

Introduction

- While on his first missionary journey, the Apostle Paul (with Barnabas) visited the cities of Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Pisidian Antioch – all of which were located in the southern region of the province of Galatia (present-day Turkey). They evangelized the area, introducing the people to the 'Gospel': That Christ, the promised Messiah, died for the sins of mankind, was buried, and, arose from the tomb the third day, just as had been promised. And, through Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection, the 'gift of salvation' had been made available to all. The people believed, accepted Christ as Savior, were born again, and, were adopted into the family of God.
- Now, Paul writes to these Galatian Christians with a 'heavy heart'. He had witnessed their spiritual birth, but something had happened. Soon after his leaving the region, some Judaizers (legalists) made their way into the churches denouncing and discrediting Paul and his gospel. Too, they persuaded many to turn away from Christianity to Judaism, claiming that the Jewish law was binding upon Christians, and that salvation must be attained by the works of the law. They especially urged the Galatians to submit to circumcision.
- This was Paul's purpose for writing Galatians. It was to refute and root out the wrongful teaching of the legalists, to win back the converts to the 'truth' in Christ, and, to defend the doctrine of justification by faith. Note: There are different schools of thought as to 'when' this letter was written. Remember: In AD50, the church leaders met as the 'Jerusalem Council' (**Acts 15**), and concluded that Gentile believers in Christ should be accepted without being required to follow the law of Moses. Too, that Hebrew believers in Christ need not continue following the law of Moses (rituals, sacrifices, holy days, etc.) to be justified. It was after this decision that the false teachers infiltrated the region of Galatia, preaching and teaching that Gentiles would have to obey all aspects of the law of Moses to be saved.

Chapter I

V.1. 'Paul'. We read in **Acts 13:2**, 'And they (church at Antioch) ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them'. Soon after, Paul and Barnabas left Antioch to begin their first missionary journey. Upon arriving at Paphos, they were confronted by a 'sorcerer' named Bar-jesus (**Acts 13:6-8**; his name by interpretation being Elymas). Then, we're told in **v.9**, 'Then Saul, (who also is called Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him'. **Note:** From that time forward, it's no longer 'Saul', but 'Paul'. 'Saul' was his Hebrew name; 'Paulus' (or *Paulos*) his Greek name; and, 'Paul' his Latin name.

- 'an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)'. An 'apostle' is one who is sent with authority to represent and speak for another. **Note:** False teachers had come in among the Galatians preaching a gospel that was altogether different from that which Paul had preached. He had preached that a man is saved by grace, through faith. The Galatians had believed, and, had become a part of the body of Christ. The Gospel had not only changed the life of Paul, but these Galatians, as well. But, now, the false teachers were claiming that in order to be saved a person must keep the law of Moses; and, were endeavoring to discredit Paul's credentials as an apostle.
- So Paul lets them know 'how' he was called to this office, assuring them that his commission was 'not of men, neither by man', but was wholly divine. He was an apostle 'by Jesus Christ', having received his instructions and commission directly from him - 'and God the Father, who raised him from the dead'.
- Paul 'had a divine commission to expose false teaching, to exclaim the gospel, to establish churches, to exhort Christians, and, to exalt Christ' (King James Bible Comm.). It's likely that Paul puts emphasis on the resurrection of Christ because the false teachers were saying that Paul had not seen the Lord; and, therefore, could not be an apostle. **Note:** Some believe Paul saw the risen Son of God that day on the Damascus Road (**Acts 9:3-9**). That's possibly so; but I believe he spent time with the resurrected Lord when he 'went into Arabia' (**Gal.1:15-17**).

Vs.2-5. 'unto the churches of Galatia'. Paul did not address his letter to a single church, or congregation, but to the 'churches' of Galatia, which were made up primarily of Jews. Evidently, there were some in all the churches that had departed from the essential truths of the 'gospel of grace', and were returning to the works of the law as a means of salvation. And it's evident that Paul wanted his words to be received by all the congregations of that region.

- 'Grace be to you and peace'. First 'grace', and then 'peace', for there can be no true peace without grace. Once grace is experienced, peace follows.
- 'from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ'. 'Grace includes God's good-will towards us and his good work upon us; and peace implies in it all that inward comfort, or outward prosperity, which is really needful for us; and they come from God the Father as the fountain, through Jesus Christ as the channel of conveyance' (M. Henry Comm.).
- 'Who gave himself for our sins'. Christ voluntarily gave his life on the cross as our substitute. He, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (**II Cor.5:21**). **The question is asked:** Why? Why would he die for those who, seemingly, cared nothing for him or his offer of redemption? **Answer:** 'that he might deliver us from this present evil world'. And it was all 'According to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen'.

Vs.6,7. 'I marvel (I'm astonished) that ye are so soon removed from him that called you (not only removed from the apostle, who had been the instrument of calling them into the fellowship of the gospel, but from God himself) into the grace of Christ'. They had allowed themselves to be moved away from Christ, who is the only Lord and Savior of the believer. No other can take his place.

- 'unto another gospel'. Here, 'another' means another of a different kind. The 'gospel' of the false teachers taught that salvation involved not only believing in Christ (faith), but included the keeping of the law of Moses (works). In essence, they were offering a different way to heaven. Note: The 'true gospel' depends only on Christ and what he has provided through his death, burial, and resurrection.
- 'Which is not another'. That which was being taught by Paul's opponents was not just a variation of the 'true gospel' but something altogether different. When the works of the law are added to grace, you no longer have grace. Therefore, it was no gospel at all.
- 'Pervert the gospel of Christ'. Note: This word 'pervert' (Gr. *metastrepho*) is used only three times in the New Testament, and it means to completely change into something of the opposite nature. The legalists were determined to pervert the gospel by substituting 'law for grace', 'circumcision for the cross', 'works for faith', 'bondage for liberty', and 'self for Christ'.

Vs.8,9. 'But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel . . . let him be accursed'. Paul was so confident that the gospel he had preached to them was the only true gospel, he says, even if an angel from heaven comes preaching a different message, let that angel be cursed forever. Note: If an angel came preaching a different gospel message, he would not be from heaven, nor would he be God's messenger - regardless of his angelic appearance (**c.f. II Cor.11:14,15**).

- 'Let him be accursed'. The word 'accursed' (Gr. *anathema*) means that one lies under the curse of God, is doomed to destruction, and, will receive God's wrath and damnation. (F. Life Study Bible)

V.10. 'For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?' Paul's first obligation was to please God, and not man. He was a servant of Christ, and would not alter his message (the gospel) for the approval of man.

- 'For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ'. His task (assignment) was not to persuade or please people, but to be a servant of Christ (to be true to his calling). He was both motivated and committed to deliver the gospel as a service to Christ. And, because of that, he had no obligation nor desire to please anyone but Christ. Note: It's sad, but it seems too many preachers of our day seek the acclaim of man rather than being concerned at pleasing God.

Vs.11,12. The question is: Why should the Galatians listen to Paul instead of the Judaizers? Paul answers by furnishing his credentials: the gospel he preached (that salvation comes through exercising faith in Christ, and in him, only) did not come from man; it was not handed to him by anyone; and, he was not taught it by sitting under someone's teaching. Instead, he declares that he received it 'by the revelation of Jesus Christ'.

Vs.13,14. 'Ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion'. Paul had been one of the most religious Jews of his day, scrupulously (carefully) keeping the law, and, at the same time, persecuting Christians (believing it was that which God would have him do). He was 'sincere' in his zeal, but 'sincerely wrong'.

- 'I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it'. (I persecuted the church of God with fanatical zeal. In fact, I did my best to destroy it.) Paul shows that if men had been choosing an apostle, he probably would have been the last one considered.

- 'And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation'. (I was, without doubt, one of the most devoted Jews of my age in the whole country. Therefore, I tried as hard as I possibly could to follow all the traditional rules of my religion.)
- Vs.15-17.** 'When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb'. God, in His own good pleasure, had set Paul apart for special service as a Christian and an apostle, even before he was born.
- Note: It was something similar with Isaiah and Jeremiah (**Isa.49:1; Jer.1:5**). Interestingly, the Holy Spirit determined that the story of Paul's conversion was so important that He had it recorded five different times in the New Testament (**Acts 9; 22; 26; Phil.3; I Tim. I**).
 - 'and called me by his grace'. By means of 'grace', God called Paul out of darkness into His marvelous light (**I Pet.2:9**), and made him a chosen vessel (**Acts 9:15**), 'a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work' (**II Tim. 2:21**). Too, in a sense every believer has been called and set apart by God's grace. We have been separated from sin and this present evil world that we might live in fellowship with God. Note: 'Being a separated person means being a person 'with' God, 'for' God, and 'near' God - living in faith and obedience for His glory and the manifestation of His Son'. (F. Life Study Bible)
 - 'To reveal his Son in me' - so that I might share the 'good news' of Christ to the non-Jewish world. Therefore, being called to this work and office, 'I conferred not with flesh and blood'. Paul did not go to others for their advice and direction concerning his calling. He was confident that man could add nothing to what God had revealed.
 - 'Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me'. Paul felt he had no need to be approved by the apostles in Jerusalem, or, to receive any further instructions or authority from them. His call and commission did not come from them, nor did he receive confirmation by them. His apostleship was firsthand.
 - Instead, he 'went into Arabia'. Note: At that time, Arabia included all the kingdom of Aretas from Damascus and east of the Jordan down to Edom in the south. Petra was its capital. It's likely that Paul went into the northern part which was densely populated. Christianity took hold there very early, possibly due to Paul's ministering in that region on this very occasion.
 - 'and returned again unto Damascus'. How long Paul stayed in Arabia is not known. Altogether, he was in Arabia and Damascus three years. Note: Some think that it was while in Arabia that He received his revelation. (I agree.)
- Vs.18,19.** 'After three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter'. It was three years after conversion before Paul went to Jerusalem to converse with Peter. Think about it: Paul left Jerusalem a 'persecuting rabbi'; he returned to Jerusalem a 'persecuted apostle'. Important note: The word 'see', as used here, is from the Greek *'historeo'*, the word from which we get our word 'history'. (This is the only time it is used in the New Testament.) It seems Paul's purpose of going to see Peter was to become personally acquainted with him, and, to hear Peter's story of his years as a follower and disciple of Christ.
- 'and abode with him fifteen days'. It's believed that Paul's visit was interrupted because the Grecians were seeking to slay him (**Acts 9:29**), and the Lord appeared to him while he was praying in the Temple, telling him to leave quickly (**Acts 22:17,18**).
- Vs.20-24.** 'Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not'. Evidently, a report had been spread among the Galatians that after Paul's conversion he had spent years at Jerusalem, receiving instructions in the faith at the hands of the apostles. Too, Paul's enemies had accused him

of being crafty (a slick talker). So, he asserts his integrity by a solemn affirmation ('before God, I lie not').

