the estate. He now applies that principle to God’s dealing with the Jews under the law of Moses. As minors—during the Mosaic age—they were no more than servants. But at the “time appointed of the father”, or what Paul calls in verse four, “the fulness of time”, their minority ended and

God sent His Son into the world through the agency of a woman, and under the very law He came to fulfill.

There is a richness to the phrase, “the fulness of time.” This was the *right* time in the history of man to consummate the work of redemption which had been in God’s purpose from the beginning (Eph. 3:11). This was the *right* time to reveal the mystery of the gospel—that both Jews and Gentiles were to be included in the scheme of redemption, and all of history that had gone before “the days of these kings” had served to prepare for this span of approximately 33 years in which the Son of God would sojourn on the earth, consummate God’s plan to save men, abolish the law of Moses, reveal the truth of the gospel through men like Paul, and call all races to salvation through Him. He who sees all things from the beginning *knew* that the Koine’ Greek in which the world then communicated would provide the right words to convey His will to man. He *knew* that the Roman roads, which united the world, would provide easy access for His messengers to go into all the world with the soul-saving gospel, and He *knew* that the old idols of the pagan world would fall before the preaching of the One True God, as Paul preached in Athens (Acts 17).

Greeks with their language, education and culture and Romans with their laws and roads, contributed greatly to prepare the world for the coming of the Christ. There can be no doubt but that the providence of God can be traced through this period of time. When the 400 years of silence came to a close, the “fulness of time had arrived... (Weir, 756)

But beyond all these considerations, the Eternal Counsel of the Eternal God *knew* the Gentile world, as well as that of the Jews, was ready for, and desperately needed, redemption. The time of minority was past. It was now time for the inheritance to be granted in the majority years.

Christ came into the world in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The first intimation of a Redeemer was made in

Genesis 3:15—the seed from which all prophecies of Christ sprang. To the serpent, God said, “...and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Through woman came the fall of the race, and through that same agency came the redemption of the race. As David severed the head of Goliath with the giant’s own weapon, so God used the source of the fall—woman—to send the Redeemer into the world Who would use Satan’s own weapon—death—to defeat him.

The phrase, “made of a woman,” is a strong doctrinal affirmation of the virgin birth of Christ. The Incarnate Son of God was *made* of a woman without the agency of a male. The apostle does not say “*born*,” but, “*made*.” This agrees with the prophecies of both Isaiah and Jeremiah. “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). “For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth. A woman shall compass a man” (Jer. 31:22). Both of these passages are connected with the seed promise of Genesis 3:15. Matthew said Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled in the conception and birth of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:20-23). The Son of God had no earthly father. He was “made of a woman,” and the “new thing” of which Jeremiah wrote was that a man would be compassed (“encompassed”) by a woman in the person of a created child. Jesus used the word “born” in referring to John: “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist” (Matt. 11:11). According to Strong, this word is, “used of the father, but by extension, of the mother; to procreate, regenerate, beget” (p. 20). But Paul used the word “made” in Galatians 4:4, and Strong says this word means, “to cause to be, to be brought to pass” (p. 20). No male was involved in the birth of Christ. He came through the seed of woman by a miracle. Mary was a

virgin when He was conceived, during the term of her pregnancy, and when He was born in Bethlehem. Had this not been the case, this young Jewish girl would surely not have visited her cousin, the wife of a Levite priest, to announce her condition, knowing the penalty for adultery under the law of Moses! This One who was “made of a woman, made under the law” came to redeem not only the Gentile world, but also those who served Jehovah under the law of Moses, that *all* might receive the the adoption of sons and become God’s children by faith in Christ.

**Verses 6-7.** Taken from their context, verses 6 and 7 are often used to teach that the Christian has the Holy Spirit dwelling directly in his body. But, like all passages, these *must* be considered contextually, and the context does not render that conclusion. Under discussion is the redemption of those under the law, and their progression from servanthood to sonship—from spiritual minority status to adulthood, or majority.

The first seven verses of Galatians 4 connect with the last verses of chapter 3, where the apostle had shown that the baptized Jews and Gentiles were together sons and heirs. The first seven verses of chapter 4 compare Judaism with the position of a minor who had not reached the status of sonship—an heir apparent who was yet a minor. But having been redeemed from the law they had ‘received the adoption of sons,’ and God had sent the spirit of sonship into their hearts, calling God Father (Wallace, 74).

The word “spirit” in the phrase, “spirit of his son” in verse 6 does *not* refer to the Holy Spirit, but to the spirit in which God’s children serve Him. Neither should the word “son” be capitalized. It does not refer to Jesus Christ, but to the disposition, or attitude, in the hearts of those who are the children of God today. When the New Testament was written, it was written in “uncials” or capital letters, and had no punctuation marks. The punctuation and capitalization of the text was done in later years by translators who

capitalized those words in this verse. But the context does not call for the capitalization of either word. We are convinced that the meaning of verse 6 is that, unlike those under the Mosaic economy, Christians serve God, not in the spirit of servants to a master, but in the spirit of sons to a Father. The “spirit of his son” is not a reference to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. That was the conclusion of R. L. Whiteside in his comments on the similar passage in Romans 8:15.

The Jew under the law was moved principally through fear, and idol worshippers were moved by fear. But not so with the Christian. ‘But ye received the spirit of adoption;’ or, more exact, ‘Ye received the spirit of sonship.’ A Christian is one who has been born again; he is a child of God by birth, rather than by adoption. He serves God, not through a spirit of slavish fear, but through a spirit of filial obedience. ‘Spirit’ as used in this verse does not refer to an individual personal intelligence, but to a disposition or attitude. ...The spirit of fear is displaced by a spirit of reverence, trust, and worship. The term ‘Abba’ means ‘Father.’ It seems that the two terms are used here for emphasis (Whiteside, 178).

The Greek word for “father” is *pater*, and *abba* is an Aramaic word. I believe the use of both words here simply illustrates the merging of Jews and Gentiles into God’s house, which is the church (1 Tim. 3:15) and the relationship of both as God’s children. The service rendered to God by both Jew and Gentile as His sons means both can call Him “Father.” That Galatians 4:6 refers to the disposition of sons of God, and *not* the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, ought to be evident from the context. The contrast there is clearly drawn. “Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son.” That same contrast is also made in the Roman passage between the “spirit of bondage” and the “spirit of adoption,” and I believe the “spirit of adoption” in Romans 8 and the “spirit of his son” in Galatians 4 are parallel, as are the “spirit of bondage” in Romans 8 and the child who “differeth nothing from a servant” of Galatians 4. Neither

of these passages refers to the Holy Spirit, but to the basis of our service to God in this dispensation. Unlike the servanthood of the Mosaic dispensation, both Jews and Gentiles now serve God in the spirit of sonship.

It has been postulated that one has the person of the Holy Spirit dwelling in his body “*because ye are sons.*” But the emphasis and contrast in Galatians 4:6-7 is upon and between sonship and servanthood—not some direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit *because we are Christians.* The spirit of sonship is in our hearts because we are sons.

So the spirit of verse 6 is not the Holy Spirit, but the spirit of sonship, as the following verse 7 specifies: ‘Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.’ It is the same sonship and the same spirit of sons as in Romans 8:15: ‘But ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.’ Here the spirit of adoption is in contrast with the spirit of bondage, and there is no reason for the small S on spirit of bondage and a large S on spirit of adoption—for the spirit of adoption in Rom. 8:15, and the spirit of sons in Gal. 4:6, do not refer to the Holy Spirit. There is no argument to be derived from these verses for the direct indwelling of the personal Holy Spirit (Wallace, *The Mission And Medium Of The Holy Spirit*, 74).

### E. An Excursus Appealing To Past Association (4:8-20)

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. Ye know how that through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

**Verses 8-11.** While this section is an excursus from the topic of the law of Moses, it contains personal notes that relate to the Galatians' tendency to embrace the Judaizers' teaching. Verse eight reminds them of their former condition as *Gentiles*, much like he contrasted the former and present conditions of the Ephesians in chapter two of that epistle. In their former idolatrous state, they served the works of men's hands—"them which by nature are no gods"—but by their obedience to the gospel (Gal. 3:26-27) they had been delivered from that bondage, as the Jews had been delivered from the bondage of the law. Now, he asks, "How can you embrace those elements from whose bondage the Jews were delivered?" That would be to reject the blessings of sonship and return to their former state as slaves or servants—not as Gentiles, but in their embrace of Jewish

feasts and ordinances which found their fulfillment in Christ. Those dead ordinances of Judaism had—and have—no efficacy in this dispensation, for they all pointed to Christ and his work of redemption. Though the fires of the temple altars still burned, and the ordinances and feasts continued to be observed by the Jews, that system was dead, having been fulfilled and nailed to the cross in the work of Christ (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14). Jesus referred to Judaism as a “carcass” devoid of life in Matthew 24:28, and about 37 years after He said those things, the Romans under Titus and Vespasian removed Judaism’s dead carcass from the world in the destruction of Jerusalem. But the Mosaic covenant was already abrogated and lifeless when Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia. Therefore, it was foolish to adopt those things which were the elements of bondage, and to relinquish the liberty of sonship Christians have in Christ. Were they to do this, Paul’s labor among them would be vain, and that is the fear he expresses in verse 11. His concern is not for them as a monument of his own work, but for their souls.

**Verses 12-15.** These verses are obviously a reference to the warmth with which the fickle Galatians at the first welcomed Paul and Barnabas among them. In verse 12, the appeal is to be as Paul. He had left the bondage of Judaism to be as they were—a Christian without distinction of race or fleshly lineage. The thrust of his statement is that he was one of them, and his appeal did not arise from any personal offence by them against him. Should they return to the law of Moses, it was not a personal offence to him, but gravely injurious to their souls. He was free in Christ and desired them to be free as well. Of all persons who could glory in the religion of the Jews, and who could have profited from adherence to it, Paul was a shining example, and he made that clear to the brethren at Philippi.

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any

other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. 3:4-9).

Paul's reference to "confidence in the flesh" in the Philippian passage is not a reference to the flesh of man, or works of the flesh, but to the fleshly ordinances of the law of Moses. In this, there is a contrast between the law of flesh—Judaism—and the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2)—"the faith of Jesus Christ." It was not the fleshly works of man in which Paul had formerly placed his confidence, but in the works of the law of Moses, here called "the flesh," in which he had trusted and formerly placed his confidence for salvation.

The word 'Spirit' is also used in two ways in the New Testament. The word is used sometimes as a synonym of the gospel. The gospel is spiritual. It has to do with man's spirit. The word 'Spirit' is sometimes used where it simply means the gospel. The old covenant was a covenant of the letter and not a covenant of the spirit. Judaism, with all of its privileges, was only the shadow of better things to come. The condition of the Jews under the law was as different from the Christian under the gospel as flesh is different from spirit. Their standing under the law was as much unlike the Christian under the gospel as the difference in the position of a servant and a son. This is the reason that Paul represents the Jews as being under the flesh, while being under the law or covenant of the letter. (Camp, 230-231).

It is from this premise that Paul says he had confidence in and trusted in the flesh. His reference was to his adherence

to the law of Moses in the strictest sect of Judaism—the Pharisees. But now, he admonishes the Gentile Christians in Galatia to be as he—to give up those things of the flesh (the law of Moses) that only engender bondage, and to be free from them in the system of the faith of Jesus Christ.

In verses 13 and 14, Paul speaks of his work among the Galatians and preaching to them “through infirmity of the flesh.” What that infirmity was, no one knows and it is useless to speculate. Had details of his infirmity been necessary for us to know, we are confidently certain that God would have revealed them to us. The “infirmity” of which he speaks in verse 13 is called “my temptation which was in my flesh” in verse 14. The word “temptation” does not necessarily refer to temptation to sin, but also to trials, tribulations and tests which come upon us. That was the import of James’ statement when he wrote, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (Jas. 1:2-3). The word “tempt” is also used of God’s command to Abraham to offer Isaac upon the altar in the land of Moriah:

And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of (Gen. 22:1-2).

The word “tempt” in this passage “signifies no more than to try or prove” (Clarke, 138). When God “tempted” Abraham it was not a solicitation to do evil, “for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man” (Jas. 1:13), but simply a trial of Abraham’s faith. Clarke says the passage literally reads, “And the Elohim he tried this Abraham” (138). So Paul’s “temptation” was not of a spiritual nature to do evil, but probably some sort of physical deformity or injury which could have hindered his preach-

ing and which tried his faith. But, even this did not keep the Galatians from receiving him, and in spite of his “infirmity of the flesh” they warmly welcomed him. In fact, he says, they not only warmly welcomed him, but received him “as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.” And well they should, for he *was* an “angel,” which signifies no more than a *messenger*, and as an “ambassador” his preaching was as though Jesus Christ Himself stood before them and proclaimed the saving gospel (2 Cor. 4:18-20).

His question in verse 15, “Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?” is rendered in the American Standard Version as, “Where then is that gratulation of yourselves?” The word “gratulate” means, “To greet or welcome with joy” (*Britannica World Language Dictionary*) and the noun form in the ASV simply refers to their warm reception of Paul and the gospel he preached. His question, then, is to call to mind their former dealings with him and their open arms in receiving his person and his message. In fact, he reminds them of their love for him in their willingness to “pluck out your own eyes” and give them to him, had that been possible. This is another indicator of the fickle nature of the Galatian people. They had gone from the deepest devotion to Paul—even a willingness to blind themselves on his behalf—to denying that he was an apostle sent from the Lord. That was probably why he expressed his amazement in Galatians 1:6 that they had so soon departed from the gospel and embraced a perverted one. His question, basically, was “What happened to that spirit which not long ago moved you to receive me?”

**Verses 16-17.** Paul still preached the same gospel he had preached among the Galatians. His message had not changed. It was the same message they had once eagerly embraced. Now, he asks, “Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” Neither Paul nor the message he proclaimed had changed. He was still the same apostle they had received and still preached the same message he

preached among them. What was the difference now? Who had changed? The difference was that Judaizing teachers had “bewitched” the Galatians and *they* had changed. How often is that witnessed in our postmodern world! Many are those today who once held to the old paths and commended the preaching of great men who are now gone from us, but because they have embraced a perverted gospel, they now reject those same men and the gospel they preached. Yes, the Truth will often make enemies. Faithful adherence to, and preaching of, the gospel will result in opposition from those who have embraced the errors of men, though they once loved the Truth.

