

# **GALATIANS**



## **PLAIN AND SIMPLE**

### **HISTORIC SETTING:**

Before Christ came, if a Gentile wanted to become a follower of the true God, he would have to become a proselyte (convert) to Judaism and become a Jew by religion though he was not a Jew by birth. This was done by the convert being circumcised, and thus bound to the observance of the Mosaic Law. This observance would include the diets, feasts, priesthood, sacrifices, etc. This was God's plan for mankind to show faith in His salvation promises while the schoolmaster (the Law) was teaching them about the coming Christ.

After the day of Pentecost when the Apostles began preaching repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, they still only accepted Gentiles in the church for the next 12 years who had first been proselytes to Judaism (like the Ethiopian Eunuch). The apostles, being Jews by birth, observed the Law, but did not follow the popular misconception that observance of the Mosaic Law and circumcision *earned* the eternal inheritance as a debt. They had realized the error of thinking they were justified before God just because they were practicing Jews. They now realized that the Law had been given simply as a guide for their faith; therefore the key ingredient in obtaining Grace and forgiveness from God was the "Faith that works by Love" which Abraham walked in while obeying all God's laws and statutes (Gen 26:5).

Jesus had taught them all this very plainly before he provided the very atoning sacrifice which made the whole process "lawful" and just. After his atonement, they didn't look to the temple sacrifices for their atonement, but saw them as only types and shadows. They looked to the Holy Spirit sanctification for their cleanness, not the ceremonial washing. They looked to Jesus' eternal priesthood as

their approach to God, not the Levitical Priesthood. So, now the apostles were practicing Jews who **also walked in the steps of the faith of Abraham ---see Romans 4:12:**

**“And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision ONLY, but who ALSO walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham..’**

Twelve years after Pentecost God spoke to Peter in a vision and revealed to him through his encounter with Cornelius that God would accept Gentiles who would walk in the steps of Abraham's faith without them being circumcised and becoming Jewish proselytes. This part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ had not been revealed until this time. As God used Peter to open the door to Jerusalem and Judea on the day of Pentecost; to the Samaritans (half Jews) in Acts 8: 14–20 (6 or 7 years after Pentecost): now God uses him to open the door to the uncircumcised Gentiles in Acts 10. The Gospel was to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile – 12 years after the Jew.

Jesus was the Messiah of the Jews and never required the Jews to stop living Jewish. Through his apostles, however, he later revealed that Gentiles who were grafted in no longer had to be circumcised and keep the Mosaic ceremonial ordinances as a binding code for membership. The ceremonial aspects of the Law had been fulfilled in Christ. There was no need for outward circumcision, if they were circumcised in heart (Rom. 2:25–29; Gal- 5:6; 6: 15). They had no need of special feast days to focus on God, because now they were daily walking in the Spirit (Rom. 14:5,6; Gal. 4:9,10). By living with a pure heart of Christian love, they actually lived the righteousness of the moral law, (Gal. 5:13–24; Rom. 8:3–4). They learned that ceremonial cleanness was only a shadow, and now they had the real sanctification of the Holy Spirit to take its place. The New Testament church order replaced the state of Israel. Now, being a member of the church under the apostles and bishops was the important thing, not a member of the Jewish Synagogue under the Sanhedrin. Disciples were taught to live righteous through the church ordinances and instructions in line with the moral law. As can be clearly seen in Romans 2:25-29 – there is a difference between keeping the moral law or “righteousness of the law” and

keeping the ceremonial law or being of the “circumcision”. The NT Gentile convert kept the righteousness of the law, but was not of the circumcision, which means he did not keep the ceremonial law.

The Jews themselves who converted to Christianity pursued the true righteousness of the law, though still practicing the ceremonies. After AD 70 when the temple and Jewish state was destroyed and the Jewish Christians were no longer bound by civil obligations to the temple, service of the priesthood, etc. They lived not much different than their Gentile brothers in Christ - now living the morality of the law in the Law of Christ; now living under Christ's priestly ministry; now offering spiritual sacrifices of praise and worship; now being living temples of the Holy Spirit; and now a “Christian”, not a “Jew”. Now, they were seeking Christ's atonement to pay their debt of sin (bondage), not the observance of Moses' Law. Many of the Jewish believers would still follow Jewish customs and holidays, and many Gentiles probably joined in for the edification gleaned by the types and shadows.