- 'Afterwards I came into the regions (coastal plains) of Syria and Cilicia'. Note: Paul left Jerusalem three years earlier with authority from the high priest to arrest saints and bring them bound to Jerusalem. But, as he neared Damascus, he met the Lord, and was converted (**Acts 9**). Soon after, he escaped from Damascus and went into the rural regions of Arabia for some time, and then back to Damascus. It was three years after his conversion that he went up to Jerusalem and met with Peter. And after all this, Paul came to the regions of Syria and Cilicia.
- 'And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea'. (The churches of Judaea, at that time, had no opportunity of communicating with Paul or of knowing him personally.)
- 'But they had heard only, etc.'. They had only heard it said, 'The man who once persecuted us is now preaching the good news of the faith he tried to destroy'.
- 'And they glorified God in me'. They gave glory to God for what they recognized as His work 'in' me and 'through' me; not only in my conversion, but in my ministering the gospel to others.

Chapter 2

- V.1.** 'Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem'. Some believe Paul is speaking of a visit to Jerusalem that was fourteen years after his conversion. If that be the case, it would likely be the visit recorded in **Acts 11:30**. But if this trip to Jerusalem was fourteen years after his first visit (**1:18**), it would be the one outlined in **Acts 15:2**. Note: The later seems more reasonable.
- 'With Barnabas (a wealthy Levite of Cyprus; and, one who was well respected among the leadership in Jerusalem) . . . and Titus'. Paul had preached the non-necessity of circumcision and adherence to the law of Moses. Therefore, it's likely Paul had Titus (a Gentile by birth; uncircumcised; a convert to Christianity; and, one called of God into the ministry) accompany him to Jerusalem to reveal to the church leaders that he was not ashamed, nor afraid, to live up to the doctrine he had preached.
- V.2.** 'And I went up by revelation'. It's important to note that Paul did not go to Jerusalem on his own initiative, or at the direction of the church at Antioch, or because the leaders at Jerusalem had called him to come. He went at the direction of God.
- 'and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles'. The believing Jews had the idea that 'salvation in Jesus' was only for the Jewish people, and Gentiles had to embrace Judaism before they could become Christians. Realizing this contention was causing division, the church leaders in Jerusalem had an interest in knowing what Paul taught. And that's his real purpose for this visit.
 - 'but privately to them which were of reputation'. He had this private conversation with the church leaders (likely, James, Peter, and John) so they might know the gospel he preached was the same as that which they preached, whether it was approved by others or not.
 - 'lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain'. Note: Paul was not second-guessing himself in his 'call to the Gentiles'. Nor did he have any doubt as to the 'doctrine he had taught'. His concern, here, is for his 'work'. It could be in danger of being completely lost if the churches he had planted among the Gentiles were disowned or disapproved by the mother Church of Jerusalem.
- V.3.** 'But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised'. Actually, Titus was a 'test case'. When Paul took him (a Greek converted to Christianity) to Jerusalem, the Judaizers (legalists) demanded he be circumcised. But Paul refused to give in to their demands. And not only that; but when the church leaders met (**Acts 15**) they agreed with Paul that circumcision was an unnecessary rite for Gentile converts. Note: It was a great day for the church; not only for that day, but for the generations that followed.
- Notice the four words in **v.3**: 'who was with me'. It speaks of the close association Paul had with Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile whom he took openly to Jerusalem. 'Too, it's likely that Paul took Titus 'with him' when he (Paul) came before the Church at its public meetings; when he appeared before the select meeting of the apostles and elders; and, when he joined the brethren for the Lord's Supper'. (Pulpit Comm.) Note: We marvel at Paul's great courage. Not only did he believe the gospel is for all; he preached it and lived it.
- V.4.** 'because of false brethren unawares brought in'. Paul describes how a false doctrine (heresy) had infiltrated the Galatian churches: (a) 'False brethren', professing themselves to be Christians; (b) had come into the church unsuspected (unawares); (c) for the purpose of spying out our liberty (scrutinize every detail of our gospel); (d) with a desire to change the liberty we enjoyed into bondage.

V.5. 'To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour'. We refused, even for a moment, to yield to their claims; because both the glory of Jesus Christ and the salvation of the lost were at stake.

V.6. 'But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me)'. Important to note: Paul does not say 'that the standing and repute of the apostles were matters of indifference to him, but that he was indifferent about receiving his commission from them as recognized dignitaries of the church'. (Word Studies in N.T.)

- 'God accepteth no man's person'. God does not show favoritism to any person because of his or her heritage, reputation, position, or accomplishments. God looks on the heart, and is no respecter of persons.
- 'For they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me'. The leaders of the church in Jerusalem added nothing to the gospel Paul preached or to the apostolic authority he possessed.

Vs.7,8. 'But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter'. God has not given two different gospels. That which Peter preached to the 'circumcised Jews' was the same gospel Paul preached to the 'uncircumcised Gentiles'.

- 'For he that wrought effectively, etc.'. The signs of an apostle (healings, miracles, etc.), were wrought in the ministries of both Peter and Paul - one to the circumcision (Jews), the other to the Gentiles (uncircumcised).

V.9. 'James, Cephas, and John'. It's likely that James (the half brother of Jesus) is named first because of the prominence of his leadership at the Jerusalem Council (**Acts 15**). Upon accepting and approving Paul's ministry to the Gentiles, these leaders extended to Paul and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship', a symbol whereby they acknowledged his equality with them. Note: 'Fellowship' means sharing or having all things in common. Someone defined it as 'two fellows in the same ship'. Too, it was a mark of confidence and friendship. John Wesley is reported as saying, 'If your heart be as my heart, give me your hand'.

V.10. 'Only they would that we should remember the poor'. These leaders were referring to the poor of Judaea who had been forsakened by friends, cast out by relatives, refused privileges of trade, were experiencing famine, and, considered by many as outcasts.

- 'The same which I also was forward to do'. Paul needed no prompting, as he had been doing this very thing. Much of his time had been spent in gathering funds for the Jewish Christians as mentioned in **Acts 11**, **Rom. 15**, **I Cor. 16**, and **II Cor. 8**.

Vs.11-13. 'But when Peter was come to Antioch'. Note: Antioch in Syria was a major trade center in the ancient world, and was heavily populated by Greeks. It eventually became a strong Christian center, was where believers were first called Christians (**Acts 11:26**), was headquarters for the Gentile church, and, was Paul's home church and base of operations.

- The exact time of Peter's coming to Antioch is not stated; but it must have been after his experience in the house of Cornelius (**Acts 11:1-8**). On that occasion, he had learned that God is no respecter of persons, and, that ceremonial uncleanness was a thing of the past.
- 'I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed'. At times, Christians must be confronted because their words or actions contradict the message of salvation through faith in Christ. Note: The basis of salvation was the issue. Is salvation through Christ alone, or does it come through Christ and

adherence to the law? On this occasion, it seems Peter, Paul, the Judaizers, and some Gentile Christians were together to share a meal. Before this time, Peter had accepted Gentiles who believed in Jesus Christ as fellow-believers, and had eaten with them. But when some Jewish believers from Jerusalem arrived, who did not approve of eating with Gentiles, Peter yielded to their influence, acted against his own convictions, and withdrew from them (as if he was afraid of being defiled).

- 'And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulations. Surely, you would think Barnabas would be one of the last to ever get caught up in such a way. Too, others followed Peter's lead. This shows that misguided Christians can influence other Christians to stray from that which is right. Trapp once said, 'The sins of teachers are the teachers of sins'. So true.
- V.14.** 'But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel (acting in hypocrisy), I said unto Peter before them all'. Question is asked: Was Paul acting properly in rebuking Peter (a pillar of the church) before them all? Surely. Paul responded in this manner (publicly) to the actions of Peter and Barnabas because they had been public hypocrites (**Tim.5:20**). Such public rebuke would weigh upon the consciences of those who had dissembled with Peter.
- '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?' (If you, born and bred a Jew, discard Jewish customs, how unreasonable to impose them on Gentiles' (Lightfoot). 'If you, who were born a Jew, adopt Gentile customs, instead of Jewish, why are you trying to compel the Gentile converts to adopt Jewish customs?' (Twentieth Century New Testament) Note: Scripture indicates that Peter recognized his error and accepted Paul's reproof in a humble and repentant manner. He later refers to Paul as 'our beloved brother Paul' (**II Pet. 3:15**).
- Vs.15,16.** 'We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles'. 'We'. Paul includes Peter as he speaks of being justified by faith. 'Jews by nature' (by birth), and, therefore, not born into the sinful environment of pagan Gentiles.
- 'Knowing that a man (any man, Jew or Gentile) is not justified (made right with God) by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ'. 'Justification' is an act of God whereby He pronounces sinners who trust in Christ as righteous (not guilty). Note: 'Faith' is not the ground of justification: 'grace' is.
 - 'For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified'. Salvation is not by human merit (works) but by divine mercy (**Titus 3:5**).
- Vs.17,18.** Both Peter and Paul, through the study of Old Testament Scripture, had learned that salvation from sin and justification come by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. Peter, knowing this, had, in effect, denied this, and allowed sin to enter his life by his hypocrisy in relation to the Gentile believers. But, as Paul reminded him, Christ is not the author of sin in our lives. Nevertheless, Peter had sinned (made himself a transgressor) by failing to hold to the truth that salvation is by grace, and not by good works.
- 'If I act like a Jew, and cause the Gentiles to observe the law, which I have repeatedly asserted and proved to be abolished by the death of Christ, then I build again the things I destroyed and thus make myself a transgressor, undoing my justification by faith in Christ' (Dake).

- Vs.19,20.** 'For I through the law am dead (I died) to the law'. Salvation by the 'law' (God's commandments) would require perfect obedience to the law, and no one other than Jesus Christ has ever accomplished such. Therefore, it is impossible to be saved by the law (**v.16**). Rather than being saved by the law, we, instead, are condemned by the law, as sinners, because it exposes our sinful living; and sin brings death (**Rom.6:23**). Therefore, the only way out of such a troublesome dilemma is to become 'dead to the law', which makes it possible to 'live unto God'. There was nothing wrong with the law. We're told in **Rom.7:12**, 'Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandments holy, and just, and good'. Note: It wasn't the law that died, but Paul died to the law.
- 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live'. Paul's faith united him with Christ in such a way that Christ's death was his death, and Christ's resurrection was his resurrection.
 - '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, who loved me, and gave himself for me'. Note: Christ is the life of our soul. He lives within us. Too, He is the 'substance' and 'source' of our lives. In **Jn.14:19**, Jesus said, 'Because I live, ye shall live also'; in **Col.3:4**, Paul says, 'Christ, who is our life'; and in **I Jn.5:12**, the apostle tells us, 'He that hath the Son hath life'. All of this is made possible through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- V.21.** 'I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain'. (I do not nullify God's grace; but if justification comes by way of the law, then Christ's death was needless; he died in vain.) This is a logical conclusion if righteousness is through the agency of the law. Therefore, a choice must be made between works' and 'grace', between 'law' and 'Christ'.