The Judaizing teachers had certainly “zealously” affected the Galatians with their false doctrines, but Paul says they had not been affected “well.” Like those of whom Paul spoke in Romans 10, they had “a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” Indeed, Paul had been as zealous in his persecution of Christians, but his zeal was applied in ignorance (1 Tim. 1:12-13). Zeal toward God is a good thing if it is a zeal for truth, but zealous propagation of error endangers the souls of those who propagate it and their hearers who embrace it. That was precisely the condition of the Jews who sought justification through the law of Moses.

Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:1-3).

The basis of salvation is Truth (Rom. 1:16-17). All the zeal in the world cannot save a single soul if that zeal is directed toward such things as “church growth” without regard for preaching the gospel of Christ. Like those Jews of whom Paul writes in Romans, the Judaizing teachers in Galatia were an extremely zealous lot, but they were igno-

rant of God's standard for righteousness—the gospel of Christ. They were not content to practice their perverted gospel among themselves, but were obsessed with binding it on others as well. Like today's Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, they zealously affected people, but not well. Theirs was a zeal that led not to salvation, but to the destruction of men's souls.

The Judaizers not only sought to turn the Galatians from the truth by adding the precepts of the law to the gospel for salvation, but to also turn them from Paul and other sound teachers. In effect, the Judaizers excluded the Galatians from the gospel with their false doctrines, and in turn the Galatians became dependent upon the Judaizers instead of Paul for their instruction. In verse 17, the ASV says, "...they desire to shut you out that ye may seek them." The false teachers in Galatia, served "not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly," (Rom. 16:18), and that's a fair and accurate description of most false teachers in the world today. They seek not the good of their hearers but self-aggrandizement, and to line their own pockets at the expense of the souls they deceive.

Zeal, like many things, can be used for good or evil. There is nothing inherently good or evil in zeal and Paul points that out in verse 18. In fact, he says, it is *good* to be zealously affected *in good*. In the phrase, "zealously affected always in a good thing," the article *a* and the word *thing* preceding and following the word "good" are italicized. That means these words are not in the original Greek text, but supplied by the translators to give a sense of the statement. It literally reads, "zealously affected always in good." It is never a bad thing to be zealous if zeal is in the cause of good, and Paul adds that their zeal which was demonstrated while he was present among them should also characterize them in his absence.

He assures them that the zeal they showed for God under

his teaching was a worthy zeal in a good cause, and he desired that they should continue that zeal for Jesus Christ and not be diverted from it as well when he was absent as when he was present with them. They were of that class of people easily led by plausible men who might be present with them. This class of people are common and have no convictions of their own, but are led by every wind of doctrine (Lipscomb, 249).

Coupled with their departure from the gospel, Paul's absence and distance from the churches of Galatia was a source of deep anxiety for him. Affectionately addressing them as "my little children," he speaks of his travail in birth "again." Like the Corinthians, Paul had fathered them in the faith by begetting them through the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15), and he uses the figure as it pertains not only to a father, but to a mother in travail bringing forth a child. He had begotten them through the gospel (Jas. 1:18), bringing them into Christ, but now travails *again* because of their departure from Him. His anxiety is also expressed in his desire to be with them again and bring about their return to Christ, so his voice might be changed toward them—that he might be confident in their faithfulness to the Lord—for their present condition presented doubts in his mind and fear that they would complete their apostasy.

## F. The Law And The Gospel In The Allegory Of Sarah And Hagar (4:21-31)

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, 'Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband.' Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.' So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

**Verses 21-24.** Returning to his argument of the superiority of the gospel system of faith over the law of Moses, Paul asks, "You who desire to live under the law, do you not hear what that very law says?" The law of Moses was a system of bondage—the very bondage that those free Galatians in Christ wanted imposed upon themselves. The "law" to which Paul here refers could not have been the law of Moses, codified at Sinai, but to the writings of the Pentateuch—the first five books of the Old Testament—which the Jews referred to as "the law," for the passages cited from it are in Genesis, not in the law of Moses itself.

He reminds them that Abraham fathered two sons—one by promise, and the other after the flesh. Isaac was the son of promise, as Sarah was barren. His birth was miraculous, and according to the promise of God. Ishmael was the son born to Abraham after the flesh. The birth of Ishmael did

not negate or change God's promise that Abraham would have a son. Like the law itself, Ishmael's birth was parenthetical between the promise of a son and the birth of Isaac. Sarah, no doubt, was aware of the promise of a son that God made to Abraham in Genesis 15:3-6, but like people in all ages of the world, she did not have enough faith to wait patiently for the fulfillment of that promise. Consequently, she devised a plan to "help out God." Her scheme was for Abraham to father a child by her handmaiden, the Egyptian Hagar. This was the "added" son until the child of promise should come, although Sarah was doubtless unaware of that figure. Neither Ishmael nor the sons of Abraham's second wife, Keturah, shared in Abraham's legacy at his death (Gen. 25:5-6). As the son of promise, Isaac was Abraham's heir—the son of promise through whom the Messiah came into the world and through whom the promise of God (Gen. 12:2-3; 15:4-6) was fulfilled. Ishmael was born of fleshly considerations according to the natural order of things, but Isaac was miraculously conceived and born of promise.

As the mistress of her household, Sarah was a free woman, while her handmaiden was a servant in the house of Abraham. This, Paul says, is precisely the relation the law sustains to the gospel system of the faith, and these two women—Sarah and Hagar—and their sons constitute an allegory of those two covenants. An allegory is a literary device, defined as, "The setting forth of a subject or the telling of a story in figurative or symbolic language requiring interpretation; especially, a narrative bearing a moral by symbolic devices, such as personification, metaphor, etc..." (*Britannica World Language Dictionary*).

Thus, the story of Sarah and Hagar and their children is set forth with them as figures or symbols of the two covenants, and the two covenants are personified in the two women. In fact, Paul interprets the allegory in this way in verse 24, and then proceeds to explain its significance, or

interpretation, and begins by saying that Hagar is representative of that covenant from Sinai which is a covenant of bondage.

**Verses 25-31.** Hagar, Paul explains, is representative of mount Sinai, or the covenant given there through Moses, and “answereth to”—is representative of—the law of Moses, or “Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” Of this interpretation, there can be no doubt. Paul wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and made the comparison between Hagar and the law of Moses twice for emphasis (verses 24 and 25). There is also irony in the account of Abraham’s two sons. The law of Moses was a shadow of the covenant revealed in Christ, but the birth of these two sons and the casting out of Hagar was a *shadow of the shadow*. That’s the precise application Paul makes in this allegory. Sarah, from whom Israel sprang, did not represent the law, but the free born children of God in Christ. Hagar, from whom the Ishmaelites sprang, represented the bondage of the law under which the Jews lived from Sinai to Pentecost in Acts two.

Paul then contrasts that covenant represented by Hagar—Mount Sinai in Arabia—with that represented by Sarah—free Jerusalem which is above and “which is the mother of us all.” The spiritual application of this allegory must not be overlooked. Sarah had only one child, while Abraham fathered many others by other women. In noting Sarah’s barren condition, Paul quotes from Isaiah 54:1: “Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband.” Though applied to Sarah, who bore only Isaac, the Scripture says she had (has) many more children. As those who walk in the steps of Abraham’s faith are his spiritual seed through baptism by faith in Christ (Gal. 3:26-27), so those same persons are the innumerable spiritual children of Sarah.

Beginning in verse 28, Paul makes the allegory's application to the present conditions. "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." As Christ and His scheme of redemption were contained in the germinal promise of Genesis 3:15, so in Isaac was the germinal promise of salvation to both Jew and Gentile as the children, or heirs, of that promise. The point we must not miss in this allegory is that Abraham is not under consideration, but *Sarah*. Abraham had many other children by Keturah (Gen. 25:1-5) but he had only *one son of promise* by his wife Sarah, and it is she who, in this allegory, is called "the mother of us all" (Verse 26). I respectfully disagree with many commentators who say the *church* is our mother. Paul's application of the allegory makes *Sarah* our spiritual mother, as he describes Abraham as our spiritual father (Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 4:1-12). From both Abraham and Sarah sprang spiritual Israel—the church—through the promise of God.

Further comparison between the law and the gospel in the persons of Sarah's and Hagar's sons is offered in verse 29. Ishmael is said to have "persecuted" Isaac by "mocking" in Genesis 21:9. What this meant is not known, but the inspired apostle calls it "persecution" in the Galatian letter. The application of this figure is then made concerning conditions then extant—"...he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now."

The first persecutions against Christ's followers arose from among the Jews who tried to eradicate the religion of Christ from their world. The Jews' reaction to Christianity was almost immediate. As the Lord had been hounded and persecuted by His enemies among the Jews, so those same enemies launched a campaign against the apostles, as recorded by Luke in Acts 4 and 5, which resulted in the death of Stephen in Acts 7, Paul's persecution of the church in Acts 8 and 9, the Jews' plot to kill Paul after his conversion

(Acts 9:23-25) and Peter's imprisonment and the death of James in Acts 12. Persecution by the Jews continued throughout Paul's life, and was especially noted by Luke during the first preaching tour in Galatia where Paul was stoned and left for dead at Lystra (Acts 14). This was the substance of which Ishmael's persecution of Isaac was the shadow in the allegory.

Though the Jews prided themselves on their fleshly descent from Abraham and trusted in the law for justification, that was not God's plan. Like Sarah, they misconstrued and misunderstood God's promise, seeking its fulfillment in ways of their own choosing, but they were wrong in their construction of it. *They* were the children of the bondwoman in Paul's allegory, but she and her son were cast out. She was not the mother of the faithful and her son was not the heir of the promise. The conclusion of the allegory is that the law of Moses was cast out. Its existence did not thwart God's plan, nor were its precepts intended to justify men. Jew and Gentile are both justified through the gospel system of faith without the works of the law, and all Christians are the spiritual children of the free woman—not the bondslave.

Thus far, Paul has presented an array of arguments showing that the law of Moses was abrogated and no part of it is to be bound as an article of faith on either Jew or Gentile in the current dispensation. He has argued that the Galatians did not receive spiritual gifts through the works of the law, but through the gospel (Gal. 3:1-5), that the promise of God was not annulled by the inclusion of the law (Gal. 3:15-18), that the law was a parenthesis between the promise and its fulfillment in Christ (Gal. 3:19-29), that Christians serve God as sons—not servants (Gal. 4:1-7), and that the covenant represented by Hagar was cast off (Gal. 4:21-31).

### III. Duties Enjoined By Freedom In Christ (5:1-6:18)

#### A. Embracing The Law Abandons Freedom In Christ (5:1-12)

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offense of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

**Verses 1-3.** This is Paul's conclusion, drawn from his allegory. The word "therefore" relates to what has just been said. Therefore, Christians are children of the free woman and, as such, must stand fast in that liberty and refuse to embrace the bondage of the law which Hagar and her son represent. To require circumcision as a condition of salvation not only entangles one in a "yoke of bondage" which Peter said, "neither our fathers nor we were able to bear," (Acts 15:10), but obligates those who are circumcised to keep the whole law. Circumcision did not stand alone as an isolated rite. Its meaning was that of a covenant relationship with God under the law of Moses and as such it obligated the circumcised man to keep the whole law—not just circumcision. The reason Christ will profit nothing to the circumcised is because circumcision represents an obliga-

tion to keep the law of Moses which could not take away sins. It should be here noted that circumcision, in and of itself, is not sinful. Paul is not addressing the modern medical practice, but a religious rite of the Jews in circumcising their males on the eighth day. To practice circumcision as a means of salvation is as worthless as seeking justification through the blood of animals under the Mosaic covenant.

**Verses 4-6.** The statement in verse four is parallel to that in Hebrews 10:26 and addresses the same problem. The Hebrews were in danger of completely abandoning the faith and returning to the law of Moses. When the Hebrew writer said, “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,” he meant that a return to the dead ordinances and sacrifices of the law would leave them without the efficacy of Christ’s blood as a sacrifice for their sins. He had earlier said in Hebrews 10:4 that, “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” To abandon Christianity and return to the law would leave them without a sacrifice to remit their sins. Only the blood of Christ has that power, and His sacrifice was made once and for all for all men for all time (Heb. 9:24-28).

So it was with the Galatians. To seek justification through the dead ordinances of the law constituted a falling from the grace of God. There is no clearer verse in all the Bible showing that one who is a Christian *can* fall from grace, than Galatians 5:4. Men may try to explain it away, and pervert it, but it stands as a plain declaration that the doctrine of John Calvin on the “Perseverance of The Saints” is a false doctrine.

God...does not wholly take away his Holy Spirit from his own, *even in lamentable falls*, nor does he permit them to glide down (*prolabi*) that they should fall from the grace of adoption and the state of justification; or commit the ‘sin unto death,’ or against the Holy Spirit; that, being deserted by him, they should cast themselves headlong into eternal destruction. So that not by their own merits or strength, but by the gratuitous mercy of God, they obtain it, that they nei-

ther *totally fall* from faith and grace, nor *finally continue* in their falls and perish. (“Calvinism,” “Doctrines of Dort,” McClintock & Strong, Vol. II, pp. 39-46).

Calvin’s doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy, or “Perseverance of The Saints,” logically grew from his other false premises concerning God’s sovereignty and man’s free will.

The doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy is a holdover of Calvinism, a relic of the old predestination and foreordination and unconditional election and reprobation theology: It is that old antiquated doctrine that God decreed before the world began that a certain elect number should be saved and a number just as certain and fixed could not be saved, neither class to be increased nor diminished, having been determined of God, irrevocably and unalterably before the foundation of the world. It is the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation of the whole race of man.