A vibrant life of “faith that works by love” is what God had actually wanted to begin with, so now that this principle was fully established by Jesus Christ, there was no need for the Mosaic system which could not truly take away sin and so had failed to produce the desired effect (Rom. 8:3,4; Gal. 6:13–16). The Law's sacrificial system was in debt to the coming Messiah, because it could only forgive sin on credit. Those under the old system were still in debt (bondage), because the old system was in debt and couldn't free them. Jesus' priesthood is not in debt, but is free - depending on no other, and owing no other - Jesus paid the debt we owed and redeemed us from the debt of our sins. Those living in Christ's system are free from sin's debt (bondage), because Christ is free and can give freedom. If one was to teach that any part of the old system is still necessary to pay for our sins, then they are indebted to the whole system - this is Paul's argument. In this book “bondage” means “in debt” due to trespasses, and “liberty” means “out of debt”. The key verse to understanding Paul's argument is 5:3 “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.” - and this system (Mosaic) cannot give freedom, because it is in debt itself!

**CONSIDER:**

1. On what condition would an apostle baptize a gentile for the first 12 years after Pentecost?
2. How does this prove they were not teaching a faith that did not require works of faith and obedience?
3. How did baptismal requirements and membership requirements change after Peter's encounter with Cornelius and the Acts 15 meeting?

**Answer:** The apostles had decided that Gentile faith did not have to include circumcision, Jewish feasts, Sabbaths, ceremonial cleanliness, temple sacrifices, etc. However, Gentile faith did have to include repentance from sin, turning to God, and works meet for repentance; such as: walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh, walking in Christian love, obeying what their church elders taught concerning holy and righteous living: and some necessary regulations set forth in Acts 15 to keep them from being overly offensive to their Jewish brethren. In short, they had to be a new creature (Gal. 6:15); submit to all the teaching of the apostles (2 Thess. 3:6); and have a faith that worked by love (Gal. 3:19-27; 5:6,18,24: 6:15).

**Summary:**

1. The Jews saw the Law as a means of obtaining a righteous standing before God, thus making the inheritance a debt God owed them, and no need for a savior or atonement by Christ.
2. The apostles learned this was a false hope. To gain a righteous standing before God, they must have Christ, who died to make atonement. Now they didn't trust in the Law to justify them, but obeyed the Law as an exercise of their faith in God, seeing Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of every type and shadow of the ceremonies, and the ultimate atonement for their sins. They were *bound* only by the Law of Christ, which at times made them have to set aside their Mosaic ordinances (1 Cor. 9:19–23; Gal. 2:12).
3. Twelve years after Pentecost the apostles learned that God will accept any and all men who will repent and follow Jesus Christ's teaching, whether or not they practice Jewish circumcision, diet, holy days, ceremonies, etc. Jesus' atonement and church membership

could be theirs upon repentance, baptism, and a living, obeying faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 10,11,15 &21)

4. Thus came a great challenge of unifying Jews and Gentiles with very different lifestyles into one body of believers and into brotherhood. This challenge lies behind all the epistles, and is the basic purpose of most of them, especially Romans and Galatians. Acts 15 and 21 show us the difficulty they dealt with and how they dealt with it. NOTE: Galatians was written before the meeting in Acts 21.

Now, having understood the situation, we come to Galatia, where Jewish converts to Christianity during the first 12 years after Pentecost would have a problem with the “new” idea of receiving Gentiles on an equal basis with Jews without them being circumcised and living as Jews – now Christian Jews. They were still very prejudiced for their Jewish ways, were putting them before Christ’s will, and were not submitting to the apostles’ authority. They wanted to carry over their Jewish lifestyle into the faith of Christ and make it binding on the church. These disgruntled Jews came to Galatia to spread their doctrine shortly after Paul established churches there in AD 52 or 53. It is important to see how the Jews having to accept the Gentiles without them becoming Jews was an acid test for Jewish believers of **true faith** in Jesus Christ and submission to His apostles. Many professing believers evidently failed this acid test and wanted to establish their **own** version of Christianity where the Gentiles still had to become Jews.