Chapter 3

- In reading the New Testament, we learn that Jesus and the Apostles were preachers of God's Word. They based their preaching on the only Bible of their time, the Old Testament. Note: It's been said by some Bible scholars that there are more than two thousand references to Old Testament Scriptures in the New Testament.
 - The theme running throughout chapters 3 and 4 is 'the gospel versus the law'.
- V.1.** 'O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?' These are very strong words, yet, well deserved. Note: 'Foolish' does not refer to a lack of intelligence, but means 'without wisdom or thinking'. These Galatians had heard the gospel, received it, believed it, and, had experienced it in 'salvation'.
- 'Who hath bewitched you?' Note: The word rendered 'bewitched' is related to witchcraft. It means to cast a 'spell' upon someone through the power of the evil eye. Such as this would cause someone to act contrary to his normal character. MacGorman says, 'In popular lore one did not come under the power of the evil eye until transfixed by its gaze. Thus, if the Galatians had kept their eyes where they belonged this would never have happened'.
 - 'That ye should not obey the truth'. They had been drawn away from the truth of the gospel by false teachers, and had acted without clearly considering the results of their actions. In reality, they had been disobedient - and were without excuse. 'They had turned from Calvary to Sinai, from sonship to serfdom, from liberty and freedom to bondage, from faith to works, from Christ to rituals and ceremonies' (Criswell).
 - 'Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?' Paul is not saying that they had literally seen the crucifixion of Jesus, but that he (Paul) had preached 'Christ crucified and resurrected' as man's only hope of redemption.
- Vs.2-5.** Paul points out their basic problem: they had moved from a life committed to faith and the Spirit unto a life of bondage to the law and the works of the flesh. In dealing with the problem, he asks a series of questions.
- 'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' If their receiving of the Spirit had been by works, then they would have earned it by keeping the law. Obviously, they received the Holy Spirit through simple faith. Note: All believers in Christ receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit by regeneration (the new birth) when they trust in Christ for salvation (**Rom.8:9**).
 - 'Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?' They had been deceived into thinking that spiritual growth could be achieved through the works of the flesh; so, in an effort to keep the commands of the law, they followed religious and traditional observances.
 - 'Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain'. When these believers broke away from the law and became followers of Christ, they suffered untold persecution. To return to the law would mean that they had suffered for no reason whatsoever. It was all 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?' Paul reminds them that the Spirit worked in them because of faith, not as a result of following the law. 'He who supplies you abundantly with his Spirit and endows you with such powers - does he do this as the result of obedience to Law? or as the result of your having listened with faith?' (Twentieth Century New Testament)
- Vs.6,7.** Paul uses Abraham, the father of the Israelite nation, as an example of the priority of faith. We read in **Gen.15:5** that God gave Abraham (although aged and childless) the amazing promise that he would have descendants as numerous as the stars. Now, here in **v.6**, Paul cites **Gen.15:6**, stating that 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'.

- 'Believed God'. This means more than just accepting what God said as being true; but that he 'trusted' God. He put his trust in God to do for him what he could not do for himself. In doing so, God imputed righteousness to him on the basis of his 'faith'.
- 'Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham'. God's promise to Abraham of countless descendants is fulfilled, primarily, by those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior. In essence, Abraham is the father of all believers, Jews and Gentiles.

Vs.8,9. Anticipating beforehand, God foresaw (He knows the end from the beginning) that Abraham would become a channel of blessing to the Gentiles. Even before the law was written, Abraham found favor with God through a life of faith. All who believe in Jesus Christ 'are blessed with faithful Abraham'. Note: Abraham was surely faithful; but the emphasis in these verses is not so much on 'his faithfulness' as on 'his faith'.

Vs.10-12. 'For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them'.

Note: The term 'the law', as used here, means the law of Moses, containing all 613 commandments of God outlined in the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy.

- Sometime earlier (before Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians), a conference of the church at Jerusalem had decided that Gentile believers in Christ would be required to adhere only to the moral and ethical commandments of the Law (**Acts 15:24-29**). Christians were not obligated to obey commandments in the Law having to do with Temple worship, animal sacrifices, circumcision, rituals and ceremonies, and the observance of the Jewish Sabbath. But it's important to note: all of the 319 moral and ethical commandments in the Law are included in the New Testament for Christians to obey.
- 'For, the just shall live by faith' (**Hab.2:4; Rom.1:17; Gal.3:11; Heb.10:38**).
- 'And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live by them'. No one can bring himself into a right relationship with God by obeying the Law, because no one can perfectly obey the commandments of God, which would be necessary to be saved by the Law. God did not design the 'law' to be the means of justification; He designed 'faith' for that purpose. Note: These Judaizers were teaching righteousness by law, plus faith. In other words, men must 'achieve' rather than 'receive' God's righteousness.

Vs.13,14. 'Christ hath redeemed us'. What the law could not do, God did (**Rom.8:3,4**). Note: 'Redeemed' comes from a Greek term that was frequently used for the purchase of slaves. It means 'to buy out from' the slave market so that the liberated slave shall never be put on sale again. Christ paid the price (His precious blood - **I Pe.1:18,19**) for our redemption, delivering us from slavery to liberty.

- 'From the curse of the law'. The 'curse' was the effect of sin in separating us from God. But we are no longer cursed, because Christ was made a curse for us through his death on the cross. He paid the debt we could never pay; the ransom price. Note: The 'process' was called 'redemption', and the 'price' was called the 'ransom'.
- 'That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ'. Paul describes the 'blessing' with two phrases: 'the blessing of Abraham' and 'the promise of the Spirit'. Both, of which, are received through faith in Christ. The 'blessing of Abraham' refers to having righteousness credited (imputed) to our account through faith in God. 'The promise of the Spirit' emphasizes the new life that is ours through the power of the Holy Spirit when we put our trust in Christ. It's 'faith in Christ' and 'his giving his life on the cross' that brings the blessings of 'justification' and 'new life'.

V.15. 'Brethren, I speak after the manner of men'. (Brethren, I am going to take a human illustration from every-day life.)

- 'Though it be but a man's covenant'. Note: This word 'covenant' (Gr. *diatheke*), strictly speaking, is not a contract between two parties, but a binding will (testament) instituted by the first party. Once it is made it stands firm. No one has the authority to alter or make it void.

V.16. 'Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made'. In **Gen.22:18**, God promised Abraham that 'in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed'. Note: When God made his covenant with Abraham, he also made it with his 'seed' (singular). 'And to thy seed, which is Christ'.

V.17. 'The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ'. The covenant God established with Abraham centuries before the 'law' was given to Israel by Moses, could not be made void (invalidated) by the covenant of the 'law' God made with Israel. In reality, the law had nothing to do with the promise God had given Abraham or with Abraham's justification.

- 'The law, which was four hundred and thirty years after'. Note: This defines the sojourn of the Israelites in the lands of both Canaan and Egypt. Josephus says, 'They left Egypt . . . four hundred and thirty years after our forefather Abraham came into Canaan, but two hundred and fifteen years only after Jacob removed into Egypt' (**'Ant.,' ii. 15, 2**).

V.18. 'For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise'. The benefits (inheritance) of the promise God made to Abraham cannot be obtained by obedience to the law given to Moses, but only by 'faith' - believing the promise God made to Abraham.

Vs.19,20. 'Wherefore then serveth the law?' Since the law cannot save anyone, for what purpose did God give it to Israel?

- 'It was added because of transgressions (human sinfulness)'. Note: The law has two functions. On the positive side it reveals the nature and will of God, showing people how to live. On the negative side it defines people's sins, and reveals to them that it is impossible to please God by obeying his laws.
- 'Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made'. Paul's reference to the 'seed' is to Christ. He is the One through whom the fulness of the Abraham covenant was realized.
- 'It was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator'. According to Paul and ancient traditions, the law was delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai by the hands of angels. They were the 'go-between', or 'mediator'. But it is Christ, who is the 'perfect mediator' through whom all might be joint-heirs of the promise of God (**I Tim.2:5**).
- 'Now a mediator is not a mediator of one'. Moses needed a mediator between himself and God, but we don't need a mediator between us and Jesus ... He is our mediator.
- 'But God is one'. God acted alone when he gave the promise to Abraham. He dealt personally and directly with Abraham, not through a mediator. The promise was unconditional; without stipulations. Its fulfillment depended upon God's faithfulness, and not upon Abraham's obedience to a set of rules.

Vs.21,22. 'Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid'. The law is not opposed to the promise; nor is it in competition with the promise, but complementary. The problem is that the law, with all its humanly impossible standards, cannot save; it only condemns.

- If it had been possible for the law to save sinners and give them eternal life, then righteousness and salvation would have come by the law.

- 'But the scripture hath concluded all under sin'. The law doesn't make us sinners; it reveals that we are already sinners. Illustration: I might enter a dangerous intersection without stopping, not knowing that I am doing wrong. But if a 'stop sign' is placed there, then I am made aware of my wrong. If I still enter without stopping, then I am a deliberate lawbreaker. Here, the very thing that people relied on for salvation (works of the law) is that which makes known how inadequate sinful people really are. Only faith in Christ can bring redemption and forgiveness of sins.

Vs.23-25. 'But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed'. (Before we were saved by faith; before we lived our lives by faith, 'we were kept under guard by the law'.)

- 'Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ'. In the Greco-Roman world, a 'guardian' prepared a child for maturity. Once the youth came of age, he no longer needed the guardian nor had any responsibility to the guardian, although the two often remained friends. In like manner, the law prepared Israel for the coming of Jesus Christ, who was the ultimate fulfillment of the law. Note: The one great purpose of the law was 'that we might be justified by faith'.
- After 'justification by faith' has come, and we have become the children of God, 'we are no longer under a schoolmaster'.

Vs.26,27. 'For ye are all (Jews and Gentiles) the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus'. All Christians are God's children, having been born again and sharing God's nature (**II Pe.1:4**).

- 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ'. Note: This is the only time Paul mentions 'baptism' in his epistle. Here, he illustrates what it means to have 'faith in Christ Jesus'. Just as in 'water baptism' a person is immersed in water, so when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, we are immersed in Him by the Holy Spirit. Too, the words 'put on Christ' indicate the believer has acquired what Christ has provided: the blessings of heaven, forgiveness of sins, and righteousness before God.

Vs.28,29. 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female'. In that time, Jewish males greeted each new day by praying, 'Lord, I thank you that I am not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman'. Here, Paul takes each of these categories and shows them to be equal in Jesus. In Christ, all 'racial' barriers to salvation are abolished; 'there is neither Jew nor Greek'. In Christ, all 'social' barriers to salvation are abolished; 'there is neither bond (slave) nor free'. In Christ, all 'gender' barriers are abolished; 'there is neither male nor female'.

- 'For ye are all one in Christ'. Faith in Christ transcends these differences and makes all believers 'one'. Note: At the foot of the cross all men are equal, and no one enjoys special privileges.
- 'And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise'. Since all Christians belong to Jesus Christ the Messiah, all Christians are spiritual descendants of Abraham and heirs of God. And this high privilege of being 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ' (**Rom.8:17**) comes 'according to the promise', not according to law or works. The original covenant with Abraham was intended for the whole world, not just for Abraham's descendants (**Gen.12:3**).