The idea of the impossibility of apostasy simply grows out of it—the logical outcome of that old doctrine. It is simply this: If a man’s salvation has been settled from all eternity then he is bound to persevere. He is made that way. God made him a certain way, either a vessel to be saved, or a vessel to be damned. He could not be or do otherwise. If that be true, then man is a mere machine, He is not a being of free moral agency, of choice, or of volition. He is a mere machine in the hands of God. His salvation on one hand, or his damnation on the other, is simply a matter of naked omnipotence. He could not do anything one way or the other that would affect his salvation. If he is predestinated to be saved, he could not be lost, no matter what he does. And if he is foreordained to be damned, a reprobate, then he could not do anything to be saved, and could not be saved no matter what he did. Thus the theory is the doctrine of divine discrimination and of providential partiality. But ‘God is no respecter of persons’ (Wallace, *Bulwarks Of The Faith*, 119-120)

Calvin’s doctrine of “perseverance” clearly contradicts the inspired apostle’s declaration that Christians in Galatia not only *could* but *did* fall from grace by embracing the abrogated law of Moses. Calvin was a false teacher, and those who embrace his doctrines today are teaching false

doctrines. The doctrine of “perseverance of the saints”—also known as “once saved, always saved,” is postulated in the following from the *Grace Evangelical Society*:

People who teach that it is possible to lose your salvation normally use several prooftexts. At first glance the verses do appear to prove their point. However, upon further study it becomes clear that they have taken the verses out of context and forced a meaning upon the text which the author never intended. A case in point is Galatians 5:4.

I have had people point to Galatians 5:4 and say, “Doesn’t Paul say that at least some of the Galatian Christians had fallen from grace? And, if they could fall from grace, so can we today.”

How did they take the verse out of context?

We would agree that the book is addressed to Christians (Galatians 1:6,9; 5:1).

We would also agree that some of the readers had fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4) and some were on the verge of doing so (Galatians 5:2).

We would even agree that it is possible for believers today to fall from grace. The text clearly does not limit this falling to the Galatian Christians only. Any Christian who reverts to seeking to be justified by law has fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4).

The problem is in the conclusion we draw, not in the premises. The whole issue here is what falling from grace means. Does it mean that the believers in question have fallen from their positional standing in grace? If it does, then Paul contradicts himself because in other passages he clearly states that is impossible (cf. Romans 8:38-39; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; Colossians 2:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:10; 2 Timothy 2:13). Since scripture is God’s Word, it cannot contradict itself. Thus, whatever Paul meant by falling from grace he did not mean falling from one’s position as a child of God.

Is there not another obvious alternative, one which fits the context and Pauline and biblical theology perfectly? Falling

from grace means that a believer who reverts to pharisaical thinking and practices has fallen from a *present experience* of grace. While our position in the grace of God is secure, our experience of His grace is not (Bob Wilkin, *Has This Passage Ever Bothered You? Galatians 5:4 - Can Believers Fall From Grace?*, <http://www.faithalone.org.news/y1988/88jan1.htm>).

The claim is made that an “*experience of grace*” is what is lost in Galatians 5:4 and that one who teaches “it is possible to lose your salvation” has taken this verse from the context. A close examination of Wilkin’s wresting of the Scriptures indicates that it is *he* who has removed this verse from the context. Paul is not talking about an “*experience of grace*,” but a contrast between the law of Moses, which could not justify the sinner, and the gospel system of faith by which all—Jews and Gentiles—are justified today. The words “*experience of grace*” cannot be found in the entire book of Galatians.

Wilkin further uses several passages in an attempt to force Galatians 5:4 into the mold of his doctrine which postulates that one cannot be lost after he becomes a Christian. Let us now examine those.

#### **Romans 8:38-39**

There is no mention of an “*experience of grace*” in this passage, nor does it teach the doctrine of perseverance as Calvinism teaches. Paul says none of the things delineated in Romans 8:38-39 can separate us from the *love of God*, and that is the absolute truth. But a man can separate himself from God’s grace and fall from it, as Galatians 5:4 teaches. There is not a contradiction between this passage and the Galatian passage.

#### **Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30**

The earnest of the Spirit is the revelation received in parts and portions by New Testament prophets, and the seal is the miraculous ability they had to confirm what they taught. There is no mention of an “*experience of grace*” in either of

these passages, nor of the utter inability of a child of God to fall from grace.

#### Colossians 2:13-14

Again, this passage has absolutely nothing to do with the false premise that a child of God cannot be lost. It makes no mention of an “experience of grace.” This is an example of those who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction and has nothing to do with a contextual consideration of Galatians 5:4. Neither does Paul declare here that “it is impossible” to fall from grace.

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:10

Dealing with the misconception of the Thessalonians that those who die before the Lord returns will not be raised, Paul says of Christ, “...who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.” It takes a mighty stretch to squeeze this verse into the “once saved, always saved” mold. That doctrine is not in this verse, despite the strainings of the Calvinistic crowd.

#### 2 Timothy 2:13

Paul says here, “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.” That verse is also true. But Paul is not talking about what *man* does, but what *Christ* does. Christ cannot deny Himself, but man *can* depart from the faith and be lost.

The contrast between the law and the gospel system of faith is continued in verse 5. It is not through the law of Moses, but “through the Spirit” that we “wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” “Through the Spirit” in this verse means through the faith revealed by the Spirit, and the “hope of righteousness by faith” is not only forgiveness in this life through the gospel, but the hope of eternal life to come. This, the law could never bring. The “hope of righteousness” is the hope that comes through the gospel, which justification from sin involves, and it is that “hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world

began” (Tit. 1:2). That hope comes only to those whose sins are forgiven and who are conformed to the image of Christ, and that comes only through the gospel—not through the law of Moses.

Verse 6 is the conclusion and summary of all he has set forth about the gospel system of faith and its superiority over the Mosaic covenant. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision for Jews or Gentiles accounts for anything in our standing before God in the gospel dispensation. What is demanded of all men today is “faith which worketh by love.” The key words in that phrase are “faith” and “worketh”. As Abraham’s faith moved him to obey the voice of God, so that is what God expects of men today. A faith which gives only mental assent to God’s existence, but does not move a man to hear and obey the gospel of Christ is a dead faith—whether he is a Jew or Gentile—and James says a dead faith will not save (Jas. 2:20-24).

Nor do works of faith apart from love’s motivation save a man. Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words” (Jn. 14:23). That is the only acceptable motivation for doing the will of Christ. A perfunctory performance of His commands is a lifeless, and loveless faith that is worthless in the eyes of God. The first and greatest commandment to Israel was, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deut. 6:4-5) and from that precept still springs all acceptable service to God. Any duties performed or worship offered that are not motivated by love for God are not accepted by Him.

**Verses 7-12.** Using the figure of a race, as he did in the Hebrew letter (Heb. 12:1), the apostle reminds them that they began to “run well,” but had faltered in their course. Then he puts this question to them: “Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” Having become Christians, they had an obligation to continue on that course,

walking in the light of the gospel (1 Jn. 1:6-7). Obedience to the gospel is not a monolithic act. In the same figure of an athletic contest, Paul told Timothy that, "...if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. 2:5). The Christian life is a constant race, and a continual struggle against false doctrines which lead away from God. That was the message of Paul and Barnabas, confirming the souls of the disciples on their return from their first preaching tour—"...we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Jesus said the same thing when he used an agricultural figure to describe discipleship. "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62). Neither did Paul consider himself to have "arrived" at any point in his service to Christ. He told the Philippians that, "I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14). Not until he faced certain death at the hands of the Romans could Paul confidently affirm that, "...the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:6-7). One cannot *begin* to "run well" and reach heaven at last without *continuing* to run well by living each moment of each day in obedience to the gospel.

Verse 8 is a gentle reminder that they who would have plucked out their eyes for him have now changed, while he and his message have remained constant. "Him that calleth you" is a reference to his preaching among them—his calling them into Christ by the gospel—and the proofs of his apostleship he had demonstrated to them. "This persuasion" that they had to add circumcision from the law to the requirements of the gospel for salvation did not come from

him. His message had not changed, nor was it he who hindered them in obeying the truth. *They* had changed, at the persuasion of Judaizing teachers who subverted their souls.

It takes very little leaven to influence a lump of dough—the truth stated in verse 9. Leaven is figuratively used in the Scriptures for both good and evil influence. Jesus warned His disciples to, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6) but they misunderstood His warning, believing He spoke of their lack of physical bread. When He reminded them of the feeding of the five thousand and the seven thousand with the loaves and fishes, they then understood that, “he bade them *not* beware of the leaven of *bread*, but of the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. 16:12). In this case, Jesus used leaven to describe false teaching. In another instance, He used it to describe *good* influence. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened” (Matt. 13:33). Paul’s point in verse 9 is that *any* influence—in this case, evil influence—can and will affect the whole lump.

Leaven cannot be isolated in a tiny part of a lump of dough. It begins small, works quietly inside the lump, and influences all of it. So is the work of false teachers in the church. No false teacher ever walked into a congregation, announcing he was such, or his intent to lead the church away from the truth. Without exception, false teachers are always deceptive. Jesus described them as “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (Matt. 7:15). They enter the church quietly and deceptively, and work their evil under cover of darkness. Like Judas, they slink through the darkened streets and alleys of deception to betray the Lord and lead men away from Him. This was precisely the case among the churches of Galatia. I have no doubt that the Judaizing

teachers were “kind and loving” in their approach to the Galatians. They didn’t come into the region deprecating Paul’s teaching and calling him a liar—at the first. Perhaps they began, as the serpent began his temptation of Eve, by questioning. “Yea, hath Paul said...?” Then perhaps they continued, “Well, you know Paul is not a *real* apostle. We are from Judea, and we know the *real* ones. In fact, we have studied under them, and that is probably where Paul also got his teaching. Paul is a good person and we love him, but he did not learn what we have learned.”

While this scenario is hypothetical, it really does not differ much from the tactics of false teachers today. Most of them come into the church with their “higher learning” and “new insights” which have been hidden from Christians for centuries and bring “new enlightenment” in the form of old heresies in new clothes. One such false teacher in our day has said he believes that, in the providence of God, the time has come for the church to be taught the Truth about the Holy Spirit—as though God has hidden that Truth from us for centuries. What arrogance! That is the reason Paul told Titus that an elder must be one who is, “holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Tit. 1:9). In fact, in the very next verse Paul pinpointed the source of the “gainsaying” of which he spoke. “For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision” (Tit. 1:10). Indeed, “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump!”

Paul’s confidence in the Galatian brethren is expressed in verse 10. This is a gentle technique of persuasion, though not a flattering untruth. The inspired apostle never used flattery, or other questionable techniques to persuade men. His message was the Truth of the gospel, even though it made enemies of some men (Gal. 4:16). There was no watering down of, or compromise in, his preaching. Those

were and are the tactics of false teachers. Paul preached the Truth in love for the souls of men, and in supreme love of the Truth of God itself (Eph. 4:15). He knew these brethren well, and expressed his confidence that they would heed and accept his well reasoned and inspired teaching in this letter. He then notes that “he that troubleth you”—the Judaizers—“shall bear his own judgment,” and adds, “whosoever he be.” “Whosoever” those false teachers *claimed* to be made no difference to Paul, or to God. They would be judged by the same standard as the rest of the world—the word of Christ (Jn. 12:48).

The logical answer to Paul’s question in verse 11 is that he would *not* still be suffering persecution from the Jews if he preached circumcision as the Judaizers claimed. The Jews instigated most, if not all, of the persecutions against Paul in Gentile lands. At Corinth, they brought him before Gallio, saying, “This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law” (Acts 18:13). That was the same charge made in Galatia—that Paul failed to require circumcision of the Gentiles.

Many think that these false teachers had accused Paul of inconsistency in circumcising Timothy and not forbidding the Jews to circumcise their children, so that he taught one way with the Jews, another with the Gentiles, seeking to please both (Lipscomb, 261).

Now, Paul asks, “If I am preaching circumcision, as the Judaizers claim, why are they still persecuting me?” If he preached the message they wanted him to preach, they would have ceased their persecution of him. The world loves its own, and will not oppose those who stand with it. “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (Jn. 15:18-19). Of Abel’s murder at the hands of Cain, John asked,

“And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother’s righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you” (1 Jn. 3:12-13). The world’s opposition to men ceases when those men cease to preach and practice the Truth. That has always been the case, and that was the case with Paul. Had he preached circumcision, as the false teachers alleged, they would not have opposed him, for the offense of the cross—a stumblingblock to the Jews (1 Cor. 1:23)—would have ceased and they would have had no reason to oppose his preaching.

His statement in verse 12 is closely connected with the question of verse 11. The words “cut off” in this verse are from the Greek *apokopto*, which Strong defines as, “to amputate; reflex. (by irony) to mutilate (the privy parts): cut off” (p. 14). The root words from which this one is derived are *apo*, meaning “off” or “away”, and *kopto*, meaning, “to ‘chop’; spec. to beat the breast in grief:—cut down, lament, mourn, (be) wail” (14, 43). This strong figure of wishing the mutilation of the Judaizers is a hyperbole. Paul does not wish the physical mutilation of the Judaizers, but uses this term to indicate his desire that they be cut off from their ability to influence the Galatians. It may also refer to his desire that they be cut off from fellowship with the churches which they disturbed. That is almost the same kind of language he employed in directing the Corinthians to disfellowship the fornicator in their midst, including the figure of leaven as an evil influence in the church.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened (1 Cor. 5:4-7).

To the Galatians then, Paul basically says, “I would that

the only type of circumcision you practice is that of circumcising those false teachers who trouble you by cutting them off from the churches which they disturb, thus purging yourselves of their evil leaven.”

## B. Freedom In Christ Is Not A License To Sin (5:13-26)

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.

**Verses 13-15.** This begins the sum and consequence of his arguments against a return to the law. They (and we) have been called to the liberty which is in Christ. All men are now free from the legal strictures of the law of Moses, by which no one could be justified. We no longer serve God as did the bondslaves under that law, but as sons in the glorious liberty of the gospel by which God forgives, receives, adopts, and blesses those who answer its call. But even in the liberty of the gospel there is danger. Not a danger that arises from the gospel itself, but from the liberty that is ours therein. That danger is the one which we find so rampant in our contemporary world and which Paul addressed in the Roman epistle—the danger of viewing God's grace under the gospel as a license to sin.