Paul, being a primary messenger of the new revelation came under attack by those who were ‘stuck’ on their Jewish practices (Judaizers). They basically claimed, that following Jesus Christ, and depending on his atoning grace and priesthood for our salvation was not sufficient to make us acceptable to God; but additionally we needed circumcision and the Jewish ordinances to make us acceptable to God. What they couldn’t see or admit was, that the “real” holiness of life produced in following Jesus and the “real” atonement and priesthood supplied by Jesus was far superior to that of the Mosaic System of animal sacrifice and earthly priesthood; and it was an insult to Christ to supplement his program with theirs. Christ’s program was based on the eternal principles of

righteousness which existed before the law; as well as the “obedience of faith” which was established before the law (and before circumcision). The ordinances of Moses’ Law were to be only a temporary part of God’s program, not the entire program. Now Christ was the Priest of a new covenant built on better promises. The Old Covenant was vanishing away to make room for the New Covenant. This transition was completed in AD 70 when the Jewish Temple was destroyed.

## **Notes on Galatians**

### **Chapter 1**

**1:1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) 2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: 3 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: 5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

**1:1–5** Paul’s greeting is also establishing some foundation stones for his message. Notice the emphasis:

1. “an apostle... **not of men, neither by man...not** by the other apostles or even Peter, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father....

It seems possible that these Judaizers were claiming Peter as their authority and trying to discredit Paul; but Paul defends his apostleship, and even shows that Peter had to be rebuked by him on the issues at hand.

2. Jesus’ sacrifice is what delivers us from this present evil world, “according to the will of God and our Father:”

**1:6 ¶ I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not**

another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

**1:6–9** “So soon removed” Evidently this letter was written not too long after Paul had established the church there. “Him that called you into the grace of Christ” This was Paul. He had been so slandered that those who once loved him were now questioned concerning their loyalty— **4:14–16**.

“Another gospel” Paul makes it clear that there is no other gospel that can save, but this so called *other gospel* is simply a perversion.

Any change of the original is just as much a perversion and the *curse* of the apostle is on *all* other perverse gospels. This includes Antinomianism, Calvinism, Mormonism, Romanism, etc.

What we are now practicing is either from the apostles or a deceiver (Acts. 20:17–31; II Thess. 2:15; 3:6, etc.). **It is important to practice ONLY first century apostolic faith and doctrine.** Trying to add or subtract will leave you with a perversion.

**1:10 ¶** For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. 11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. 13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

**1:10–14** Paul makes two points clear in his own defense:

1. His present preaching is not due to natural bias or preference from his raising, from monetary gain, human reasoning or worldly status; but from direct revelation from Jesus Christ. This he establishes on the evidence of the next point:

2. He had been strongly biased **for** the Jews religion to the point of persecuting Christians. In this position he had much status and profit even above many his same age. He is an Israelite by blood and was exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers.

**1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: 17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. 18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. 20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. 21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; 22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: 23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. 24 And they glorified God in me.**

**1:15–24** Immediately after Paul's conversion by a direct interview with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus; he first preached in Damascus; then he went into Arabia for a time; then came back to Damascus. He did not go up to be taught by the other apostles; but only to visit them. He was not commissioned or taught by them, but by God.

Paul is establishing his apostleship to be of equal authority with the others, because his enemies were trying to discredit him, and thus discredit his message. "If they can't prove you wrong, they will attack your character". The other apostles were 3 years taught by Jesus, but Paul was 3 years taught by the Holy Spirit and revelations from Christ.

These Judaizers were trying to convince the Galatians that Paul was preaching a gospel contrary to the other apostles and Christians, or at least of lesser authority. Paul is showing the true history and relationship he has with the other Christians and the apostles.

## **Chapter 2**

**2:1** Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. **2** And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. **3** But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: **4** And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: **5** To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. **6** But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: **7** But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; **8** (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) **9** And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. **10** Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

**2:1–10** In continuing his narrative Paul tells of a visit he made to Jerusalem, fourteen years after his conversion, with Barnabas and Titus (Acts 15). Titus was an uncircumcised Greek Christian. At Jerusalem, Paul first shared his mission with the church, but after

certain false brethren started an uproar about circumcising the Gentiles, he had a conference with the elders of the church, which included such pillars as James (the Lord's brother), Peter, and John.

At this conference (Acts 15) it was further established that the Gentiles didn't have to follow circumcision or Moses' ceremonial ordinances, but only a few standards were set to avoid the Gentiles offending the Jews in the churches. Up to this time circumcision and submission to Moses' Law were the entrance requirements into the Church as well as their professed repentance and faith in Christ; but now, in place of Moses' Law and circumcision, their repentance had to include abstaining from these "necessary things", which were connections with their past idolatry and uncleanness, before they could be baptized and received into the Church. Titus not being compelled to be circumcised was a proof of the decision. This decision did not change the fact that Gentile believers must live a holy life, observe all things Jesus taught, and obey their church leaders. This is seen in the fact that they had to obey when Paul delivered the "decrees for to keep" from the apostles (Acts 16:4).