Chapter 4

Vs.1,2. 'The heir, as long as he is a child (minor)'. In the Roman custom, there was no specific age as to when a son became a man. Yet, in both Jewish and Greek cultures there were definite 'coming of age' ceremonies, times when a boy was considered no longer a child, but a man.

- 'Differeth nothing from a servant'. The minor heir has no advantage over being a slave; and, has no rights in the household until the father decides it is time for him to enter into the rights of his inheritance. Note: The minor's relationship in the household is similar to that of a slave. Both are dependent for the necessities of life, and both come under the discipline of the house.
- 'Though he be lord (master) of all'. He is lord of all by birthright and title, but actually has less day-to-day freedom and authority than a high-ranking slave in the household. Yet, unlike the slave, he is destined to inherit everything.
- 'But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father'. 'Tutors' (guardians) have supervision of the person. 'Governors' (stewards) have supervision of the property (trustees who manage the estate). While the heir is a minor, he is controlled by these guardians and stewards until he reaches the age prescribed by his father.

Vs.3-5. 'Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage'. Paul uses the illustration of 'slavery' to show that before Christ came and died for sins, people were in bondage to the law. They believed salvation was theirs by keeping the law; instead, they became enslaved to the law, never being able to fully keep it. Note: The law's effect on man's corrupt nature was to bring him into bondage.

- 'Under the elements of the world'. Paul likens an Israelite 'living under the law' as being similar to a minor heir who is kept in a state of subjection until the time appointed of the father.
- 'But when the fulness of the time was come' (when the time was right). When the time came, which was appointed of the Father, he put an end to the legal dispensation and set up another in its stead (that of grace'). Note: The time was right because the 483 years prophesied by Daniel were drawing to a close (**Dan.9:24-26**).
- 'God sent forth his Son'. Note: For centuries, men have discussed and debated the 'theory' that claims Jesus to be 'The Eternal Son of God'. Yet, after all that has been said or written, it seems we are no closer to knowing the truth of the matter than did those who have gone before. So, before going further, let me assure you that I don't have the answer. Actually, all I have is more questions. An incomplete list follows.

- (1) Did Jehovah God have a 'son' in eternity past? If so, (a) Was he begotten of God? (b) What was his name?
- (2) Is 'Jehovah God' ever referred to as 'Father' or 'God the Father' in the Old Testament?
- (3) Was the 'Word' of **Jn.1:1** (*Christo*; Lord Jehovah; The Anointed One; Promised Messiah), the third person of the Godhead in eternity past? Was the 'Word' ever referred to as 'God the Son' in the Old Testament?
- (4) **Jn.1:1** says, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. Was the 'Word', mentioned here, (a) the Christ of glory, or (b) Jesus of Nazareth?
- (5) Who was it that 'made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men' (**Phil.2:7**)? (a) The 'Word' (the Christ of glory), or (b) Jesus of Nazareth?
- (6) At the 'incarnation' (**Jn.1:14; Matt.1:18-25**), 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us'. The Christ of glory took upon himself humanity in order to redeem man from his sins. Note: 'Incarnation' is the 'union of divinity with humanity in Jesus Christ' (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary). After the incarnation, it is 'Jesus Christ', fully God and fully man. And, because this is true, it seems the word 'Sonship' refers to Jesus' humanity, and not to his deity.

- (7) One final thought having to do with the theory of the 'Eternal Sonship of Jesus': Such a term is never mentioned in the New Testament, nor in the writings of Flavius Josephus (the Jewish Historian who lived 37AD til 100AD). In fact, as best as I have been able to determine, the term 'Eternal Sonship of Jesus' was not used until the Nicene Creed at the First Council of Nicaea, 325AD. It was there that Orthodox Christians claimed Jesus was the Eternal Son of God. **Nicene Creed:** We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God, *eternally begotten of the Father*, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God'.
- 'The word Son in connection with Jesus does not refer to His Deity, but to His humanity. As God, Christ (the Word) had no beginning, was not begotten, was not the first-born, was not born, and therefore, was not a Son; but as man He had a beginning, was begotten, was the first-born of God, was born, and therefore became the Son of God. To believe that sonship refers to Deity, you must believe that this person of Deity had a beginning, was not always God, was not always in existence, and therefore, was not an eternal and self-existent Being. Yet, it is plainly stated in **Mic.5:2; Jn.1:1,2; Col.1:17; Rev.1:8-18; and Jn.17:5**, that He had no beginning as God, and, that He was as eternal and self-existent as the Father and the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, as man, it is plainly stated that He had a beginning. **Note:** The following statements of Scripture tell us that as man, and as a Son He had a beginning proving sonship refers to humanity and not to Deity'. (Dake)
 - 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman'. The Son of God came forth out of (Gr. 'ex') a woman, became incarnate and dwelt among us (**Jn.1:14**). The fact of the miraculous virgin birth agrees perfectly with the language here. Christ (the Word) did not cease to be God when he became man (at incarnation), but the God-man, one person with two natures.
 - 'Made under the law'. He was born as a Jew. That being so, he was subject to God's law, all of it. And he fulfilled it perfectly: 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (**Heb.4:15**).
 - 'To redeem them that were under the law'. This was the purpose for 'God sending forth his Son', not from heaven, but into the world - 'to seek and to save that which was lost' (**Lu.19:10**); and, ultimately, to the cross, that he might 'redeem' (pay the ransom price for; buy back) sinful man. **Note:** It's been estimated that there were some 60 million Jews living in the Roman Empire in Paul's day. When someone purchased a slave, the buyer could either own and use the slave or set him free. With God, it was both. When he purchases (redeems) people through Christ, he does so that they might be his, and, at the same time, be set free (**3:13; Matt.20:28**). The purpose of the incarnation was 'redemption'; that sinful man might be delivered from the curse of the 'law' and become 'sons of God' through 'grace'.
 - 'That we might receive the adoption of sons'. Inasmuch as we are not 'natural' children of God, we become sons and daughters only by divine adoption (**Jn.1:12; Eph.1:5**). **Note:** Under Roman law, an adopted child was guaranteed all legal rights to his father's property. He was in no way a second-class son, but was equal to any other sons, biological or adopted, in the father's family. Too, Christians, as adopted children of God, we share with Jesus all rights to God's resources.
- Vs.6,7.** 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts'. When a person receives Christ as Savior, Christ' Spirit takes up residence in the person's being transforming the heart that has been rebellious and evil to one that is loving and obedient. Amen! The songwriter had it just right when he penned the words, 'What a Mighty God We Serve'.
- 'Crying Abba, Father'. It is fitting that those who are now sons of God and have the Spirit of God's Son in their hearts and lives, to cry, 'Abba, Father'. **Note:** The term 'Abba' is Aramaic, and means "O Father". It happens to be the same word Jesus used when referring to the heavenly Father.

- The result is, we are no longer just minor heirs no more than slaves, but have been made the heirs and children of God by Christ. Note: Sons are never slaves and slaves are never sons in their father's house.

Vs.8,9. 'Howbeit then, when ye knew not God'. Paul reminds these Galatian 'converts to faith in Christ' of their past spiritual condition and behavior, and what they were before the gospel was preached to them. They were ignorant of the true God, and, of the way he is to be worshipped.

- 'Ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods'. (You were in bondage to gods that have no real being.) Note: Paul is not denying the existence of these 'gods', but their deity. Too, he endeavors to show the Galatians that in doing service to these false gods, they were in the worst of bondage (slavery), for they were doing service to those which by nature were no gods.
- 'But now, after that ye have known God'. They had been brought to the knowledge of the true God and of his Son Jesus Christ, had been saved, had come out of ignorance and bondage, and, had become 'new creatures' in Christ Jesus. Too, through Christ they had received the adoption of sons.
- 'Or rather are known of God'. It is more important that God knows us (in the sense of a spiritual relationship) than it is for us to know God. It's been said, 'All our acquaintance with God begins with him; we know him, because we are known of him'.
- 'How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements (legalism), whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?' Paul's question shows the foolishness of their desire to be slaves again. Note: The words 'weak' and 'beggarly' express the utter impotence of these elements 'to do and bestow' what was 'done and given' by God in sending his Son to the cross.
- 'How is it that you, who have been taught to worship God in the gospel way, should now be persuaded to comply with the ceremonial way of worship? that you, who have been acquainted with a dispensation of light, liberty, and love, as that of the gospel is, should now submit to a dispensation of darkness, bondage, and terror, as that of the law is?' (Matthew Henry Comm.)
- 'One of the tragedies of legalism is that it gives the appearance of spiritual maturity when, in reality, it leads the believer back into a 'second childhood' of Christian experience'. (Wiersbe)
- In paganism the people sought God. In the Christian revelation God sought them. This is the difference between '*religion*' and '*Christianity*'. (H. H. Hobbs)

Vs.10,11. 'Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years'. The false teachers, those causing havoc among the Galatian believers, were demanding the continued observance of 'special days' (those required of Judaism) for their own benefit (by doing so, it would lead them to a higher plane of spirituality; would tend to make them feel religious and justified because they would be 'doing' religion and not necessarily 'living godly') .

- 'I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain'. Paul feared they were on the verge of losing all they had gained by trusting Christ for their salvation; fearful that his ministry to them had been meaningless. Note: 'The labor of ministers is in vain upon those who begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh'. (Matthew Henry)

V.12. 'Brethren, I beseech you'. He calls them 'brethren', even though he knew their hearts, at this time, were not in harmony with what they had before received, believed, and experienced.

- 'Be as I am'. Paul urges them to 'be like him'; no longer in bondage, but free from the rituals, rites, and rules of the law. In essence, he was saying, Don't give up 'grace' for 'law'; don't turn from 'faith in Christ' to 'legalism'.
- 'For I am as ye are'. Since his conversion on the Damascus Road (**Acts 9**), having been saved by grace, through faith, Paul had been liberated from legalism, and was living like a Gentile, that he might be more effective in winning them to Christ (**I Cor.9:21**).

- 'Ye have not injured me at all'. Paul felt no ill will against them. Instead, he viewed them with gratitude, because of the affection they had shown when he first brought to them the gospel.

Vs.13,14. 'Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first'. Paul reminds them that he had preached the gospel to them in spite of an infirmity (physical weakness or disability) he had to overcome. Note: Some have suggested that his infirmity was possibly an attack of malaria or epilepsy, or maybe ophthalmia (an Oriental eye disease prevalent in the lowlands of Pamphylia).

- 'And my temptation which was in my flesh, ye despised not'. Paul's infirmity, whatever it was, did not cause them to despise or reject him.
- 'But received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus'. In spite of Paul's illness, and possibly an impulsive appearance, they showed a great deal of respect, and welcomed him with joy, as if he had been an angel of God - or even Christ Jesus himself.