For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ). Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid, How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin (Rom. 5:17-6:7).

When a person is baptized into Christ, he is separated from his old life of sin which held him in bondage. He is no longer a servant of sin, but a servant of Christ.

If we keep in mind what Paul had been saying, we will see that to crucify the old man is the same thing as to die to sin. Of himself, Paul said, 'I have been crucified with Christ' (Gal. 3:20). Paul the sinner died. What was true of him is true of everyone who becomes a Christian. The old man, the body of sin, is the sinner. Every time a person becomes a Christian, a sinner dies. We die as sinners and are raised up as saints. ...We are then no longer the bondservants of sin. When a bondservant, or a slave, dies, he passes from under his master. His master no longer has dominion over him. ...If a slave of sin dies to sin, he is free from service to his master. Sin rules him no more (Whiteside, 133).

If grace abounds much more than sin, as Paul wrote to the Romans, then the objection might be raised that we

ought to sin more in order that God's grace might abound much more and be magnified. But Paul refutes that theory in Romans 6 by contrasting the servant of sin with the servant of righteousness. Liberty in Christ does not make one free from all restraint. That's the point in Paul's refutation of that theory:

What shall we say then? shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey? whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:15-18).

The servant of sin is the man who allows sin to have control of his life. But the servant of righteousness is the man who stands in the liberty of the gospel system of faith. In his life, sin may enter, but it does so as an intruder, not as a ruler. The servant of righteousness will control his fleshly lusts through continuing obedience to the gospel, and not use his liberty as an occasion to sin in order for grace to abound. Sin is a severe taskmaster which promises great things, and may deliver them "for a season." But in the end, the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). The body of sin is destroyed in baptism and the new man rises to "walk in newness of life." That life which follows baptism into Christ is new in quality as well as quantity, and is to be lived separate from the dominion of sin.

Their number is legion in our postmodern world who teach that the grace of God allows men to continue living in sin and will then usher them one day into heaven. This is one of the most pernicious and dangerous teachings extant in our world. That philosophy equates God's grace with His toleration of every imaginable sin. Consequently, they conclude that the law of Moses demanded right living, but un-

der the system of grace, that is no longer required, because we are no longer under *any* law. That conclusion is the basis for much licentiousness that is practiced by the religious world, and flies in the face of Paul's statement that, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). The "law of the Spirit of life" is the gospel. It is by God's law of grace that we are delivered from the guilt and consequences of sin and pass from under its dominion.

To be in captivity under the law of sin is to be dead spiritually. Hence, this law of sin in our members is also the law of death. Freedom from that law is salvation. But the law of the Spirit of life makes us free from the law of sin and death—that is, it is that by which we are saved. In [Romans] chapter 1:16, Paul tells us that the gospel is God's power for saving people. We conclude, therefore, that the law of the Spirit of life is the gospel. This conclusion harmonizes with Paul's line of reasoning. It would be absurd to think that Paul started in to prove that the gospel is God's power for saving people, and then reached the conclusion that some other law saves us, or frees us, from sin and spiritual death (Whiteside, 168).

Freedom from *the* law of the Mosaic dispensation does *not* mean we are free from *all* law under the system of grace. Nor does God's grace permit Christians to continue living in sin. The fact that immediate punishment for sin, such as stoning for adultery under the law of Moses, is not part of the grace system under which we live does not mean God has no law prohibiting adultery. That is made abundantly clear in passages such as First Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:19-21. The grace of God teaches us to live, "soberly, righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12), and a violation of that law of grace will bring eternal punishment. God's grace does not mean an absence of law, or that He tolerates sin, and Christians cannot and *must not* use their liberty in Christ as an occasion to the flesh.

Self indulgence, or pursuit of fleshly lusts, naturally excludes others. That's the contrast in verse 13 between using liberty to indulge oneself and love of one's neighbor. The

self-centered person who indulges in sin, saying, “God wants me to be happy”, is not one to consider the needs of his neighbor. One of the first and fundamental precepts in following Christ is self-denial. “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Lk. 9:23). No man is a follower of Christ who has not first denied his own will and said, “Lord, thy will be done.” Spiritual egocentrism denies the welfare of others and seeks the good of self. That’s the appeal of many so-called “Community Churches” which pander to the “felt needs” of their members. The fun, games, concerts, ski trips, dramas, and other worldly pursuits provided by modern religionists result from an inward focus and an emphasis upon *getting* in religion. Like Judas, people are asking, “What will ye give me?” instead of following Him who looked outward to fields white unto harvest, and *gave* His all that we might live. This Judas egocentrism is that which Paul opposes in verse 13 when he says, “...but by love serve one another.”

The word “love” in verse 13 is the Greek, *agape*. This word indicates a kind of love that rises above emotional or filial attachment. This is the highest form of love and is the kind God has for man. It is not to be equated with “liking” someone. Jesus said, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son...” (Jn. 3:16). God certainly did not *like* man in his sinful condition, but He *loved* man so much that He was willing to give His Son to die for us. *Agape* is love that springs from the will and seeks the highest good for others. It is the kind of love that motivates one to provide necessities for those whom he does not even know, and that is the kind of love that Paul enjoins upon us all. With love motivating us, we ought to serve one another, not esteeming ourselves above our fellow saints.

The law is fulfilled, says Paul in verse 14, by loving our neighbors as ourselves. There are two words which describe

man's relationship to both God and his fellow man. The first, "godliness," describes his relationship to God, and the second, "righteousness," describes his relationship to man. A man who is godly is one who loves and respects the sacred and all things relating to God. One who is righteous is one who comports himself in right dealings with others. A man who is ungodly certainly cannot be trusted to treat his fellow man right. Godliness is the first requisite of the law, followed by righteousness. This was taught by Jesus in answering the lawyer's question:

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matt. 22:36-40).

In his comments on Romans 1:18, R. L. Whiteside discusses this topic and points out the difference between the words "godliness" and "righteousness."

Godliness is piety and reverence. A godly person is one who has respect for God and sacred things. Ungodliness is impiety, irreverence, a lack of respect for God and sacred things. Godliness is a right attitude toward God. Righteousness refers more particularly to our right attitude toward our fellow men. It is treating our fellow men right. Unrighteousness is the failure to do right toward our fellow men. (24).

When a person is godly—pious toward God—that piety and reverence will issue in the fruit of righteousness which is right dealings with his fellow man. When Paul says the law is fulfilled in the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," he means that the one who so loves his neighbor and treats him righteously has *already* fulfilled the first commandment of Jesus to love the Lord with all his heart. That constitutes evidence of his godliness, for one who fulfills the law in loving his neighbor will *already* be a

lover of God.

On the heels of his injunction in the previous verse, Paul issues a stern warning in verse 15. If they have no love for God, and, consequently, for each other, they will continue in their wrangling over circumcision, i.e., they will “bite and devour one another.” For a people of such vacillating emotions as the Galatians, this warning was absolutely necessary. Doubtless, the Judaizers had aroused quick and emotional responses among some of them which had resulted in recriminations from both sides. Even among the faithful, this is a danger. Those who love and defend the Truth must never stoop to such tactics. Attacking persons or character has no place in defense of the Truth. The argumentum ad hominem is a poor defense of God’s Truth. Let those who teach error call defenders of Truth “unloving,” “legalists,” “spiteful,” and “hateful,” but in defending the Truth, always address the *doctrines* of false teachers, not their persons. This only results in biting and devouring each other until each is ultimately consumed. Certainly, false teachers should be “cut off” as Paul desired of those who troubled the Galatian churches, but that “cutting off” should be as a result of their doctrines to keep the church pure from error. Character assassination has no place among defenders of the Truth. Even Paul lamented the lost condition of his persecutors when he wrote, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Rom. 10:1) but he did not yield to their false teaching among the Galatians. On the other hand, “speaking the truth in love,” does not mean speaking the truth in such a way that it offends no one. That simply cannot be done if one preaches the Truth, as Paul noted in Galatians 4:16. To preach the truth in love is to preach it with a love for the souls of men, and a supreme love for the gospel which is God’s power to save lost souls. To do that is to fulfill the law, for there is no higher love than action directed toward others to bring about

their eternal salvation.

**Verses 16-21.** What does it mean to, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh?” It is obvious that the word “flesh” in this context does not refer to the law of Moses, but to the bodies of Christians. The law did not have “lusts,” but all men have “the lust of the flesh.” In view of this, Paul says the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. The result of this conflict is that “ye cannot do the things that ye would.” The last phrase of verse 17 directly connects with Paul’s discourse on that same conflict in the Roman epistle.

For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin (Rom. 7:19-25).

The conflict of which Paul speaks in both the Roman and Galatian epistles is the conflict between the inner man—the spirit—and his flesh. That is further explained in Romans 8:4 where the apostle refers to walking, “not after the flesh, but after the spirit.” For that reason, I believe this is another instance when the word “spirit” should not be capitalized. The spirit of Romans 8:4 and in Galatians 5 is not the Holy Spirit, but the inward man. That is the meaning of Paul’s statement that, “with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” He is not saying, as the Calvinists do, that when a Christian sins, he does so with his body, but his spirit does not sin. Paul refers to that part of man which *controls* him and that is the contrast between “flesh’ and “spirit.”

It seems to me that the commentators fail entirely to grasp the meaning of this verse. Some of them take it for granted that Paul is speaking of the condition of the Christian. In their estimation, the mind of the redeemed man serves God, but the flesh serves the law of sin. When they seek to explain this idea by dwelling on the warfare in the Christian between the spirit and the flesh, they miss the point entirely, for the verse says nothing about such a warfare. Paul spoke of service and not of fighting. And there is no such thing as serving God with the mind while the body serves sin (Whiteside, 163).

Continuing this theme in Romans 8, Paul says the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those who “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:4).

The clause is descriptive of the characters in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled. ‘Walk’ refers to manner of life. As flesh and spirit are here contrasted, it seems certain that Paul meant the human spirit, and not the Holy Spirit. To walk according to the flesh is to lead an animal life. No matter what his character is, he is one who lives a worldly life. He lives as if this life were all that is worthwhile. To walk according to the spirit is to keep the flesh under control so as to promote spiritual growth in the service of God (Whiteside, 171).

That is what Paul means in Galatians 5 when he refers to the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit. Certainly, the Holy Spirit is the source of that fruit, but it is produced in the spirit of man and brings him to a higher plane of living. The conflict between flesh and spirit results in one or the other dominating a man or ruling his life. He is either ruled by his fleshly lusts, or his inward man controls him under God’s law and submits the members of his body as servants of God (Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:1-10).

The Christian serves with the mind the law of God; the sinner with the flesh serves the law of sin. In the life of the Christian, the mind—the inner man—dominates the flesh; in the sinner’s life the flesh dominates the mind. But in either case, the mind does the planning and willing. In the sinful life, the mind yields to the appetites and passions of the flesh, and

plans for their gratification; in the Christian life the mind keeps the body under, and uses it in acts of service to God (Whiteside, 164).

To “walk in the spirit” is to live with the fleshly lusts under the control of the inner man which has been purified by obedience to the gospel. It is to conduct one’s life with his body in subjection to his purified soul, as his soul follows the precepts of the gospel of Christ. That is Paul’s contrast between the lusts of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5. If the fruit of the spirit is fruit which the Holy Spirit directly—without medium—produces in man’s heart, it should logically follow that the works of the flesh are produced by Satan operating directly upon man’s heart. In this case, one must not only affirm a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian, but also direct demon influence. That question was posed to one who teaches a “supra-literary” influence of the Holy Spirit upon the Christian. His reply was interesting.

The works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19ff) come from man’s own spirit which includes his heart (Matt. 15:18-20). How the devil exerts his influence on man is something I am not prepared to say. He works through false teachers for sure (1 Tim. 4:1-2) but whether he is limited to informational power, I really doubt. I have not conquered Luke 22:3 (Personal letter, Jan., 2000).

If Satan’s influence over Judas in Luke 22:3 was direct—without Judas’ concurrence—then there is no such thing as free will. Greed—a lust of the flesh—drove Judas to conspire with the chief priests to betray the Lord (Lk. 22:4-5). Satan entered Judas as he enters all who are ungodly—through lust (Jas. 1:13-15). The same was true of Ananias and Sapphira when they lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-3). Peter said to Ananias, “Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?” (v. 3). Satan did not *directly* fill their hearts to lie. His influence was through their lust for money which dominated their spirits, and Peter later asked of

Sapphira, “How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?” (v. 9). Satan has neither direct, nor “informational power” over men. There was a time, during Christ’s personal ministry, when direct demon possession was allowed to manifest the power of Christ over the demon world. But in no case during that time did Satan or demons have *direct power* to cause a person to commit sin. That kind of power has *never* been exercised by Satan. Even in the Garden of Eden his influence over Eve was through her own lust (Gen. 3:6), not by direct possession. Satan’s power is exercised when *man’s spirit* allows the lusts of his flesh to dominate and control his life. The fruit of the spirit is fruit produced by man’s spirit when it is purified by the gospel, and the works of the flesh are produced and practiced when his spirit is corrupted by his own lust.

Verses 18 through 21 contain an enumeration of the works of the flesh—those things which are committed when the flesh dominates and controls man’s whole being. In the first two—adultery and fornication—there is a difference. If these were the same thing, they would not have been listed as two distinct works of the flesh. “Adultery” is from the Greek, *moicheia*, and “fornication” is from *porneia*. All adultery is fornication, but not all fornication is adultery. Adultery is unlawful sexual relations with a person other than one’s own spouse by either a husband or wife. Fornication is a broader term and encompasses any kind of unlawful sexual relations by persons married or unmarried. Those include such sins as sodomy and bestiality.

“Uncleanness” is from, *akatharsia*, and means “impure” (Strong, 9). This is a general term that Lipscomb says is “Unnatural practice—self-abuse, bestiality and sodomy” (266). Thayer says it is, “in a moral sense, the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living” (21). This would then be closely linked with fornication, as would “lasciviousness” that immediately follows.

“Lasciviousness” is *aselgeis* in the original, and means, “unbridled lust, excess, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence, wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc” (Thayer, 79-80). It is characteristic of the general lifestyle of lascivious persons that they unashamedly engage in things such as dancing—“indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females”—and filthy language.