Paul says that in his conference with Peter, James, and John and the other elders, he received no new doctrine or light; but rather they accepted him as the apostle of the Gentiles even as Peter was the apostle of the circumcision. Paul also preached to Jews and Peter also preached to Gentiles; but Paul's field of labor was predominantly Gentile lands, while Peter's field was predominantly Jewish communities, such as in Judea and Babylon.

Points to consider: The doctrine of justification by faith which the apostles held was not antinomian faith or this "one act" justification ("once saved—always saved") which antinomians teach. The apostles would have used that as an argument, which they didn't; but rather showed that works of faith, obedience to God and his apostles, and even these few "necessary things" were to be a part of their living faith if they were to be saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. They saw this being "saved" as completed in the future, not in the past (Acts 15:11).

**2:11 ¶ But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.**

**2:11-13** Paul goes on to tell of a situation that illustrates the controversy at hand: the same controversy that the Galatians were ignorantly being led astray in.

Peter was at the Antioch church with Paul and Barnabas. They were all freely fellowshiping with Gentile and Jewish Christians alike. However certain Jewish Christians came from the Jerusalem church, where James was bishop. These people were still prejudiced about freely eating with uncircumcised Gentiles, even though they were believers. Peter, trying to avoid offending these Jewish Christians, withdrew and avoided eating with the Gentiles. When Paul saw him do this and others following his example, he realized this was harmful to the preservation of the truth, and would cause offense to the Gentiles. Where could this lead? It was a lack of good judgment on Peter's part.

**2:14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?**

**2:14** Paul then confronts Peter with his inconsistency and argues thus: *If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles in eating with the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, who separate themselves; why are you now acting as though the Gentiles have to become Jews to eat with you?*

**2:15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have**

**believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**

**2:15–16** Paul says that even he and Peter, being Jews had stopped looking to Moses' Law as a means of justification before God; but had believed and followed Jesus Christ and his doctrine as the only means of being justified before God.

**"The faith of Christ"** is the doctrine of Christ, or the *faith* and hope that Christ taught.

**2:17** But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. **18** For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

**2:17–18** "While we seek to be justified by Christ" Did Paul believe in an Antinomian one act of faith justification? No: he had a daily justification by daily faith. His wording proves the point that it wasn't a "done deal" but a race of faith to run and a course to finish (II Tim. 4:7). The difference between justification by Moses' Law and justification by Christ was the difference between obeying a system that could not deliver the goods, and obeying a system that could -- obedience was still mandatory. Moses' Law could not atone for sin in reality, but only in type; but Jesus' priesthood could actually atone for Sin, and so God's ordinances through Moses were only a type and shadow to be fulfilled in Christ's superior sacrifice and priesthood.

"If following Christ's program leads us to fellowship with Gentiles, which you are now indicating is sin – Is therefore Christ the minister of sin? Is Christ leading us to sin??" GOD FORBID!

"If I build again obligations and restrictions which I laid aside in obedience to Christ, then I make myself of transgressor" I am bringing myself into obligations and restrictions concerning fellowship with Gentile believers, which Christ has done away with. This is wrong to do!

"It is my own foolishness in recognizing obligations that I'm no longer bound to, therefore making myself a transgressor (in debt to

an obsolete system) instead of asserting my freedom from these obligations while following Christ.”

Peter didn't have to separate from the Gentiles, but by doing so, he was admitting it was wrong to have eaten with them, thus admitting he was transgressing. This move on his part accused the Gentiles of not having sufficient standing with God apart from circumcision; and therefore charged Christ with not supplying them with enough to please God without them becoming Jews. Most likely he hadn't thought this through, so Paul brought it to his attention.

That which was “destroyed” (vs 18) was their hope of justification by keeping the Mosaic Law and therefore living separate from Gentiles. They destroyed this hope when they forsook this hope and followed Christ for justification, who said they could fellowship with repentant, obedient Gentiles.

**2:19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.**

**2:19–21** There are two aspects to be seen in the statement of verse 19:

1. For I through the law's condemnation of me, am dead to any hope of justification from the law – vs. 16. 2. For I through the law's own condemnation of me in Christ (He died in my place) am dead to the law's jurisdiction as long as I remain “in Christ” – vs. 20.