V.15. 'Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?' What has happened to that happy spirit you enjoyed when you heard the gospel message of redemption, embraced it, and accepted Christ as Savior? Is there now any reason to think otherwise?

- 'If it had been possible, ye would have plucked out (gouged out) your own eyes, and have given them to me'. This is an expression of great affection; one that describes supreme love and devotion. Note: Some believe, from what is said here, that this is proof that Paul had a disease of the eyes. But there is no conclusive evidence that such was the case.

V.16. 'Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?' How is it that I, who was received at the first with such great affection, am now considered your enemy? Is it because I tell you the truth about the dangers of legalism, and warn you about listening to false teachers, that your affections toward me have changed?

V.17. 'They zealously affect you, but not well'. The false teachers were zealous (full of fervor) in their attempts to persuade the Galatians to go their way, which was to promote Judaism and steal their hearts from Christ. But Paul warned that yielding to them would not turn out well.

- 'They would exclude you, that ye might affect them'. They would turn you against me so that you might love and abide by their decisions only. Actually, they wanted to isolate the Galatians from Paul's influence, as well as from other Christians, and bring them into their group of legalists (keep them in bondage).

V.18. 'But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing'. Paul certainly wasn't against zeal. Yet, for zeal to be good, it must be directed toward a noble goal. On the other hand, zeal in a bad thing is always dangerous. Note: Paul knew whereof he spoke. Before becoming a Christian, he was full of zeal; even persecuted the church.

- 'Not only when I am present with you'. Paul desired the Galatian believers to have fervor for those things which were good when he was absent, not only when he was present with them.

V.19. 'My little children'. It's interesting to note: This is the only time in Paul's writings that he uses this term. And he uses it here to demonstrate his deep feelings for the Galatians, inasmuch as he had been the instrument of their conversion to the Christian faith.

- 'Of whom I travail in birth again'. Paul compares his pain over their faithlessness to the pain of childbirth. The Galatians were drifting away from Christ and to the law (legalism). So, Paul, representing them as needing a second spiritual birth, is once again going through birth pangs, just

as he had earlier when he brought them to Christ. Note: This doesn't mean these Galatians had not been truly converted when brought to birth; but that their backsliding was now causing a second time of travailing in pain for them. One writer said, 'The first time there had been a miscarriage'. (I disagree.) The word 'again' (Gr. *palin*) means: to restore once more; anew. It refers to something which could not be done again if it had not been done once before. Without doubt, they had been born again, and, had accepted Christ as Savior. But, after listening to the false teachers, they were now leaving 'grace' and going back to the 'law'.

- 'Until Christ be formed in you'. Note: The word 'formed' (Gr. *morphoo*) means to give outward expression to one's inward nature. Paul, by preaching the gospel to the Galatians had brought them to a new birth by faith in Christ. Now, he feels as if he is laboring (travailing) again, until the likeness of Christ is formed in them.

V.20. 'I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice (tone)'. Paul was writing, which is never as effective as the spoken word. Too, he wished that he did not need to speak to them in such strong words (change his tone).

- 'For I stand in doubt of you'. Actually, Paul was saying, 'I am perplexed in you. Since I am not with you, I frankly don't know what to do'.

V.21. 'Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law'. Note: When 'under the law', it is 'what you do' for God that makes you right before Him. But 'under grace', it is 'what God has done for us in Jesus Christ' that makes us right before Him.

- 'Do ye not hear the law?' 'Are you hearing what the law really says, and paying attention to what it really means?' Note: Although a tragedy, they failed to hear the message of the law, even while trying to obey it.

Vs.22,23. 'For it is written, that Abraham had two sons'. It is clear that Paul is speaking of Ishmael and Isaac, which illustrate the opposing concepts of slavery and freedom, of law and grace, of the sinful nature and the spiritual promise. Note: Those who submit to the law, claiming to be sons of Abraham, forget that Abraham had two sons.

- 'The one by a bondmaid'. 'Bondmaid' (bondwoman) refers to a female slave. Here, it is Hagar, Sarah's maidservant (**Gen.16:1,2**).
- 'The other by a free woman' - Sarah, the wife of Abraham and co-equal heir of the promises of God made to Abraham. Note: It was the status of the mother that determined the status of the son.
- 'But he who was born of the bondwoman (Ishmael) was born after the flesh'. Note: The faith of Abraham and Sarah wavered. They feared that it would not be possible for Sarah (because of advanced age) to have the child God had promised, so Sarah gave her maidservant (Hagar) to Abraham to produce an heir.
- 'But he of the freewoman (Isaac) was by promise'. God later carried out his plan and fulfilled his promise. Note: Ishmael's birth was according to the 'flesh' and 'unbelief', while Isaac's was through 'promise' and 'faith'.

Vs.24,25. 'Which things are an allegory' (symbolic; to speak figuratively; to have hidden spiritual meaning). Paul says, the births of these two sons were not only literal and historical events, but signified something further.

- 'For these are the two covenants'. In the Bible, a 'covenant' is a contract that sets the rules for our relationship with God. These two women symbolize the two covenants, 'law' and 'grace'. Hagar represents the Mosaic covenant of law and bondage, given at Mt. Sinai, and is the mother of the child of the flesh. Sarah represents the Abrahamic covenant of grace and liberty, and is the mother

of the child of promise. Note: The 'covenant of the law' represents the completely ineffective system of a 'works religion'. Its three aspects are: (a) Hagar, as a slave, symbolizing the bondage that comes from the law; (b) Mt. Sinai, representing the birthplace of the law; and (c) the 'Jerusalem which now is', the capital of religious Judaism, a most unholy 'Holy City', full of injustice, violence, and murder, and in bondage. Note: This is a severe condemnation of the false teachers (legalists) from Jerusalem, who were trying to turn the Galatians away from Paul and grace, and back to the law, with all its rites, rules, and rituals.

Vs.26,27. 'But the Jerusalem which is above is free'. The other covenant, that of 'grace', is presented here as the heavenly Jerusalem (**Heb.12:22-24**), the spiritual city of which all Christians are children. It is the Jerusalem in which Christ, the son of David, reigns; he who is at the right hand of God. Note: It is believed, by many, to be the 'new Jerusalem' John later saw 'coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband' (**Rev.21:2**).

- 'Which is the mother of us all'. Paul compares this Jerusalem to a spiritual mother. And he quotes **Isa.54:1**, which encourages the 'free woman' to rejoice - 'for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband'.

Vs.28-30. 'Now, we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise'. As Christians, whether Gentiles or Jews, we do not identify with Ishmael, but with Isaac. We, by faith, are the children of promise.

- 'But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit'. Paul answers by referring to **Gen.21:10**. Sarah, while weaning Isaac, saw Ishmael mocking (mistreating in some way) Isaac. So, she had Abraham cast out Hagar and her son, 'for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac'. Note: Paul likens this to that (persecution) which the Judaizers were bringing against the Galatian converts to Christianity. Law and grace cannot live together as principles for our Christian life.

V.31. 'So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free'. 'Dear brothers, we are not slave children, obligated to the Jewish laws, but children of the free woman, acceptable to God because of our faith'. (The Living Bible)

- Note: Although the above 'analogy' has to do, primarily, with the two systems of 'law' and 'grace', I would like to share the following from my booklet, 'Sanctification: A Second Work of Grace', page eleven.

Trouble in the home of Abraham and Sarah.

- According to Gen.21:9-14 and Gal.4:21-31, things were not going well in the home. Therefore, inasmuch as Sarah was unable to bear children, she suggested to Abraham that he go in unto Hagar, her maid, and obtain a child by her. 'Abraham harkened to the voice of Sarah' (Gen.16:2). And Hagar bare Abram a son (born after the flesh): and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bear, Ishmael' (Gen.16:15).
- Then, some fourteen years later, Sarah gave birth to Isaac, the son promised by God (born after the Spirit). Afterwards, because of Ishmael's mocking and persecuting Isaac, the family found itself without peace and rest. That being so, Sarah concluded that the only way to solve the matter was to 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son' (Gen.21:10).
- Notice: Ishmael, born 'after the flesh', is a clear type and representative of the 'Old man' (inbred sin) with which we were born. Ishmael was in the home first (**c.f. Fig.1, p.33**).
- Afterwards, Isaac, born 'after the Spirit' (type of 'salvation'), came into the family. But the two sons were unable to get along. In essence, a 'warfare' ensued, with he who represents the 'inbred sin'

(Ishmael) warring against Isaac, he who represents the 'new nature' (**c.f. Fig.3, p.33**). And, because of the turmoil, it was decided that the only remedy for real peace, was: 'Ishmael must go'.

- And it's the same in the heart of the believer (the man saved but not yet sanctified). As long as 'inbred sin' (Adam nature) remains in the heart there will be trouble. Therefore, in order to have peace and joy, the 'Adam nature' must go; it must be crucified; it must be reckoned dead (**c.f. Figs.3&4, p.33**).
- This is a wonderful type of 'Sanctification: A Second Work of Grace'.

Chapter 5

- V.1.** 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free'. When the Galatians trusted Christ for salvation, they were freed from the 'yoke of bondage'. No longer were they servants of Satan; no longer bound by sin; but, through faith in Christ, had been set free to live in liberty. **Note:** Paul is speaking here of the freedom of the gospel of the new covenant. And this 'liberty' is the wonderful freedom that is to be enjoyed by every believer in Christ. Too, not only is it freedom from sin and guilt and condemnation; but freedom from the penalty and power of sin, as well.
- 'Stand fast'. Paul encouraged the Galatian Christians to maintain their freedom in Christ by standing firm in their conviction that they had been justified by faith, and, to resist the temptation to move into legalism, as was being encouraged by the Judaizers.
 - 'Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage'. These Galatian believers had escaped the bondage of sin by putting their faith and trust in the atoning work of Christ. But they were now in danger of the bondage of the 'law'. The legalists were trying to yoke them with Judaism. 'Yoke' is a symbol of slavery, while 'salvation' is a gift of God; given us by grace alone (**Eph.2:8,9**). We are saved by grace through faith, and we live the Christian life the same way.
- V.2.** 'Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing'. Paul warns them concerning the rite of circumcision, because the legalists taught that Gentile male believers in Christ cannot be saved unless they be circumcised. When, in fact, the Apostles and the Church in the Council at Jerusalem made no such rule regarding circumcision and keeping the law (**Acts 15:24**).
- In writing to these Gentile male believers in Christ, Paul said, 'If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing'. He was saying, if male Gentile believers in Christ submitted to circumcision, believing they must do so to be saved, they would, instead, cast aside their salvation received by grace through faith. In reality, the Judaizers were trying to undo what Christ had done in their lives. But salvation cannot be earned by works (law), nor by a combination of faith and works. It is always by grace through faith in Christ, and that only.
- V.3.** 'Every man who becomes circumcised. . . is a debtor to keep the whole law'. A Gentile who is circumcised as a part of his requirement to be saved becomes a debtor to keep the entire law. **Note:** The law is not a cafeteria-line where some items may be chosen, and others ignored. The law-keeping has to be perfect (**Ja.2:10**): the whole law. And such perfection, according to **3:11**, was impossible.
- V.4.** 'Christ is become of no effect unto you'. Some Galatians had changed their faith in Christ to faith in legalistic observances of the law; a foolish path, indeed.
- And Paul says to those who had done so, 'Ye are fallen from grace'. **Note:** It's statements like this that cause difficulty to those who hold to the theory of 'Eternal Security', or, 'Once Saved Always Saved'.
 - 'To fall from grace is to be alienated from Christ and to abandon the principle of God's grace that brings to us life and salvation. It is to have one's association with Christ nullified and to no longer abide in Christ' (Full Life Study Bible).
 - 'Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away' (Jn.15:2). **Note:** Since Christ is the true vine, to be a 'branch' in the vine is to be 'in Christ'. And in order to be 'in Christ' a person must be saved. But, if that person doesn't continue on with Christ, he is 'taken away' (removed from the vine).