“Idolatry” is simply “image worship.” That was the universal sin of the ancient pagan world, and continues as a near-universal sin in our world today—especially in our own society. An “image” can be literal or a philosophical image, or concept, on which the mind has fixed its affections. Our society worships at the image of “Choice” by permitting women to murder their unborn children under the euphemism, “abortion.” While the idols have changed from Molech of the Canaanites to Choice in modern society, the rites and results are the same. As parents took their infants and burned them to death in the arms of Molech’s image as a sacrifice to him, so modern parents take the unborn and kill them in sacrifice to their idol, Choice. Unlike images graven from wood or stone in the ancient world, modern idolatry takes a multitude of forms today, among which are the gods of Leisure, Mammon, Family, Celebrities, and Hedonism.

“Witchcraft” is from *pharmakeia*. That is the word from which we derive the English word “pharmacy” and describes the ancient occult practice of drug-induced influence on others. Thayer says it means, “The use, or the administering of drugs; poisoning; sorcery, magical arts, often found in connection with idolatry and fostered by it...the deceptions and seductions of idolatry” (649). The dangers of witchcraft are far greater than the mild forms that are popularized in modern entertainment.

“Hatred” is *echthra* which means, “hostility or hatred” (Strong, 34). This evil is the basis of murder, as Jesus taught in the Sermon on The Mount (Matt. 5:21-22), and as John addressed: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 Jn. 3:14-15). Murder is the fruit which springs from the seed of hatred. Not all hatred reaches fruition in murder, but hatred is the seed of it.

“Variance,” says Strong, is “a quarrel, i.e. (by impl.) wrangling:—contention, debate, strife, variance,” (32), and Thayer says it is, “contention, strife, wrangling” (249). These definitions of the word indicate a quarrelsome disposition which is contrary to Paul’s admonition in which he says, “As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18). Those who are at peace with God (Rom. 5:1) will be at peace with one another. The quarrelsome spirit is foreign to the character of Christians and is of the flesh. This does not mean the Christian cannot oppose error, but that he must not allow his passions to rule his heart to the extent that he seeks to quarrel as a way of life. Peaceful fellowship with one another is a horizontal relationship that results from first having a vertical relationship with the Father (1 Jn. 1:7). If we walk in the light of God’s Truth, fellowship and peace with one another are the results.

“Emulations” is an interesting word. It is from *zelos*, which is translated “zeal” in many other New Testament passages. Strong says it is derived from *zeo*, which means “to be hot (boil, of liquids; or glow, of solids), i.e. (fig.) be fervid (earnest):—be fervent.” (34) The noun, *Zelos*, is translated “zeal” in Romans 10:2, referring to the Israelites who had a “zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” It is also used of the Corinthians’ repentance in 2 Corinthians 7:11, of their good effect on the churches of Macedonia in 2 Corinthians

9:2, of Paul's fervor in persecuting the church in Philippians 3:6, and of the fervent labor of Epaphras at Colossae and Laodicea in Colossians 4:13. Thayer says it is "1. zeal, ardor in embracing, pursuing, defending anything: 2. an envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy" (271). This word, then, can be applied to either a good effort or an evil one. Paul's zeal in persecuting the church was misdirected and evil, as was the zeal of Israel in Romans 10:1. On the other hand, the zeal of the Corinthians and Epaphras was directed by the right motive, and in the right cause. Paul also draws the distinction between zeal that is good and that which is bad in Galatians 4:17-18. As one of the works of the flesh, emulations—or a fervid zeal—is a bad thing. It springs from the motive of a quarrelsome spirit which Paul has just discussed and can never be a good thing. The zealous pursuit of things that make for strife and quarreling, such as men's obsessive hobbies, are always evil. The emulator is often the hobby-rider who promotes his cause and imposes it on others regardless of its error. He is more often wedded to his own arguments than to the Truth.

"Wrath" is from *thumos* and is, "passion (as if breathing hard):—fierceness, indignation, wrath" (Strong, 37). Its root word is the verb *thuo* which means, "to rush (breathe hard, blow, smoke), i.e. (by impl.) to sacrifice (prop. by fire, but gen.); by extens. to immolate (slaughter for any purpose):—kill (do) sacrifice, slay" (ibid.).

...to rush along or on, be in a heat, breathe violently... accordingly, it signifies both *the spirit* panting as it were in the body, and the *rage* with which the man pants and swells... In the N.T. 1. passion, angry heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again... 2. glow, ardor...the wine of passion, inflaming wine (which either drives the drinker mad or kills him with its deadly heat) (Thayer, 293).

Wrath, then, is rage against another that builds inside a person, and is closely allied with the fleshly works of hatred, variance, and emulations. It is a passionate, heated

desire of the heart to rush upon one's enemy and immolate or destroy him, brought on by a seething, boiling within that is nurtured as a grudge. The wrathful person never turns the other cheek, but seeks revenge for any and all perceived offences against him, no matter how slight. It is the disposition of heart that would not hesitate to destroy the good name of another, or to assassinate one's good character. Like all other works enumerated by Paul in these verses, wrath proceeds from the inner man, and betrays an evil heart. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: for these are the things which defile a man..." (Matt. 15:19-20).

"Strife" is *eritheia*, meaning, "intrigue, factions,;—contention (-ious), strife," (Strong 32). Thayer says the verb form of the word is derived from a word, meaning, "working for hire, a hireling... hence, apparently in the N.T. a courting distinction, a desire to put oneself forward, a partisan and factious spirit which does not disdain low arts; partisanship, factiousness" (249).

This, too, connects with such things as "variance" and "emulations." The zealously quarrelsome individual creates factions and strife. Rather than teaching and practicing God's word to build up the church and promote the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, he promotes his own pet theories and causes strife which leads to division. The character of such persons is inherently divisive. The root cause of division in the church is always the introduction of practices, either in work or worship, which are not authorized in the Scriptures. Despite that, those who object to unscriptural practices are always accused of creating strife and contention by their objections. That was charged of Elijah when Ahab said to him, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" (1 Ki. 18:17). But the the fact remains that those who promote unscriptural innovations among God's people are the cre-

ators of such strife.

“Seditions” comes from *dichostasia*, which literally means, “a standing apart” (Thayer, 153). It is also translated as “divisions” in Romans 16:17, and 1 Corinthians 3:3. In the former, Paul says to “mark” and “avoid” those who cause “divisions,” and in the latter, he says to the Corinthians, “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” Another word for “division” in the New Testament is *schisma*, from which our English word “schism” is derived. Both words indicate division, but in different degrees. *Schisma* is from *schizo*, from which the first half of our English word “schizophrenia” comes. The Greek word means “to split, or sever, break, divide, open, rend, make a rent” (Strong, 70)

A final separation is indicated by *dichostasia*, but its beginning is found in *schisma*. When a piece of fabric is torn, but still remains in one piece, a *schisma* occurs—a rent in the fabric. When the tear or rent in the fabric is completed until the cloth is then in two pieces, *dichostasia*—a complete standing apart—occurs. The strifes and contentions of hobby riders and innovators constitute a rent in the church, and when these are pursued, they result in a final standing apart—*dichostasia*, or sedition.

“Heresies” is *hairesis*, meaning “a choice, i.e. (spec.) a party or (abstr.) disunion, sect” (Strong, 8). Thayer says it means, “1. Act of taking, capture...the storming of a city... 2. choosing, choice, 3. that which is chosen, a chosen course of thought and action; hence, one’s chosen opinion, tenet... 4. a body of men separating themselves from others and following their own tenets [a sect or party]” (16).

Observe the natural progression from variance, through emulations, wrath, strife, and seditions, until those who practice such things ultimately form their own party or sect. The word *hairesis* is used reproachfully to describe the Phari-

sees, Sadducees, and Christians (Acts 5:17; 15:5; 26:5; 24:5, 14), as “sects.” A sect results when men choose their own opinions as rules of faith and practice above the Word of God. All of these things are comprehended in Paul’s warning that if they continued to “bite and devour” one another, they would “be consumed one of the other.” The strife and wrangling that arises from fleshly lusts can only lead to division in the church and the formation of sects, until the church Jesus built may cease to exist in a community.

“Envyings” can also result from a spirit of rivalry between competing sects. Strong says this word is *phthonos* and describes a spirit of ruination which results from “ill will (as detraction), i.e. jealousy (spite):—envy” (75). This sin has always been found in the denominational world which is divided into sects. They preach conflicting doctrines and compete for the hearts of men much like the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus’ day. Of the Pharisees, He said, “...for ye compass land and sea to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves” (Matt. 23:15). Envy is what motivates large “Community Churches” to put the best spin on their sectarian messages, and to dazzle their members and visitors with fabulous displays of drama, pageants, and concerts in practicing their “market-driven religion.”

“Murders” is from the same word in Galatians as the word describing Saul’s persecution of Christians. “And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem” (Acts 9:1-2).

Robertson (113) suggests that the persecutor was like a war-horse who sniffed the smell of battle. He kept on breathing ‘threatening and slaughter’ against the church, which may represent a dual legal procedure, i.e., warnings and punish-

ment (Longnecker, 368). Later he would confess that he was 'exceedingly mad' against the Lord's people... If he located any that were of the 'Way,' either men or women, he would throw them in chains and return them to Jerusalem for trial. Whenever possible, he would see that they were executed (26:10) (Jackson 105).

Thayer says the charge of "murder," lodged against Barabbas in Luke 23:19, 25, is the same word (657), and Strong says it means, "murder:—murder, be slain with slaughter" (76). Saul's actions in persecuting Christians, and the word's connection with "slaughter" indicates a wanton, violent act that proceeds from the same kind of disposition toward others. In the case of works of the flesh, murder is the consequence of those things which precede it, such as hatred, variance, emulations, etc. Unchecked by love for others, the disposition engendered by those things would naturally result in murder. When one surrenders his life to the flesh and casts off knowledge and love of the Creator, the violent taking of human life is his logical end. Murder was one of the evils enumerated by Paul in his description of a Godless, pagan world which "did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:28-29).

"Drunkenness" is the state that results from ingesting intoxicating drink. The word is from *methe*, which means not only "intoxicating drink," but "intoxication; drunkenness" (Thayer, 395). Of all the works of the flesh, this evil has brought untold misery and ruin to legions of people in our society. The consumption of alcohol and the drunkenness which results from it is responsible for the slaughter of multitudes of innocent people on public roads. Solomon warned that, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). Alcohol is deceptive and ultimately destructive to those who use it, and it ought to be shunned like the plague. But, sadly, there are many in our postmodern age who not only use it, but argue that it is not condemned by God. "Drunkenness,"

they say, “is condemned, but not drinking.” That’s like saying, “It’s perfectly alright to eat, but wrong to digest that which is eaten.” Drunkenness is the *result* of drinking alcohol, and no one ever became drunken who did not first imbibe strong drink. That notion is so silly, it almost deserves no answer—except for the fact that those seeking to rationalize their behaviour will readily accept such sophistry. It has even been postulated that Jesus and the apostles drank alcohol in the form of wine, using Jesus’ miracle at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee as their “proof.” That is absolutely false.

There is no proof that the “wine” at the marriage feast in Cana was fermented. The Greek word for “wine” in this text is *oinos*, which may refer to a fermented beverage (cf. Eph. 5:18), or it may denote freshly squeezed grape juice (cf. Isa. 16:10 LXX). Since the word for “wine” is generic, the student has no right to import the concept of an alcoholic beverage into this passage without contextual justification—of which there is none. (Jackson, *Social Drinking Question*, <http://www.christiancourier.com>)

Drunkenness is soundly condemned throughout the Bible, and drinking alcohol will have no place among those who are spiritually minded. Indeed, as a work of the flesh, it will not be found among those who faithfully mind spiritual things and present their bodies as living sacrifices unto God (Rom. 12:1-2).

“Revellings” is a general term used in only two places in the New Testament—here and in 1 Peter 4:3. It is from *komos*, which denotes, “a carousal (as if a ‘letting loose’):—revelling, rioting” (Strong, p. 44). Thayer says the word in Greek writings refers to, “a nocturnal and riotous procession of half-drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honor of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before the houses of their male and female friends; hence used generally, of *feasts and drinking parties that are pro-*

*tracted till late at night and indulge in revelry; plur. [revellings]* (p. 367).

As other works of the flesh are closely connected and feed one upon the other, so *drunkenness* and *revellings* are closely related. The activity described by this word is that of throwing caution to the wind because of one's drunken stupor, engaging in things one would not do in a sober state of mind, and releasing inhibitions that normally restrain one from indulging fleshly lusts. This is the result of the old mantra of the 1960s social revolution which declared, "If it feels good, do it." The only rule in revelling is that there are no rules of decent and civilized behaviour. The kind of self-indulgence described in this word is the be-all and end-all of the works of the flesh—the tossing aside and rejection of all moral restraint. Interestingly, Peter also describes that kind of behaviour:

For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you... (1 Pet. 4:3-4).

Peter's teaching on this subject is in the same kind of context as Paul's. Peter says as stewards of the grace of God, Christians are to pattern their lives after Christ's and crucify the flesh, walking in the spirit. And in this connection, Peter says, "...as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin..." (1 Pet. 4:1). Peter's contrast is between the *mind* or spirit of man and the flesh. This is the same contrast Paul draws between the spirit and the flesh, and both are saying the *spirit* of man *must dominate* over his fleshly lusts. Moreover, Peter presents a close connection between "wine" and "revellings."

As a final reflection on the works of the flesh, Paul says, “and such like.” This not only includes each of the works of the flesh enumerated by inspiration, but those which are akin to them. The Christian must put to death all works of the flesh that even *resemble* any of those in Paul’s list. That includes such things as dancing, although “it is sometimes contended by worldly-minded church members that revelry does not include dancing; if not, *such like* certainly does” (Lipscomb, 269).

“Love” is the foundational fruit of man’s spirit from which all devotion to God springs. Without love, Paul says all else is worthless (1 Cor. 13). The kind of love described as a fruit of the spirit is *agape*—love that springs from man’s will, not from emotions.