I am in Christ (under his legal guardianship) and no longer under the laws' jurisdiction: thus making me free to live unto God through Christ (Rom. 6:1–7: 1-6). If Christ died in my place, then technically I died “in” Christ; thus freeing me from the law's jurisdiction while I remain “in Christ”. The way I abide in Christ is to abide in his faith and practice (Jn. 15:10:1 Jn 2:24)

If we take up our cross and follow Jesus, thus being crucified with him—if we lose our life for his sake, thus finding it in him (Mk. 8:34,35); then he will live in us as we live by his faith (his doctrine: Jn. 14:21–23: 15:1–10; 1 Jn.2:24). If we walk in the light with him,

his blood will keep us clean before God (I Jn. 1:7;9); and we will have no need for circumcision or Jewish ordinances to supplement this.” \*\*The Law could not pay it's debts, so it was in bondage and couldn't free those who looked to it for freedom -- Jesus paid the debts of the law system and set up his own priesthood that could indeed pay it's debts (pay for sins) - so we should seek justification through Jesus' faith (system); and not through the old obsolete earthly sacrificial system.

“I do not frustrate God’s gracious offer of atonement through Christ by saying that I can gain justification another way – by keeping the ordinances of the law. If I could gain a righteous standing before God (justification) by the blood of bulls and goats, then Christ didn’t need to die, because I would already be justified. Instead, I confess my need of Christ’s atonement and follow His program of salvation. By His blood my record is washed clean as I follow and obey Him (I Jn 1:7).

“I do not frustrate the grace of God, for if justification came by animal sacrifices, then Christ died in vain”

**POINT TO CONSIDER:** Paul’s idea of “frustrating the grace of God” was saying that Christ’s death was unnecessary, because one could be legally declared righteous in God’s courtroom by observing the ceremonial law of Moses. **This alone is legalism! Does any sane person teach this today in the name of Christ? To preach that we must live holy and obey all Jesus’ taught to be eligible for his gracious atonement and priesthood is not legalism or salvation by works; but the TRUTH. God’s free gift is only offered to the humble, repentant, and obedient believer (11 Cor. 6:17–7:1; Mark 8:34–38). If you teach that obeying any system of belief can atone for sin apart from the atonement of Christ, it will be a form of legalism or idolatry; but not necessarily what Paul was combating. Paul was combating apostate Judaism.**

### Chapter 3

**3:1** O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? **2** This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? **3** Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

**3:1-3** "O foolish Galatians..." you, who have been taught thoroughly about faith in the crucified Savior....you who had a good beginning in obeying the truth... now are turning back to trusting circumcision and Jewish ordinances for part of your justification as though Christ's gospel wasn't enough... this could only be due to Satanic deception."

Had they received the Spirit of adoption (God's seal of acceptance) and spiritual gifts by becoming Jews or by believing and being baptized into the faith of Jesus Christ? They had begun to walk in the Spirit following Jesus Christ and trusting his eternal sacrifice and priesthood for atonement. Why would they want to go back to the inferior and ineffective Old Testament ordinances, priesthood, circumcision, temple sacrifices, etc., which were only a shadow of the better things to come in Christ?

**3:4** Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

**3:4** *"Have you endured so much persecution to follow Jesus Christ only now to turn back and lose out? If indeed you are turning back!"* Why else would Paul's preaching be in vain, if they would still be saved?

**3:5** 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?

**3:5** Did I Paul (1:6), who laid hands on you for you to receive the Spirit, prophesied, and worked miracles among you; did I do it as a Jew through the law, or by the faith of Jesus Christ?

**3:6** Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. **7** Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. **8** And the

**scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.**

**3:6–9** The “obedience of faith” (Rom. 16:26) or “righteousness of faith” (Rom. 4:13) being counted to man as perfect righteousness by God’s grace was established before circumcision and the Law of Moses as God’s criteria of acceptance. Abraham was accepted in this way as he exercised faith in God by leaving his homeland (Heb. 11:8); by waiting on God for a son (Rom. 4); by obeying all God’s commands (Gen. 26:5); and then offering that son upon the altar (James 2). God said to Abraham, “Walk before me and be thou perfect” (Gen. 17:1). As Abraham strove to do this, he was exercising faith in God, and God counted this to his record as righteousness, and put his sins aside for Jesus to pay.