- 'If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned' (Jn.15:6). Note: No one can 'abide in Christ' until he has accepted Christ as Savior. But after salvation, if a person does not go on with the Lord (obey his commandments and serve him), he is alienated from Christ. He no longer enjoys the Lord's fellowship.
 - 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself shall be a castaway' (I Cor.9:27). Note: To be a 'castaway' is to be a 'reprobate'; to be 'rejected'. It does not mean 'a cracked pot, fit to keep', nor 'to be put on the shelf', nor 'lost opportunity in the Christian life', as some teach. It means to become Christless and literally rejected.
 - When a person, who has been saved by grace through faith, then, afterwards, embraces the law as his rule of walking with God, he departs (falls) from the grace of Christ. Note: 'Eternal Security' is conditional. It will be a reality only for those who obey God's commandments and continue on with Him. The Bible teaches, in both the Old and New Testaments, that the believer must 'continue on with the Lord' in order to enjoy the blessings and benefits of an eternity with God and the saints. The following are some of the scriptures that teach the necessity of continuing: **Dt.8:19; Eze.33:13,18; Jn.8:31; 15:6,10,14; Heb.3:6** - and many others.
- V.5.** 'For we (born-again believers) through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith'. Our hope of righteousness and redemption comes by faith in Jesus Christ; and we can endure in this faith only through the work of the Holy Spirit. Not only has the Lord set us free, he also sent the Holy Spirit to assist us in our living this Christian life.
- V.6.** 'For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love'. Whether or not one is circumcised doesn't really matter. But what does matter is 'faith that finds its expression in love'. This is the ultimate calling for faithful service to Christ, and fulfills the two greatest commandments: (1) loving God with all our being, and (2) loving others as ourselves (**Matt.22:34-40**). Note: There's a familiar statement, 'Faith alone justifies, but the faith which justifies is not alone'.
- V.7.** 'Ye did run well'. Spiritually, the Galatian Christians had started the journey toward heaven filled with joy and love (**4:15**). They had been running a good race, right on course, looking forward to reaching the goal. Note: This refers to the time before the Judaizers came on the scene.
- 'Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?' Since Paul is using the figure of a race, the word 'hinder' suggests someone 'cutting in', 'disrupting', 'interfering', 'throwing them off course', etc. Note: The pressure from the Judaizers had a negative impact on these Galatian believers, causing them to turn aside from the truth.
- Vs.8,9.** 'This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you'. The pressure to forsake the gospel of grace certainly did not come from God. Therefore, if the persuasion did not come from God, from whom did it come? And the obvious answer is: the devil. That means, in essence, that these Judaizers were serving the devil. And he always offers a poor substitute. In listening to these false teachers, these Galatian Christians had neglected their calling from God, and were leaving Jesus to pursue the false and empty teachings of man; in this case, legalism. Note: Every false teacher, even the devil himself, tries to use the Bible to support his heresy (**Matt.4:5,6**).
- 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump'. In the New Testament, leaven (yeast) is almost always used as a symbol of evil. Here, Paul compared the corrupting influence of the legalists to yeast

spreading through bread dough. Their corruption of the gospel threatened to spread, not only through the church in Galatia but throughout the entire region.

V.10. 'I have confidence in you through the Lord'. Even while Paul condemns the Judaizers, he, at the same time, encourages his readers to be true to Christ. He expresses confidence (was fully persuaded) that the Galatians would hold to the truth of justification by faith in Christ (which was really a confidence in the Lord who is able to keep them).

- 'But he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be'. It seems that the problem involved many people, with one singled out as their leader. Yet, not only did Paul believe that the Lord would help the Galatians remain true to the gospel, he was equally confident that judgment awaits those who endeavor to lead believers astray and away from the Lord.

V.11. 'And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision why do I yet suffer persecution?' The Judaizers accused Paul of teaching the need for circumcision to be saved. Note: This could be a distorted interpretation of Paul's act in circumcising Timothy, a half-Jew (**Acts 16:3**). Yet, he did this in order to avoid the possibility of hindering Timothy's work among the Jews. It had nothing to do with Timothy's salvation. Too, Paul had already shown in the letter that he refused to have Titus, a Gentile Christian, circumcised **2:3**).

- 'Then is the offence of the cross ceased'. Paul refuted their claims, that he was teaching the need for circumcision in order to be saved, by pointing out the persecution he experienced from preaching salvation only through faith in the grace of the Lord, which he calls 'the offence of the cross'. Note: The word 'offence' (Gr. *skandalon*), mentioned here, is translated in **I Cor.1:23** as 'stumbling-block'. To the Jews, the gospel of a crucified Christ was a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks 'foolishness' (*moronic*). The Jews looked for a political-military messiah who would destroy their enemies, not one that would be destroyed by them. So, they stumbled over the idea of a Savior who died on a cross, a death reserved for the worst of criminals.

V.12. 'I would they were even cut off which trouble you'. Note: The worship of Cybele at Pessinus, a principal city of Galatia, was deformed by the practice of 'self-mutilation' on the part of some of its devotees (heathen priests). This was a matter of universal notoriety. And it's likely that Paul, when in the neighborhood, heard frequent mention of these devotees, which were known as the '*opocopi*'. (Pulpit Comm.) Therefore, Paul, in irony, expresses the wish that those who are so insistent upon circumcising Gentiles would go all the way and emasculate themselves.

- MacGorman points out that in certain pagan religions (such as the Cybele-Attis cult) self-emasculatation was practiced. 'It was the frenzied rite of sacrifice whereby a man entered the priesthood of the cult goddess'. He goes on to explain Paul's words, saying, 'If circumcision is efficacious, then excision ought to be more so!'
- The 'Twentieth Century New Testament' reads 'mutilate themselves'. The 'New English Bible' reads, 'make eunuchs of themselves'. 'Beck's New Testament in the Language of Today' catches the full meaning: 'castrate themselves'.
- Phillips, in an effort to tone down Paul's words, says, 'I wish those who are so eager to cut your bodies would cut themselves off from you altogether'.
- Still others believe Paul is saying, concerning the term 'cut off', that he wishes them to be 'anathema' (consigned to destruction with a curse). (I disagree with this, totally.)

V.13. 'For, brethren'. After the difficult words concerning the Judaizers, Paul again addresses his readers with the tender word 'brethren'.

- 'ye have been called unto liberty'. You have been called to total freedom from the law; unto liberty, not slavery. Note: Salvation is ours through believing in Christ. At that moment, we are not only freed from the dominion of sin over our lives, but freed from the bondage of trying to save ourselves by doing good works.
- 'Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh'. Being called unto liberty does not mean a person is free from the spiritual and moral obligation to love God and live in obedience to his Word. Paul is saying, 'Don't let this cause you to think you have no responsibility to live right'. Liberty must be maintained, not abused. It is abused when it is made the occasion of turning liberty into that which is contrary to God's will.
- 'But by love serve one another'. Faith must be guided by love. True Christian love will show forth itself through true Christian conduct. Love is 'action'; and there's no greater way to express it than in serving others.

V.14. 'For all the law is fulfilled in one word (precept), even in this; Thy shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'. On one occasion (**Matt.34-40**), while conversing with a Pharisee lawyer, Jesus was asked, 'Which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus answered, '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 great 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'. Note: The first four of the Ten Commandments deal with our relation to God. The last six deal with our relation to others. Paul, here, is thinking of the Galatian Christians' relation to each other. Too, we must remember; for any Christian 'act' to have meaning, it must be done in love.

V.15. 'But if ye bite and devour one another (a picture of church strifes), take heed that ye be not consumed one of another'. Notice the progression of the words 'bite', 'devour', and 'consume'. Instead of living in loving unity, the Galatian churches were moving from dissention to destruction. This is far from the Christian ideal of love. When Christians do this, they cause God to weep and Satan to cheer.

- Charles Kingsley said, 'There are two freedoms: the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where a man is free to do what he ought'.

V.16. 'This I say then, Walk in the Spirit'. To keep these Galatians from devouring each other, Paul admonishes them to 'Walk in the Spirit'. Note: The Greek word translated 'walk' means to 'walk around', and speaks of one's manner of life. Too, the 'Spirit', mentioned here in **vs.16-18**, is the 'Holy Spirit', who dwells in the hearts of all who are regenerated (born again). Therefore, such a 'walk' means that we are molded by the power of the Spirit with our character and personality coming under His guidance and influence.

- 'And ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh'. Note: The word 'lust' means to crave, or to have an intense desire. It can be a good desire (**Lu.22:15**) or an evil one, as here in this verse (**cf. Ja.1:14,15**).
- 'The flesh', mentioned here, is the 'sinful nature', that which everyone born of woman (except Jesus) has inherited from our forefather Adam, which was due to his disobedience, the 'fall'. In reality, the sinful nature is 'human nature' corrupted by sin. Originally, when man was created by God, his nature was not corrupt, but became corrupt when Adam sinned. David said, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me' (**Ps.51:5**).
- Note: The 'sinful nature' is expressed in many different ways in scripture: Adam nature, inbred sin, the uncircumcised heart, flesh, body of sin, self-will, old man, carnal mind, body of death, and, no doubt, many others (**c.f. p.33**).

- Vs.17,18.** 'For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh'. This speaks of the 'warfare' within the heart of a carnal believer (babe in Christ), who has not, as yet, gone on to holiness (is unsanctified). Note: 'The spiritual conflict within the believer involves the totality of his person as he struggles to determine whether he will wholly surrender to the inclinations of the 'flesh' (sinful nature) and return to the dominion of sin, or whether he will yield to the demands of the Holy Spirit and continue under the dominion of Christ (v.16)'. It's important that we understand; the battlefield is within the heart of the unsanctified Christian himself (c.f. Fig.3, p.33). Paul treats this civil war within, between the sinful nature and the Holy Spirit, more fully in **Rom.7:14-25**.
- 'So that ye cannot do the things that ye would'. You don't live the way you want to. When you know to do right, the 'sin nature' within pulls the opposite direction. And it's the same the other way around. When you are about to do that which is wrong, the Holy Spirit tugs at your heart to do that which is right.
 - 'But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law'. If we follow the leadings of the Spirit we will not yield to temptations to sin. Such living brings us into harmony with the Word of God, and frees us from trying to save ourselves through obedience to the law.