...affection, good will, love, benevolence, Jn. 15:13; Rom. 13:10; 1 Jn. 4:18. Of the love of men to men; esp. that love of Christians toward Christians which is enjoined and prompted by their religion, whether the love be viewed as in the soul or as expressed... Of the love of men towards God... Of the love of God towards Christ... Of the love of Christ towards men... troublesome service, toil, undertaken from love, 1 Th. 1:3; ...love which embraces the truth, 2 Th. 2:10... God is wholly love, his nature is summed up in love, 1 Jn. 4:8, 16 (Thayer, 4).

“Love,” then, is that which is cultivated in and springs from the individual. It is a trait of man’s will or spirit upon which all other fruit of the spirit rests and from which it draws its sustenance. Man’s first duty is to love God. That is godliness. His second duty is to love man. That is righteousness. One who loves God with all his heart will naturally and inevitably love his fellow man who is made in the image of God. Love will move him to seek the highest good for himself in relation to God and the highest good of his fellows. This is fundamental in every aspect of his relationship to God and his fellow man. He who has respect and love for the sacred will have no trouble respecting and lov-

ing others of his kind.

How is this kind of love developed? Is it by a direct influence of the Holy Spirit upon the spirit of the Christian? That is the position of some who deny any such influence upon the alien sinner, but say the Christian cannot produce the fruit of the spirit without the Holy Spirit's direct aid. That philosophy is "half-baked Calvinism." Calvinism contends that the alien sinner is so depraved that he *cannot* become a Christian of his own will, and that after he becomes a Christian, he has the Holy Spirit guiding his life so that he *cannot* be lost. The notion that the alien sinner can understand the word of God, and act upon its precepts to become a Christian, then *cannot* produce the fruit of the spirit without direct influence of the Holy Spirit is simply a mutated form of Calvinism, and a misapprehension of Paul's use of the word "spirit" in Galatians five.

In conversion of the alien sinner, and production of the fruit of the spirit in the child of God, the Holy Spirit operates only through the word of God. All life, in both the physical and spiritual realms, and that which sustains and brings it to fruition, springs from seed. The material creation in which all men live was begun by miracle and is propagated by the germ of life implanted in the seed of all living things by the Holy Spirit. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:1-2).

Elohim—the three persons of the Godhead—all functioned in the creation. That is evident from Genesis 1:1-2, John 1:3, and Hebrews 1:1-2. The Holy Spirit's work is defined in the Genesis account as bringing life from the primal elements of creation and placing the germ of life in the seed of all living things. When Moses wrote that "the Spirit of God *moved* upon the face of the waters," he did not mean mere

motion. The word “moved” was given to him to indicate a specific action designed to accomplish the generation of life.

**Moved** merachepheth, was brooding over; for the word expresses that tremulous motion made by the hen while either hatching her eggs or fostering her young. It here probably signifies the communicating a vital or prolific principle to the waters. (Clarke, 17).

The germ of life, or what Clarke terms the “vital or prolific principle,” was implanted directly in all living things by the Holy Spirit. Having done that work, the Holy Spirit ceased his production of life and the fruit thereof through direct means and continued its propagation through seed. “And God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so” (Gen. 1:11).

God’s spiritual creation had the same kind of beginning and continues in the same fashion. In fact, John’s language regarding Christ’s work of redemption is analogous to that of Moses. (cf. Gen. 1:1 and Jn. 1:1). The church was begun by miracle and continues through seed and that seed is the word of God in which the Spirit implanted life. “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn. 6:63).

Jesus did not mean the Holy Spirit is the word of God, or that the word of God is the Holy Spirit. He used metaphorical language indicating that spiritual life is in words which the Holy Spirit revealed and said, “the seed is the word of God” (Lk. 8:11). The germ of spiritual life inheres in the word, placed there by the same Omnipotent hand that placed physical life in the seed of all living things. Upon this basis, we affirm that every action of the Holy Spirit, exerted upon the alien sinner or the child of God, is begun, carried on

and consummated only through the word of God.

In Matthew's account of the parable of the sower, Jesus called the seed "the word of the kingdom," (Matt. 13:19). He used a universally recognized, natural occurrence to illustrate how the Holy Spirit works in the spiritual realm—through seed—but in none of the soils did the Holy Spirit directly implant life, or produce fruit. The Holy Spirit infused life into the seed "in the beginning" and in every case in the parable, the development and fruition of that seed depended upon the soil—not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had done his work when he placed life in the seed in the beginning of creation and has done the same in the spiritual realm as the Great Revelator of God's word. There was *no* development in that which fell upon the wayside soil because it would not receive it. There was *some* development of that which fell upon the rocky ground, but it did not come to fruition. Why? The soil received the seed but did not have sufficient depth to retain and nourish it. That which fell among thorns partook of the same soil which nourished the thorns, but was choked out by them because the *soil* nourished the thorns to the neglect of the good seed. But that which fell in *good soil* sprang up and "bare fruit a hundredfold" (Lk. 8:8). It was the *same* seed from the *same source* that came to fruition in the good soil, but found unfavorable conditions in the others. The deficiency of some of the soils did not negate the sufficiency of the seed, nor did the seed need or receive additional help from the Holy Spirit.

Now, to hear some people today, one would have to believe that the Holy Spirit was in that good soil "in conjunction with the word of God." From whence sprang that hundredfold fruit? From the Holy Spirit working "in conjunction with" the seed? Did the Holy Spirit infuse life into soil that needed direct, additional help in bearing fruit? Did the Holy Spirit reside in and operate upon western Oklahoma soil

when my grandfather produced a cotton crop? Certainly not! The Holy Spirit placed the germ of life in that cotton seed in the beginning. If I believed the Holy Spirit exerts a direct influence upon the child of God to produce fruit to-day, then I would argue that the Holy Spirit exerted a direct influence upon the soil where my grandfather planted cotton. The two cases are parallel, and in both cases it would be miraculous. The Holy Spirit has never effected salvation for the alien sinner, nor fruit in the heart of a Christian except through the word of God.

As a fruit of the spirit, “love” is that character trait that springs from within the heart of the individual, not something implanted there by a direct influence of the Holy Spirit. It is the foundation of all the individual’s acceptable service to God. When Moses recited the law for the second generation of those who had left Egypt, he prefaced that recitation with, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deut. 6:4-5). Nothing Israel did in their observance of the law of Moses was acceptable to God if what they observed did not spring from their love of Him. Not a single drop of sacrificial blood, a wisp of smoke from burning incense, or a crust of unleavened bread eaten at the passover profited an Israelite anything if he did not first love the Lord with all his heart. Though rivers of blood flowed from their altars, if they did not first love the Lord God, that blood was shed for nought. The same is true in this dispensation in which we live. None of the songs we sing, the money we give, the prayers we pray, the sermons we preach, the communion we observe, or the good deeds we perform in daily living profit anything if we do not *first* love the Lord with all our heart. That is an unchanging principle of God in every age of the world and that is exactly what Paul meant in First Corinthians 13:1-7.

Issuing from the love in man’s spirit for God and things

sacred are all those other things enumerated in verses 22 and 23. First, there is “joy.” Strong says this is *chara*, meaning, “cheerfulness, i.e. calm, delight:—gladness” (77). Thayer says one meaning—and I believe the one expressed as a fruit of the Spirit—is “to attain to blessedness at the right hand of God in heaven, Heb. 12:2; the same idea is expressed in the parable by the words ‘joy of thy Lord’, the blessedness which the Lord enjoys, Mt. 25:21, 23” (665). The “joy” here spoken of is directly connected with the “peace” which immediately follows. The “calm, delight, gladness” of heart is because one’s sins are remitted and he stands in fellowship with God. This is also the blessedness of the happy man of whom David speaks in the First Psalm. “His delight is in the law of the Lord” (Psa. 1:2). Because he loves God, he seeks forgiveness by doing God’s will and the peace he has with the Father creates in him joy unspeakable (1 Pet. 1:8). The same word—*chara*—is descriptive of the joy that was set before Christ and for which joy He endured the shame of the cross (Heb. 12:2).

The “peace” that produces joy in the Christian’s heart is not an absence of carnal conflict, but peace with God. Even Christ was not exempt from carnal conflict while He lived in the flesh. The “peace” here is peace with God. When the angels announced the birth of Christ, they said, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” This great truth is so trivialized by the world—especially at that season the world celebrates as the birth of Christ. In the minds of most people, it has come to mean a cessation of carnal conflict, such as peace between warring nations. But that is *not* what the angels meant. In fact, there is a seeming contradiction between the words of the angels and Jesus own words:

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her

mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household (Matt. 10:34-36).

But there is no contradiction between Jesus' statement and the angels' announcement. They spoke of peace between God and man, and Jesus spoke of the opposition that would come to those who preached and obeyed that message of peace. The peace announced by the angels was the same kind of peace of which Paul wrote: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). This is also the same kind of peace Paul spoke of when he told the Ephesians, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph. 2:14). It is the peace that comes only through reconciliation to God—"...for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Eph. 2:15-17). The fruit of peace results from a cessation of conflict between God and man that comes through the remission of sins in man's obedience to the gospel and his continued walk in the light of that gospel (1 Jn. 1:7).

"Long-suffering" is *makrothumeo*, and means "to be long-spirited, i.e. (obj.) *forbearing* or (subj.) *patient*:—bear (suffer) long, be longsuffering, have (long) patience, be patient, patiently endure" (Strong, 46). This is the disposition to endure present trials and perhaps privation for a later reward. Longsuffering does not seek immediate gratification, but understands that there is a higher, more enduring substance than things of the world. This is the same disposition evinced by Abraham who lived a nomadic life, without benefit of a permanent dwelling place because, "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is

God” (Heb. 11:10) and it is closely tied to the kind of faith that characterized him—an implicit and deeply abiding trust in the surety of God’s promises. Longsuffering also derives from love, joy, and peace. Nothing of earth can move the person who loves God, and whose faith has brought him peace and joy.

“Gentleness” is from *chrestotes*, which means, “*usefulness*, i.e. mor. *excellence* (in character or demeanor):—gentleness, good (-ness), kindness” (Strong, 78). Thayer says it is the quality of “1. *moral goodness, integrity...* 2. *benignity, kindness*” (672). Gentleness is the character trait of the person whose action toward others is always guided by moral rectitude. It is that quality in the Christian which never behaves in a harsh or unkind manner toward his fellow man, nor blames God for his woes in life which are common to all. This, too, is a direct result of the love he has for God and his fellow man.

“Goodness” is *agathosune* and is also found in Romans 15:14; Ephesians 5:9; and 2 Thessalonians 1:11. Strong says it is, “*virtue or beneficence*” (7). The key word here, I believe, is “*virtue.*” The virtuous person is the morally courageous person whose goodness is always based on an objective standard. He is the person who does good even though no one else knows he is doing good, because his allegiance is to a higher standard than his own situational ethics—a standard of righteousness that arises from an objective source outside his own consciousness. A prime example of a virtuous person is Joseph in his reaction to the proposal of Potiphar’s wife.

And it came to pass after these things, that his master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master’s wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then

can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? (Gen. 39:7-9).

Joseph could well have reasoned, as do many today, that, “My master is gone, she desires me, no one will know, and we can both derive pleasure from this one act of fornication.” But Joseph’s goodness—his virtue—would not allow him to “sin against God.” He did not leave a higher standard of conduct out of the equation. He knew what she proposed was wicked and constituted sin against God, regardless of whether anyone else knew about it. That is moral courage, or virtue, which is inherent in goodness.

“Faith” is *pistis*, which Strong says is, “*persuasion*, i.e. *credence*; mor. *conviction* (of *religious truth*, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher) espec. *reliance* on Christ for salvation; abstr. *constancy* in such profession; by extens. the system of religious (Gospel) *truth* itself:—assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity” (58). The fruit of faith is not only belief based upon Truth, (Rom. 10:17), but a constant, daily walk in the precepts of that Truth. That’s what Paul meant when he said, “...and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). Paul’s faith motivated him to live by *the faith*—the gospel of Christ—and the life he lived was a daily buffeting of his own fleshly desires, bringing them into submission to Christ (1 Cor. 9:27). Thayer also says it is used in Galatians 5:22 in a way which means, “*fidelity, faithfulness*, i.e. *the character of one who can be relied on*, and, “of one who keeps his promises” (514). That would indicate that the word “faith” as Paul uses it here means not only one who lives faithfully, in full assurance of *the faith*, but also one whose life is such that faith or trust can be placed in him as well.

“Meekness” is a much maligned and misused word in the English language. In modern usage it has come to mean a sort of spineless character who serves as a doormat for

others, but in Scripture it describes “calmness in provocation, composure in hostilities” (Wallace, *Commentary On Romans, Galatians and Ephesians*, 124). It is that disposition of character that turns the other cheek when provoked, yet continues an unabated course of righteousness.

As a human attribute, Aristotle defines it as *the mean between stubborn anger and that negativeness of character which is incapable of even righteous indignation*: according to which it is tantamount to *equanimity*. Plato opposes it to fierceness or cruelty, and uses it of humanity to the condemned; but also of the conciliatory demeanor of a demagogue seeking popularity and power. Pindar applies it to a king, *mild* or *kind* to the citizens, and Herodotus uses it as opposed to anger. These pre-Christian meanings of the word exhibit two general characteristics.

1. They express *outward conduct* merely.
2. They contemplate relations to *men only*.

The Christian word, on the contrary, describes an *inward* quality, and that as related primarily to *God*.

The *equanimity*, *mildness*, *kindness*, represented by the classical word, are founded in self-control or in natural disposition. The Christian *meekness* is based on *humility*, which is not a natural quality but an outgrowth of a renewed nature. To the pagan the word often implied *condescension*, to the Christian it implies *submission*. The Christian quality, in its manifestation, reveals all that was best in the heathen virtue—mildness, gentleness, equanimity—but these manifestations toward men are emphasized as outgrowths of a spiritual relation to God. The *mildness* or *kindness* of Plato or Pindar imply no sense of inferiority in those who exhibit them; sometimes the contrary. Plato’s demagogue is kindly from self-interest and as a means to tyranny. Pindar’s king is condescendingly kind. The meekness of the Christian springs from a sense of the inferiority of the creature to the Creator, and especially of the *sinful* creature to the *holy* God. While, therefore, the pagan quality is redolent of *self-assertion*, the Christian quality carries the flavor of *self-abasement*. As toward God, therefore, meekness accepts his dealings without murmur or resistance as absolutely good and wise.