- Vs.19-21.** 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest'. Paul had just written about the battle within between the flesh and the Spirit in the believer. Although it is an interior, invisible battle, the results are outwardly manifest (evident). These works of the flesh are expressions of the unregenerated human nature; they come from the heart that is in rebellion against God; they are plainly evident to everyone; and, they are incompatible with the influence of the Spirit of God.
- Paul, here, gives a partial list of sins that are 'works of the flesh', which may be listed under three headings: (1) Sex (v.19), (2) Worship (v.20a), and (3) Social relationships (vs.20b,21). Note: Each of these is worthy when expressed in God's will. It's when a person gives in to Satan that these works become 'works of the flesh'.
 - Adultery. Violation of the marriage covenant by sexual immorality.
 - Fornication. In earlier times it meant 'the use of a prostitute'. Later, it included a variety of sexual sins, but primarily premarital and extramarital sex.
 - Uncleanness. Moral impurity. Note: Of the nine times Paul uses this word, seven are associated with sexual sins.
 - Lasciviousness (lewdness). Unbridled and unrestrained passion and lust.
 - Idolatry. The worship of idols or gods of their own making; anything other than God.
 - Witchcraft (sorcery). Comes from Greek word (*pharmakeia*) which referred to drugs or the administering of drugs (the source of our word pharmacy). For a period of time, sorcerers came to monopolize the use of drugs in the practice of magical arts associated with idolatry. Pagan religions also practiced sexual perversion in their rites.
 - Hatred. Enmity; personal animosity. The inner motivation for the ill treatment of others.
 - Variance. Strife, rivalry, discord, factions, quarrelsomeness. Note: In Greek religion Eris was the goddess of strife. She was the sister of Ares, the god of war.
 - Emulations (jealousy). Burning zeal. 'The desire to have what someone else has, wrong desire for that which is not for us' (Barclay).
 - Wrath. Boiling rage. A sudden flash of temper; unable to control one's anger.
 - Strife. A self-centered action that creates factions.
 - Seditions. Desires to create divisions.
 - Heresies. Sects that capture and overthrow other groups. Hardened dissensions. Note: There is all the difference in the world between believing that we are right and believing everyone is wrong.
 - Envyings. Feelings of ill-will. Persistent desires to corrupt and destroy others.

- Murders. The slaying of others.
- Drunkenness. Excessive drinking. To come under the control of alcohol or other substances. To be impaired in any way by drink is sin.
- Revellings. Unrestrained partying. Open, drunken parades, oftentimes held in honor of a deity.
- 'They which do such things (make a habit of) shall not inherit the kingdom of God'.

Vs.22,23. 'But the fruit of the Spirit'. In contrast to the 'works of the flesh' (**vs. 10-21**), Paul now presents the 'fruit (singular) of the Spirit'. It is but one fruit, made up of nine elements. The first three (love, joy, peace) are in relation to God; the next three (longsuffering, gentleness, goodness) are in relation to man; and the final three (faith, meekness, temperance) are in relation to a person's own inner life. Note: The word 'fruit' takes the place of works, mentioned in **v.19**. Too, it's important to understand it is not 'the Spirit' that is bearing the fruit, but the person controlled by the Spirit. And the fruit of the Spirit is:

- Love. In the Greek language there were four different words for 'love'. (1) '*Eros*' - the word for romantic or passionate love. (2) '*Philia*' - love we have for family or friends. (3) '*Storge*' - love that shows itself in affection and care. (4) '*Agape*' - the self-denying, self-sacrificing, Christlike love, which is the foundation of all other graces.
- Joy. Is not just emotion, but is based rather on the believer's relationship with Christ. It is serenity in the midst of a storm (**Matt.5:11,12**). It's the glad-heartedness produced by entire faith in God's love for to us. Note: Christ within is its foundation.
- Peace. The ability to remain constant (consistent; steadfast) in spite of circumstances. It is an inner calm, which rises above outward environment and experience.
- Longsuffering. Means a person can have love, joy, and peace even during those times when people and events vex (irritate) them. It is patient endurance under provocation; forbearance under ill-will, with no thought of retaliation.
- Gentleness (kindness). It seeks to do good to the one who has wronged it. To react toward others in a kind manner.
- Goodness. Shows itself in a readiness to do good to all as we have opportunity. It is serving God by serving men - being a light in darkness, food for the hungry, and water for the thirsty (**Matt.25:35-40**).
- Faith (faithfulness). An abiding conviction and trust in the truth. It speaks of fidelity and dependability, which makes a person true to his promise and faithful to his task.
- Meekness. To be dominated by gentleness and mildness. It is not weakness (as many of our day think of it), 'gentle strength' (power) under control. Too, a meek person is a teachable person, not a know-it-all.
- Temperance. Speaks of an inner strength by which a person controls himself, using his powers for good and not bad. Not excessive or immoderate in the use of meat and drink and other enjoyments of life. It's the mastery of one's passions and desires.
- Paul closes out the list of 'fruit' by noting that 'against such there is no law'. No law can condemn the one producing the fruit of the Spirit. Law only condemns sin, not righteousness.
- Interesting note: 'The listing of 'the fruit of the Spirit' matches the order and meanings of the inner lusts and 'works of the flesh'. Love overcomes fornication and adultery. Joy overcomes lasciviousness and uncleanness. Peace overcomes witchcraft and idolatry. Longsuffering overcomes variance and hatred. Gentleness overcomes emulations. Goodness overcomes wrath and strife. Faith overcomes seditions and heresies. Meekness overcomes envy and murders. Temperance overcomes drunkenness and reveling' (Evangelical Sunday School Commentary).

V.24. 'And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts'. Paul summarizes the comparison of the 'works of the flesh' and 'the fruit of the Spirit'. The conclusion is that the works of the flesh must be crucified if the fruit of the Spirit is to be manifested. Without this crucifixion we cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit as God would have us do.

- God did not eradicate the 'sinful nature' within when he saved us (**Rom.7:14-25**). Therefore, since the flesh (sinful nature), with its affections and desires is still a present reality (**c.f. Fig.3, p.33**), it seems Paul is emphasizing the 'carrying the cross' principle into the redeemed life.
- When we commit our lives to Christ, we submit to participate spiritually in His crucifixion and His resurrection. Spiritually, our past sinful life is crucified, and we rise to a new life in the Holy Spirit.

Vs.25,26. 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit'. **Note:** The word rendered 'walk' is not the usual one used by Paul (*peripateo*, **v.16**). Here, it is *stoicheo*, and means to walk in a line, keep in rank and file, march in battle order. To walk in (by) the Spirit is to order our lives by His rule and conduct, walking a straight path in fellowship with Him.

- 'Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another'. Life in the Spirit is not exempt from temptation. Therefore, Paul names three ways that will help us to be continually on guard: (1) hold to humility; (2) avoid a combatant attitude; and (3) refrain from being jealous. If we do this, we will not seek the vain (empty) glory of the world.
- Something to think about: 'Kicking mules never pull, and pulling mules never kick'. As Christians, we can learn a lot from animals.

Chapter 6

- In the first five chapters, we learned how false teachers from Jerusalem had followed Paul around in his ministry and discouraged his new converts by teaching that Gentiles had to become proselytes to Judaism through circumcision before they could become Christians. They had corrupted some of the Galatian believers, and Paul wrote this letter to help the church know how to deal with the situation.
- The 'great theme' of this letter to the Galatians is 'justification by faith', and these last two chapters are focused on 'practical Christianity'.

V.1. Brethren, if a man (believer) be overtaken (found out, detected, caught, snared) in a fault (a falling beside, trespass, transgression, sin), ye which are spiritual (those walking in the Spirit and showing forth the fruit of the Spirit), restore such an one. **Note:** The word 'restore' (Gr. *katartizo*) is the same word used in the New Testament (**Matt.4:21**) of mending nets. Too, it is used as a surgical term for setting a fractured or dislocated bone. Whatever the 'fault' may be, the spiritual brethren should restore the offender's conduct as gently and effectively as a physician would set a broken bone. Therefore, 'to restore a person means to lead him back to true repentance for sin and to a full commitment to Jesus Christ and his ways' (Full Life Study Bible).

- 'Restore. . . in the spirit of meekness (gentleness); considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted' (with full understanding of our own weaknesses and corruption). 'Those spiritual are not to aggravate the fallen brother's grief, nor scold him, nor condemn him, but lift him up gently and restore his faith' (Luther).
- 'Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted'. Each Christian should deal gently with offenders, knowing that he could find himself in their place. No one is immune from temptation.

V.2. Bear ye one another's burdens'. Lend a helping hand by lifting heavy loads of others. **Note:** The 'burdens' (Gr. *baros*), mentioned here, are a particular burden of a brother's fault (either a lapse in morals or faith). It speaks of an overload which those 'spiritual' can lighten, a weight too heavy for the fallen individual, and, a burden capable of being shared by others of the fellowship.

- 'And so fulfill the law of Christ'. **Note:** The question may be asked: What is the 'law of Christ'? First of all, it is not the law of Moses. In **Acts 15:10**, the law is described as a 'burden', but the law of Christ is not so (**I Jn.5:3**). His burden is light (**Matt.11:30**). The law of Christ, to which Paul refers, is the 'law of love and grace'.
- The ministry of restoration is a way Christians can bear one another's burdens and fulfill the law of Christ. It's His law that teaches us to love one another.

V.3. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing'. Paul warns against having an arrogant attitude of moral superiority toward fellow-believers in need of restoration. Those 'spiritually strong' should never become haughty, or high-minded, and, therefore, refuse to restore the weak.

- Thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought leads to the sin of pride. The wise King Solomon, in **Prov.16:18**, said, 'Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall'. If the person who has such a high opinion of himself would look at the facts, he would discover 'he is nothing'.
- 'He deceiveth himself'. Self-conceit leads to self-deception. **Note:** It's been said, 'If some people could buy themselves in the morning for what they are worth, and in the evening sell themselves for what they think they are worth, they would make a fortune in but one day'.

- V.4.** 'But let every man prove his own work'. Rather than comparing his life with that of others, a person should first take inventory of himself. Fallen Christians need restoration, and all Christians need to engage in honest self-examination to assess their need of spiritual and moral improvement. Too often, those within the Christian fellowship are preoccupied with assessing the failure of others rather than their own lives.
- 'and then (after he has objectively examined his own life) shall he have rejoicing in himself alone'. Then he can rejoice over (praise and thank God for) his works. Note: Moffatt says, 'Then he will have something to boast about on his own account, and not in comparison with his fellow-believers'.
- V.5.** 'For every man shall bear his own burden'. Note: Critics might use **vs.2,5** to try to prove the Scripture contradictory. However, in the Greek text two different words for burden are given. In **v.2**, it is '*baros*' (a weight too heavy for the fallen individual to bear alone); while in **v.5**, it is '*phortion*' (the burden of the law; a soldier's pack). Jesus used this word when he spoke of his burden being light. Here, Paul makes a distinction between crushing burdens and those burdens a person can bear alone.
- V.6.** 'Let him that is taught in the word communicate (share, contribute) unto him that teacheth in all good things'. It is the duty of all who are taught God's Word to help provide material support for those who serve them (pastors, workers, teachers, evangelists, missionaries). Ministers are the Lord's soldiers, captains, and standard-bearers; and, therefore, are not to go to war at their own cost. In return, the minister is to faithfully carry out his responsibilities.
- As teachers share their wisdom and knowledge of God's Word, so those being taught should share their financial resources. This is mutual burden-bearing. Remember: No one else can do our giving for us, whether the giving be spiritual, moral, or material.
- V.7.** 'Be not deceived (stop being led astray); God is not mocked'. Paul is still talking about giving to good causes and doing God's work. Note: It is self-deceptive to think sin will have no consequences. Refusal to believe that sin has consequences is mockery (to turn up one's nose) of God. No man can successfully snub God.
- 'for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap'. For those who are hesitant to share in all good things with those who teach them, Paul reminds them of God's principle of sowing and reaping. Note: When a seed is planted in the ground, it grows, matures, and produces more seed like that from which it came. A grain of corn, when planted, grows to maturity; and will produce more corn. There is absolutely no possibility that it will produce beans, peas, or potatoes.
- V.8.** 'For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption'. The same principle (the one mentioned in **v.7**) applies to what we do with our lives. If we plant to gratify sinful desires (the flesh), we will reap the corruption that comes of sin (physical, moral, and spiritual rotteness and ruin). Note: According to John Stott in *The Message of Galatians*, sowing to the flesh means 'to pander to it, to cuddle and stroke it, instead of crucifying it. Every time we allow our mind to harbor a grudge, nurse a grievance, entertain an impure fantasy, or wallow in self-pity, we are sowing to the flesh'.
- On the other hand, 'he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting'. Just as in agriculture it is impossible to plant corn and reap potatoes, spiritually, it is impossible to live an evil and sinful life and reap righteousness. Note: Sowing (planting) to the Holy Spirit demonstrates our commitment to Christ.
 - A further 'truth' is that we not only reap what we sow in 'quality', but that we reap more than we sow in 'quantity'. If you plant one grain of corn you will harvest corn. But from the one seed you will

reap hundreds of like grains. Note: In the parable of the sower (**Matt.13:8**), Jesus mentioned that of the seed that fell on good ground, some 'brought forth an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold'.

- V.9.** 'Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not'. Keeping with his theme of 'sowing and reaping', Paul gives words of encouragement to those who had stayed faithful in Galatia, urging them to continue doing good (sowing to the Spirit), even though results were not readily apparent. Therefore, he must not 'be weary'. Note: The word 'weary' means 'to retreat in battle', 'to give up the fight', 'to have one's patience exhausted'. The idea is that one may get tired on the job, slacken up in his work, or even quit altogether, if he expects to see the harvest immediately. Therefore, Paul encourages these believers to be patient; because, eventually ('in due season', at the right time), there will be a harvest.
- Weariness can set in when a Christian has been doing good for a long time with little results to show for it. The temptation in the face of such disappointment is to cease from doing good, because it seems in vain. But we must remember, living for God and doing what is right can never be in vain. The same God who will not allow unforgiven sins to go without consequences, will not allow faithful service to Him to go unrewarded. 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have showed toward His name' (Heb.6:10). Our responsibility is to sow the seed, but the harvest belongs to God.
- V.10.** 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men'. Paul instructed the church to keep on doing good for others, whether they deserved it or not. Too, as Christians, we are to do good to all men as a witness for Christ. Note: Charles Wesley said, 'Do all the good you can, by all means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can'.
- 'Especially unto them who are of the household of faith'. All those born-again are members of the family of God. Therefore, if we do not show love to our brothers and sisters in Christ, we fail to have the love of God in our hearts. When writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, Paul said, If one neglects to care for his own (believers in the household of faith), he is worse than an infidel (unbeliever). Note: Our love for fellow Christians is the primary test of our love for God.
- V.11.** 'Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand'. There are varying opinions as to what is meant by Paul's statement. It is known to readers of the Apostle's letters, that he usually dictated them to a ministry associate, who wrote for him. An example of this is, 'I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord' (Rom.16:22). Because Paul mentions a large letter by his own hand, some believe, (1) he wrote the entire epistle using 'large letters' because of his poor eyesight. Others believe, (2) that up to this point, Paul was dictating the letter, but had now taken the pen from the scribe and wrote these closing words himself for the sake of greater effectiveness. Note: It seems likely that Paul deliberately used large printed letters, like bold-faced type, to call attention to what is being written. He wanted his readers - and the Judaizers - to get the message.
- 'how large a letter'. Galatians does not fit the idea of a 'large' or 'long' letter. Therefore, a better translation could be, 'You see with what large letters I am writing to you with my hand' (Stamm).
- V.12.** 'As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised'. Paul returns to the major theme of 'salvation by faith and not by works of the Law'; and, once again, mentions the subject of circumcision ('make a fair shew in the flesh'). By doing so, he exposes the

motives of those who were troubling his readers. They (Judaizers) wanted Gentiles to be circumcised and become Jewish proselytes before believing in Jesus.

- 'Only lest they should suffer persecution for the cause of Christ' (so that they themselves might escape persecution from other Jews). The legalists were not concerned for the Galatians, or for God, or for a salvation that comes only through the cross, but about their own comfort and reputation.
- V.13.** 'For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh'. Paul indicts the Judaizers for not keeping the very law they preached while insisting the Gentile converts become Jewish proselytes through circumcision. Note: They had a two-fold selfish purpose in mind: (1) to escape persecution which comes with the cross of Christ; and (2) to brag and boast over the Galatians. Earlier, in **Lu.11:46**, Jesus had accused the lawyers with laying on the people 'burdens grievous to be borne' while not being willing to lift a finger to help.
- V.14.** 'But God forbid that I should glory (boast, trust in), save (except) in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'. 'Paul cared nothing for the glory that comes from fame or popular acclaim. He cared nothing for the glory that comes from wealth or riches. He cared nothing for the glory that comes from position and power among men. He only cared about the glory of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ' (D. Gucik). 'It is not that the Judaizers gloried and Paul did not. Rather it is that the Judaizers gloried in the flesh of the Galatians, whereas Paul gloried in the cross of the Galilean' (MacGorman).
- 'By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world'. Note: The 'world', in the sense Paul means it here, was not the global earth; nor was it the mass of humanity, but the satanic world system which is in total opposition to God and his Word. 'The world means everything that is opposed to God, His kingdom, and His righteousness' (Full Life Study Bible). Note: Crucifixion means 'a death of shame'. Therefore, since the world is crucified unto Paul, it has no more power over him. It is dead as far as he is concerned (**c.f. Fig.4, p.33**).
- V.15.** 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature'. Paul goes on to say, the gospel is not about circumcision or uncircumcision, but about the 'good news' that we can become 'new creatures' by faith in Christ (**II Cor.5:17**). Salvation by faith does not just give the repentant sinner a 'make-over', but makes him a whole 'new creature'. This was something the law could never do. Note: The 'cross' removes the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. A Jew is not saved because he is circumcised; a Gentile is not lost because he is not circumcised. Circumcision affects only the body, not the soul. A surgical operation can have absolutely no effect on the old nature.
- V.16.** 'As many as walk (in straight line, 5:25) according to this rule (the cross of Christ and the message of grace that centers there), peace be on them, and mercy'. Peace and mercy are the results of salvation. Peace is the believer's new relationship to God, and mercy is the forgiveness of all his sins and the setting aside of God's judgment.
- 'And upon the Israel of God'. Note: The word 'and', here, is better translated 'even'. So, Paul identifies Christians, all God's people under the new covenant, i.e., both believing Jews and believing Gentiles, as the true Israel of God, it's not those who are circumcised and live by legalism, but those who are new creations by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Too, some believe that the phrase 'the Israel of God' has reference to Christian Jews, as Paul himself. Still others believe it means nothing more than the descendants of Abraham according to faith.

- Vs.17,18.** 'From henceforth let no man trouble me'. There are two schools of thought. First, Paul was saying to the Christians of Galatia, 'Don't be a trouble to me by continuing to listen to these Judaizers'. Secondly, Paul's apostleship, authority, and gospel had all been questioned. And Paul had answered all their criticism. Now he says, 'Let's hear no more of such disturbing, distracting attacks'.
- 'For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus'. 'In contrast to the Judaizers, Paul believed and preached the gospel, even amid great suffering. If the physical scars he wore (the marks of the Lord Jesus) were not enough to recommend him, nothing ever could' (David Jeremiah).
 - 'The marks Paul bore in his body, scars suffered for the sake of the Lord Jesus, spoke more eloquently than the body marks (circumcision) which the Judaizers loved to impose on others as a proof of their zeal' (Wycliffe Bible Comm.).
 - 'Brethern, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen'. Paul gave a final blessing to his readers, referring to them as 'brethren' and pronouncing upon them the 'grace (unmerited favor) of our Lord Jesus Christ'. Note: Paul's central message to the Galatians was 'salvation by grace', so it's fitting that he closed his letter with that thought.

The Heart of Man

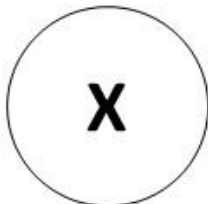


Fig. One

“X” represents the ‘Sin Nature’, with which we were born.

(Ps. 51:5, Rom 5:12)

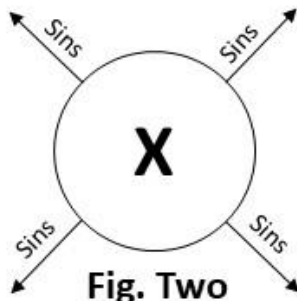


Fig. Two

Natural Man (1 Cor 2:6) - unsaved

‘Sin Nature’ has begun to bear fruit (sins).

Now a sinner (Rom 3:23)

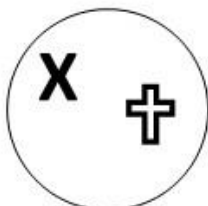


Fig. Three

“✝” represents the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Christ).

Sins forgiven, saved, a ‘Babe in Christ’, yet carnal (1 Cor 3:1)

A warfare within (Rom 6:7)

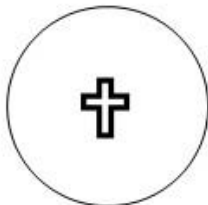


Fig. Four

Spiritual Man Sanctified. Perfect in Christ.

(1 Cor 2:6, 15; Jn 11:17; 1 Thes 4:3)