As toward man, it accepts opposition, insult, and provocation, as God's permitted ministers of a chastening demanded by the infirmity and corruption of sin; while, under this sense of his own sinfulness, the meek bears patiently "the contradiction of sinners against himself," forgiving and restoring the erring in a spirit of meekness, considering himself, lest he also be tempted (see Galatians 6:1-5). The ideas of forgiveness and restoration nowhere attach to the classical word. They belong exclusively to Christian meekness, which thus shows itself allied to love. As ascribed by our Lord to himself, see on Matthew 11:29. Wycliffe renders 'Blessed be *mild* men' (Vincent, 58-59).

Easton says the word "meekness" is "a calm temper of mind, not easily provoked" (780). That was the disposition ascribed to Moses in Numbers 12:3: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." This statement was made at the time his sister Miriam and his brother Aaron spoke against him, saying, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?" (Num. 12:2). Moses' meekness describes his reaction to their provocation. He did not retaliate, but left the matter in the hands of God, trusting the Lord to make the matter right. That did not mean Moses was spineless, but that he was calm in the face of their provocation and maintained self-composure in a hostile situation. Meekness is the calmness of soul displayed by the pilot of a ship who, in the fiercest of gales, with full assurance and serenity of soul, remains at the wheel of his vessel and courageously steers it into the harbor's safety.

"Temperance" is "the restraint of evil propensity," (Wallace, *Commentary On Romans, Galatians And Ephesians*, 124). This quality, like the others, arises from the soul of the man who *wills* to restrain his fleshly lusts. It is a matter of *his own will* that has been purified by the gospel—not the result of a direct influence of the Holy Spirit upon his spirit. The Greek word for "temperance" in this verse is *egkrateia* which Strong says is, "*self control (espec.)*"

*continence*” and is from the root word *egkrates* which means, “*strong in a thing (masterful), i.e. (fig. and reflex.) self-controlled (in appetite, etc.)*” (p. 25). As this is the last of the things Paul lists under the fruit of the spirit, it would seem that all others result in temperance which is the mastery of the spirit over the flesh. The key phrase from Strong is “self-control,” indicating that this kind of mastery arises from the will of the individual who is under the influence of God’s word. He has received “with meekness the engrafted word” (Jas. 1:21), and it has found good soil in which to produce the fruit of the spirit. Those are basically the same things often referred to as “Christian virtues” described in 2 Peter 1:5-7. Here, Paul calls them the fruit of the spirit, and Peter says if these things abound in our lives we “shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:8).

Concluding the list, Paul says there is “no law” against these things. These are universal qualities which should have always characterized men in all ages of the world. “There never was any law in any age against such things as these” (Wallace, *Commentary on Romans, Galatians And Ephesians*, 124). They are the righteous qualities that naturally issue from our foundational love for God and result in love for, and right treatment of, our fellow man. These should have characterized all men in ages past and *will* characterize those who love God in all ages to come.

“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the lusts and affections thereof” (v. 24). Having died to sin and to the law, the Christian lives no longer under the dominion of either. He is no longer a slave of sin, but a servant of righteousness and, as such, his spirit or inner man dominates his life. He no longer uses his body as the instrument of sin, because he is dead to sin. That’s the subject Whiteside discusses in his comments on Romans 6:2:

In physical death a person no longer lives the life which he

formerly lived. And so the sinner dies to the life of sin; in that life he no longer lives. A sinner dies to sin and there is one less sinner in this world. Paul says: 'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. 2:20). When Paul became a Christian, there was one less sinner in the world as certainly and definitely as if he had died physically and been buried at Damascus. And that death is repeated every time a person becomes a Christian (129).

To be crucified with Christ is to render obedience from the heart to the "form of doctrine" contained in the gospel (Rom. 6:17-18). One who does this, willingly places himself under the dominion of Christ and is thereby removed from under the rule and reign of Satan through gratifying the lusts of the flesh. Hence, he crucifies the flesh with its attendant affections and lusts and his spirit, or inner man who is born anew dominates his life. The logical conclusion in verse 25 is, if we "live in the realm of [the] Spirit—in spiritual dispensation," we then must "walk by rules governing spirit" (Wallace, *Commentary on Romans, Galatians And Ephesians*, 124). Then his final words on the subject warn against vanity or "vainglory" that results from walking after the flesh. Wallace says these "final words applied to the relationship between the fleshly Jews—now Christians—and the once pagan Gentiles now Christians—all in the church" (*Commentary on Romans, Galatians And Ephesians*, 124). The result of living after the flesh would be a source of provocation against weaker brethren, but could also be the source of their envying others. Provocation and envy are not problems when Christians walk together in the light of the gospel and bear each others' burdens.

### C. Our Duties Of Mutual Care And Service (6:1-5)

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.

**Verses 1-2.** Having dealt with the false teaching of Judaizers, and its consequences of strife and alienation through vainglory, Paul now turns to the right treatment of each other as brethren. The word "brethren" is indicative of the mutual affection all Christians ought to have one for the other. As a general term, referring to all who are in Christ, the word is applied in New Testament usage to Christians of both sexes. Like many things of a Biblical nature, this word has fallen prey in recent years to the influence of the feminist movement. An example of that influence is seen in current writings which use the term, "he or she" in third person references in popular literature and newspaper articles. Proper English usage has historically demanded the use of the masculine term "he" in such writings—such as, "When a person dies, he is buried." But feminist influence now demands that it be awkwardly constructed as, "When a person dies, he or she is buried."

Feminism's influence is also seen in the church where the word "brethren" is often replaced by the terms, "brothers and sisters," and the term "man"—from *anthropos*, meaning "human kind" or "mankind"—is changed to "men and women." When the term "sister" is used in the New Testament it refers to a female, but the term "brethren" is a general reference to all who are Christians—whether males or females.

*having the same national ancestor, belonging to the same people, countryman; ...any fellowman,— as having one and*

the same father with others, viz. God (Heb. 2:11), and as descended from the same first ancestor (Acts 17:26), ...*a fellow-believer, united to another by the bond of affection*; so most frequently of Christians, constituting as it were but a single family (Thayer, *adelphos*,10).

Despite the influence of feminism, the term “brethren” as a reference to all who are in Christ is still a good term and should be employed by those who speak where the Bible speaks. Contrary to feminist propaganda, the term is inclusive of both males and females. As such, its employment is no more an affront to females than it is to males. Its Biblical usage is an affectionate, fraternal expression toward all who have put on Christ, and that is Paul’s use of it in verse one. Wallace says, the “expression attends Paul’s rebukes recurrently to soften severity, reminding always of the mutual affection between members of the body” (*Commentary On Romans Galatians And Ephesians*, 125).

In this section, Paul not only rebukes their vainglorious spirit, but directs their affections away from self-promotion and toward others. It isn’t enough to “reprove and rebuke,” but one must also “exhort” into the right way those so reprovved and rebuked. The Galatians demonstrated a spirit that is so prominent among religionists of our day. That is the spirit of “self”, cultivated by denominationalism which caters to every whim and desire of those who embrace it. It is the spirit of Judas who asked, “What will ye give me...?” (Matt. 26:15) and of all who “shop around” for a religion today.

But Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt. 16:24). The principle of sacrificial service to God is the undergirding of a right relationship with Him. In their disobedience, Adam and Eve turned from service to self when the Serpent whispered, “Ye shall be as gods” (Gen. 3:5). Cain’s obsession with self impelled him to murder his brother. Love of self drove those of Noah’s generation to devise all

sorts of wickedness, and Secular Humanism cast the Gentile world into the mire of unspeakable debauchery.

This same spirit has mutated itself and invaded religion today in the form of what may be termed “Spiritual Humanism.” Secular Humanism removes God from the center of the created universe, exalts man and human reason, and expresses itself in the dogma of Darwinian Evolution. The only difference between Secular Humanism and Spiritual Humanism is that the latter wraps itself in religious robes and, from behind its facade, pays lip service to God while satisfying human wants. Instead of looking outward to fields white unto the harvest, it turns inward to the “felt needs” of man. Spiritual Humanism makes the church a debtor to satisfy members’ “needs” and “interests,” and mocks the idea of *their* indebtedness to preach the gospel to lost and dying souls (Rom. 1:14-15). Manifestations of this egocentrism include the construction of gymnasiums, euphemistically called “Family Life Centers,” participation in “Church” basketball and volley ball leagues, small group therapy sessions, aerobics classes, the acceptance of the unscripturally divorced into the church, and a constant stream of recreational activities conducted for teens by the church, and advertised as “Fun, Food and Fellowship” in the name of various and sundry “ministries.”

Deconstructing the church for which Jesus died, Spiritual Humanism neither regards it as an ark of safety from sin and its consequences, the glorious Bride of Christ, nor the repository of all spiritual blessings (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27; 1:3). For Spiritual Humanists, it is but a social service organization to cater to egocentric members. To many, the church is a play room full of social toys where God has placed them to have fun and recreate themselves, and this is precisely the spirit Paul rebukes in the Galatians, as he turns their attention *from self* to others in Galatians 6:1-2.

The Christian’s concern for others must be a constant

way of life—especially for his own brethren in Christ. Rather than disunity which can only result in biting and devouring one another, the Christian must manifest the spirit of Christ toward others. That spirit was one of love, mutual concern, and sacrifice. Instead of being preoccupied with one's own pet theories, the Christian will look to the welfare of his brethren and seek the restoration of those who go astray. That is the injunction in verse one concerning the one who is "overtaken in a fault." To be "overtaken in a fault" is not the same thing as wilfully sinning. No one is exempt from the frailties which attend all who live in the flesh, and that is also true of Christians. That is why God has provided for our forgiveness when we sin after becoming the children of God.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 Jn. 1:9-2:2).

Paul does not deal here with those who are the "servants of sin," but those into whose lives sin enters as an intruder. They are to be restored to fellowship with God through gentle teaching that brings them to repentance—"in the spirit of meekness." The instruction here is two-fold and relates to the one who seeks the restoration of an erring brother, as well as he who errs. The propensity to rebuke from the vantage point of a "holier-than-thou" attitude must be shunned. That does not mean that one must tolerate or minimize sin in the life of another, but the one who restores a brother in Christ *must* undertake his action in a spirit of meekness. The brother who has fallen prey to the works of the flesh is to be restored by one who displays the fruit of meekness. The meek person is self-abased in his relation-

ship with God, realizing his own frailties, while calmly and gently leading an erring brother back to the right path. There is no greater love that one can show than to seek the salvation of one who has sinned—whether an alien sinner or a brother in Christ. Love does not gloss over, tolerate or ignore sin, but compassionately snatches the sinner from Satan’s grasp (Jude 22-23).

The mutual bearing of burdens in verse two is aid that is to be extended to each other. This kind of care and aid springs from the first fruit of the spirit Paul lists—love. He who loves his brother in Christ has nothing but that brother’s best interest at heart.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

When the kind of love described in the above passage rules the hearts of brethren, nothing but kindness, affection and mutual concern will be the result. Unlike the Judaizers, love does not vaunt itself with an air of superiority, nor is it puffed up against others. Love is not self-seeking, but looks to the good of others with a willingness to abase self that others might profit. It is that same disposition exhibited in Christ who gave Himself for us—not the disposition of the Judaizers who projected an air of superiority in dealing with the Gentiles. The mutual affection and burden-sharing here enjoined will fulfill the law of Christ which says, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matt. 22:39).

**Verses 3-4.** The spirit of humility, so absent from the Judaizers, is enjoined in verse three and this connects with what has just been said. He who restores his brother must do so in meekness, not as one whose confidence is in himself, as the Pharisee who prayed, “God, I thank thee that I

am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican” (Lk. 18:11). The one who restores his brother needs to understand that no one is exempt from fleshly frailties, and to ever bear in mind Paul’s warning, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). Solomon said, “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18). That’s what Paul warns against in this verse. He who is blinded by his own self-importance is self-deceived and easily toppled.

“Let every man prove his own work,” is an exhortation to self-examination based upon the standard of the gospel. To “prove” is “*to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing be genuine or not) as metals... to recognize as genuine, after examination, to approve, deem worthy*” (Thayer, 154). One does not test a thing by itself, but by an objective standard. A man’s work in God’s service must meet the standard of God’s word. Only then, can one “approve” his own work. Christians do not measure themselves by themselves. This may be a reference to the Judaizers who also disturbed the Corinthians and to whom Paul referred in his second epistle to Corinth. “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (2 Cor. 10:12). When one’s work is the Lord’s work, he may then rejoice, but one who compares himself with himself or his peers does not necessarily measure up to the Lord’s standard.

**Verse 5.** Paul may seem to contradict himself within three verses in this chapter. In verse 2, he said “Bear ye one another’s burdens,” but here he says “every man shall bear his *own* burden.” The two statements are easily reconciled. In the first, he refers to the trials and temptations of life that beset all, and the mutual care we must have for each other. In the latter verse, he refers to what he had just said about

individual responsibility in verse four. Each is responsible to God for his own life. I cannot answer for my parents, my children, my wife or anyone else. I shall give account to God for the life I live in the flesh, (2 Cor. 5:10). That is bearing my own burden of responsibility before God. Macknight says verse five relates to what was said in verse four. "This he told them [v. 4] was the only sure ground of boasting, because everyone shall bear his own burden at the judgment, and be treated not according to the opinion which he hath of himself, or which others have of him, but according to what he really is, ver. 5" (202).

### D. Duties To Support Teachers And Render Benevolence (6:6-10)

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

**Verses 6-8.** There are two major points in verses 6-10. The first is that Christians have a responsibility to support those who are teachers of the gospel, (vv.6-8), and the second is that Christians have a responsibility to render good unto all others, (vv. 9-10). The first point—that Christians are commanded to support those who give themselves to preaching the gospel—was also a topic in Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians.

Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, ‘Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.’ Doth God care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? ...Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:7-14).

Support of those who labor in spiritual things is a fundamental principle taught throughout the Bible. It is not only a kind gesture to support those who preach the gospel, but it is a solemn duty enjoined upon God’s people. That is what

Paul means when he says, “communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.” The “good things” of this verse do not refer to the things taught, but to the good material things which support and sustain the hearer. These things are to be used to support those who teach and preach God’s word, and that includes elders as well as evangelists. In fact, Paul applies the same passage from the law to elders in his first letter to Timothy that he applies to himself and others in his first letter to Corinth. “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the laborer is worthy of his reward” (1 Tim. 5:17).

In verse seven, the apostle reminds the Galatians of God’s immutable law of nature that like begets like. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” From this law, there is no appeal, and it applies equally to both the natural and spiritual realms. In the natural realm, one does not sow wheat seed and reap watermelons, nor does one sow sparingly and reap abundantly. Reaping is related to sowing in both quantity and quality. Not only does one reap in relation to how *much* he sows, but also in *what* he sows.

Extending the argument for purpose and design as a proof of Divine Intelligence, all the laws of nature may be called to testify—the law of kinds, that like begets like, and that every seed produces after its kind... The law of kinds decrees that there can be no transmutation or crossing of the species. The law provides for variation of species but not for the development of one species of life into another—there is no example of transmutation (Wallace, *The Gospel For Today*, 12).

One who believes he can sow to the flesh and reap spiritual things is self-deceived. He may as well sow rye seed, hoping to reap a crop of soybeans. To believe he can do that is to attempt to mock God’s immutable law in order to set it aside. But Paul says “God is *not* mocked.” God’s laws

say *what* they say, and *mean* what they mean, regardless of what one *thinks* they say or mean. To set aside any of His laws, either in the spiritual realm or the natural realm, is an attempt to mock God. His laws may be ignored, disobeyed, scoffed at, disbelieved, or reviled, but man cannot alter them. Man does not break any law of God—he only breaks himself on them. When a car crashes head-on with another it violates God’s law of physics that says two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time. The drivers do not break that law. They only break themselves in violating it. So it is with God’s law of sowing and reaping. A man reaps *what* he sows, regardless of what he *thinks* he will reap.

This law of sowing and reaping in verse seven comes within the context of what he has just said in chapter 5 concerning the flesh and spirit. His conclusion regarding the law of sowing and reaping in the spiritual realm is then given in verse eight in a contrast between sowing to the spirit and the flesh. Of the words “spirit” and “flesh,” Franklin Camp makes this observation:

The word [“spirit” JCB] is used sometimes as a synonym of the gospel. The gospel is spiritual. It has to do with man’s spirit. The word ‘Spirit’ is sometimes used where it simply means the gospel... The condition of the Jew under the law was as different from the Christian under the gospel as flesh is different from spirit (230).

The word ‘flesh’ is also used to denote the body... The avenue of sin is through its appeal to the flesh. The word ‘flesh’ is also used in this sense. In answering some who had charged Paul’s gospel of grace of encouraging sin, Paul shows that such is not true. Paul made it plain that the gospel of grace, which frees one from the bondage of sin, through the blood of Christ, is no license to sin. Rather than the gospel of grace giving one a license to sin, his body is to be used in the service of righteousness... It is for this reason that Paul states his conclusion in Romans 8 that one is not a debtor to the flesh and to allow the flesh to control ends in death (229-230).

I believe the tenor of Paul's injunction to sow to the spirit refers to the spirit of man—not the Holy Spirit. It is difficult to understand how one sows *to* the Holy Spirit, but there is no difficulty in understanding that man can sow spiritual things to his own spirit. This is better understood in the light of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 2:9-13. The "spiritual things" of which he speaks in verse 13 are the things of the gospel scheme of redemption, and he says those "things" have been revealed in words "which the Holy Ghost teacheth." These "words" reveal the plan of salvation and are directed to the mind of man. One sows to the spirit—his own spirit—when he hears, believes, and obeys those words "which the Holy Ghost teacheth." The inner man—the spirit of man—is the soil in which the word of God is sown, (Lk. 8:5-15). While this seed contains life *from* the Holy Spirit, it is *not sown to* the Holy Spirit, but to the *spirit of man*. When the inner man is changed and renewed, his flesh, with its lusts, passes under his spirit's control, through obedience to the teachings revealed by the Holy Spirit. The body, or flesh, is merely the instrument through which sin is committed. So long as the flesh is controlled by the purified spirit of man, then he "mortifies"—puts to death—the deeds of the body which means he is sowing to the spirit. The spirit of man then dominates his life and brings the flesh under the control of spiritual considerations. But if his fleshly lust dominates his inner man, or spirit, he sows to the flesh. That is the contrast drawn here between sowing to the spirit and sowing to the flesh, and the difference between reaping life or death.

**Verses 9-10.** In view of what he has just written, he offers the exhortation of verse nine. Just as reaping comes after sowing, and what is sowed is reaped, so in due season we shall reap life everlasting if we do not become weary in well doing. The words "well doing" in this verse are equated with sowing to the spirit and contrasted with the works of

the flesh. One can easily become “weary in well doing” if he considers only the short term of his service to God. But the law of well doing—sowing to the spirit—is as immutable as any law of God, and the harvest of life everlasting will come as surely as God lives—but only if we “faint not.”

The word “therefore” in verse 10 indicates that this is written with a view to what he has just said. Doing good unto all men as opportunity permits is sowing to the spirit, and that must be the Christian’s constant work. This is the “righteousness” that is the natural and logical consequence of “godliness.” Where there is no opportunity, there is no responsibility, but as opportunities arise, it is our responsibility to take advantage of them to do good unto others. This involves not only considerations of food, clothing, and shelter, but of doing the highest good to others by making known to them the gospel which saves. The injunction to do good to others is all-inclusive, though it particularly singles out “them who are of the household of faith.” Like that of the Saviour who came to die for all, our obligation is to all men, especially our brethren in Christ, and this verse refutes the idea of benevolence to “saints-only” as a nefariously false doctrine.

### E. Final Rebuke Of Judaizers In Galatia (6:11-18)

Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. As many as desire to make a show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

**Verse 11.** Paul often employed an amanuensis to write his epistles. The words were his, dictated to another, but the penmanship itself was that of another. From his statement in verse 11, it is obvious that Paul himself penned this letter without dictating it. It was written with his “own hand,” perhaps indicating the urgency and importance of what he wrote. That is not to say his other inspired writings were not important, but meaning that from the tenor of his words in Galatians 1:6-9 there was an extreme urgency to write and correct the things which disturbed the Galatian churches.

**Verse 12.** The first persecutions against the Lord’s church did not arise from pagan sources such as Rome, but from among the Jews in Judea. That is evident from the arrest of Peter and John at the temple (Acts 4), the arrest of all the apostles (Acts 5), the murder of Stephen (Acts 7), and the scattering of the disciples from Jerusalem (Acts 8). Like Paul in his former religion, the Jews considered Christianity a heretical sect and were determined to stamp it out because it taught the abrogation of their law (Acts 6:11-14). For that reason, many Jews who became Christians were wont to revert to Mosaic practices in order to avoid persecution. Like many people today, they were only half con-

verted, mixing certain practices of the law with Christianity in order to avoid being persecuted. That is Paul's charge against them in verse 12. They bound circumcision upon the Galatians in order to avoid condemnation and persecution by their own countrymen. They were fence-straddlers. They wanted to follow Christ, but not to the extent which He expressed in Matthew 12:30. Like men today, they thought Christianity could be practiced with God's approval by compromising and pleasing men in order to avoid censure by their peers. But devotion to Christ will not bring the world's approval. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). The Judaizers' aims were to avoid persecution and promote themselves among unbelieving Jews by boasting of proselyting Gentiles. Their concern was not for the cause of Christ, but for their own self-promotion. They were concerned with prestige among their peers and numbers among their converts.

Their conduct has found many imitators in men who make godliness a way of gain, whose religious course is dictated by considerations of worldly self-interest. A little persecution, or social pressure, is enough to turn them out of the way. They cast off their allegiance to Christ as they change their clothes to suit the fashion. Business patronage, professional advancement, a tempting family alliance, the entrance into some select and envied circle—such are the things for which loyalty to Christ are bartered, for which men put their souls and children in great peril (Lipscomb, 285).

**Verses 13-14.** Those among the Galatians who taught and practiced circumcision as necessary to salvation in Christ did not keep the law themselves. They were hypocritical in their teaching, for their sole purpose was self-promotion. They served their own bellies—not the cause of Christ. By contrast with those false teachers, Paul says his glory is not in the flesh, but in the cross of Christ. He had once gloried in his fleshly descent from Abraham, and the law of Moses, but is now "crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). In obeying

the gospel, Paul died to sin and his former life and “through the gospel he had lost interest in worldly things. Paul and the world are dead to each other. The cross stands between them” (Lipscomb, 286).

**Verse 15.** Consequently, his life is now hidden in Christ, and his glory is in heavenly things not those of this world, as it was with the Judaizers. Therefore, in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles are made one. Whether one is an uncircumcised Gentile or a circumcised Jew, the only thing which counts is a “new creature,” which is a reaffirmation of his sentiment expressed in Galatians 5:6. In that passage, he says, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” Those two passages are a parallel and “faith which worketh by love” is equal to becoming “a new creature.” One becomes a new creature in Christ by faith which works by love, and that means an obedient faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ by which one becomes a child of God. That also connects with his statement in Galatians 3:26-27, in which he notes that they *all*—whether Jew or Gentile—became God’s children by faith when they were baptized into Christ. Faith that works by love is an obedient faith that springs from man’s heart and eliminates all appendages to the gospel plan of salvation such as circumcision.

**Verses 16-18.** “This rule” of verse 16 is what he has just written in verse 15—that the only thing which counts for salvation with God is “a new creature.” Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is regarded by God as a condition of salvation. The “new creature” or new man who has died to sin, been buried in baptism, and risen to a newness of life (Rom. 6:1-5) is the only thing God requires. Upon them, Paul says, is the peace and mercy of God, and adds, “and upon the Israel of God.” That last phrase defines God’s true Israel, or spiritual Israel. Paul rejects the notion that fleshly Israel now constitutes God’s chosen people. Instead,

God's true Israel is composed of those new creatures who have obeyed the gospel—whose circumcision is not outward, but of the heart (Rom. 2:28-29) and who comprise the church of Christ.

Verse 17 is an affirmation that his apostolic claims have been vindicated in this letter. His words might be paraphrased thus: "Let this be the end of the matter. I have vindicated my claims, and further disturbance over these questions cannot be sustained by any proofs of those who disturb you." He had not only vindicated his apostolic claim, but also bore the marks of the Lord in his physical body. These were the scars he received because of the beatings, scourgings, and stoning he had endured in the service of the Lord. The Judaizers could not make this claim, for they avoided persecution by teaching false doctrine. That was not the case with the great apostle. The scars in his physical body attested to his fearless and faithful preaching of the gospel of the Risen Lord.

In his short benediction, Paul again calls them "brethren," softening the severe rebukes in the epistle and manifesting his affection for them. Despite their vacillation, he still loved them and desired their greatest good. In that, he manifested the love of the Lord he served and prayed that the "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" would be with their spirit. That grace is in the gospel as opposed to the law, and their "spirit" is the inner man that is purified by the gospel and contrasted with the fleshly ordinance of circumcision. Even in this benediction, he expresses the truth that the only circumcision which God accepts is that of the heart—not of the flesh.

His final word is "amen," which means "so be it." In the solemn proceedings of the synagogues, the hearers indicated their adoption of the sentiments expressed by the use of that word. That custom passed into our age and we today express the same in saying, "Amen" (1 Cor. 14:16).

## Works Cited

1. Boles, H. Leo, *A Commentary on Acts of The Apostles*, 1941, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville.
2. Camp, Franklin, *The Work Of The Holy Spirit*, 1974, Franklin Camp, Birmingham, Alabama.
3. Clarke, Adam, *Commentary On The Old Testament*, n.d., Abingdon Press, New York, Nashville.
4. Conybeare, W. J. & Howson, J. S., *The Life And Epistles Of The Apostle Paul*, n.d., Thomas Y. Crowell Co., NY.
5. Easton, M. G., *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, Sage Digital Librarian.
6. Jackson, Wayne, *The Acts of the Apostles: From Jerusalem To Rome*, 2000, Courier Publications, Stockton, Calif.
7. Jackson Wayne, <http://www.christiancourier.com>.
8. Lipscomb, David, *Commentary On The Epistle To The Galatians*, 1936, Edited with additional notes by J. W. Shepherd, Gospel Advocate Co.
9. Macknight, James, *Macknight On The Epistles*, Vol. 3, Galatians, 1969, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich.
10. Martin, William C., *These Were God's People, A Bible History*, 1966, The Southwestern Co., Nashville.
11. McClintock, John & Strong, James, *McClintock & Strong's Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 1969, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids.
12. Thayer, Joseph, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament*, 2002, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. Peabody, Mass.
13. Vincent, Marvin R., *Vincent's New Testament Word Studies*, Vol. 1, Sage Digital Librarian.

14. Wallace, Foy E., Jr., *Bulwarks of The Faith*, 1951, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, Oklahoma City.
15. Wallace, Foy E., Jr. *Commentary on Romans, Galatians and Ephesians*, 1991, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, Conroe, Texas.
16. Wallace, Foy E., Jr., *The Gospel For Today*, 1967, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, Nashville.
17. Wallace, Foy E., Jr., *The Mission And Medium Of The Holy Spirit*, 1967, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications.
18. Wallace, Foy E., Jr., *The Book of Revelation*, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, 1966, Nashville.
19. Weir, Marvin, "The Jews Under The Rule Of The Roman Empire," *Written For Our Learning, A Historical Survey Of The Old Testament*, The 2000 Lubbock Lectures, Hicks Publications, Lubbock, Texas, Ed. Tommy Hicks.
20. Whiteside, R. L., *A New Commentary On Romans*, 1945, Miss Inys Whiteside, Pub., Denton, Texas.