All who exercise this same faith in God and Christ are counted as Abraham’s spiritual children and also accepted by God as sons and daughters (11 Cor 6:17–7:1). This is what the Scriptures meant when they said of Abraham, “In thee shall ALL nations be blessed”. Those with the faith of Abraham are “spiritual Israel” and the true children of promise. Those with only Abraham’s blood and genes, but without true faith were “earthly Israel”, and not the children of promise – see Romans 9:1-8

Abraham received this promise due to his **faithfulness**, so now we who follow his faith are blessed in this same blessing that came upon Abraham. NOTICE: THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM WAS SEEN IN FAITHFULNESS -- THIS IS THE ONLY KIND OF FAITH SPOKEN OF IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AS SAVING FAITH --A FAITH THAT IS FAITHFUL (Heb. 11:6)

**3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.**

**3:10–11.** Deut. 27:26 curses everyone who doesn't continue in all the words of the Law of Moses. Now, if you strive to gain a righteous standing before God through Moses' Law and apart from Christ's atonement; you put yourself under this curse. The plumb-line of Moses' moral law only showed how crooked we are; and the blood of bulls and goats in the ceremonial law could not atone for our sins – **SO SEEKING JUSTIFICATION THROUGH THIS SYSTEM APART FROM CHRIST LEFT YOU CONDEMNED.** The Gentile who wanted to accept obligation to one part of Moses' system for salvation put himself under the obligation to do all the law or be cursed by it.

The fact that this legal justification through Moses' Law apart from Christ's atonement **was never** intended by God for man in the first place is clearly seen in the Old Testament statement that the Justified man is the man who lives by faith in God's grace ("the just shall live by his faith" Hab. 2:4). Obeying God, not thinking you are earning a perfect record, but doing it as an exercise of your faith, trusting God to save you by grace – this is what God intended for man after the fall. **Take note: Hab. 2:4 was written to and of people under obligation to obey Moses' Law – this proves that Paul's idea of "faith" was not antinomian faith, but the obedience of faith, which is required to obey the law of Christ. Obeying law does not militate against faith, it makes faith alive (see James 2).** Faith is the proper response to God's commandments. How can you exercise faith in your doctor until he has given you a protocol? Giving directions to follow opens the door to faith. It allows faith to show itself.

**3:12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.**

**3:12** Being justified by the law is different than being justified by faith. To be justified by the law – you are actually justified by the fact that you have done all that the law said perfectly —"he that doeth them shall live in them (the deeds of the law)" means you can be saved by keeping the law -- this also means that the sacrifices of the Mosaic system had the power to atone, which they didn't!

**3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:**

**3:13** Christ's death in our place, taking upon himself the Law's curse on us, freed all believers from the condemnation of God's plumb-line. We are now free to live in Christ's program.

**3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

**3:14** So now, being freed from the curse of the law, we are to live by faith like Abraham, so we can be justified by faith like Abraham. This promised blessing to Abraham can also now come on the Gentiles through Christ. When they repent and follow Christ, they can receive the Spirit of adoption into Christ's system without any need for Moses' ceremonial system.

**3:15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.**

**3:15** “Brethren, I am using a illustration from human affairs: even in a human covenant (will or testament), if it be confirmed (sealed, ratified, etc.). no man can take away or add to it” God’s covenant promise to Abraham’s seed cannot be changed. It was actually a promise from God to Christ. God himself would fulfill the atonement for man.

**3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.**

**3:16** There are two aspects to the promises to Abraham: the blessings to his spiritual seed and that in His seed shall all nations be blessed. As to the seed through which all nations would be blessed, we are specifically speaking of Christ; not the descendents. Paul, from this basis, explains that the promise was ultimately concerning “The Seed” spoken of to Eve in Genesis that would bruise the serpents head, and this seed is Christ — and furthermore all who become “in Christ” are the recipients of the

promises of blessing. This includes all true believers from the beginning of the earth. The promises of blessings were not simply to Abraham's fleshly children, otherwise Ishmael's descendants, Esau's descendants, Keturah's descendants, etc. would be heirs of the promises. This the Jews admit was not the case. This same argument is used in Romans 9–11 to show why believing Gentiles can be grafted in as equals with believing Jews, and the unbelieving Jews, though descendants of Abraham, are cut off. ***“Ro.9:6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: 7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”*** Paul is not contradicting himself here; but simply showing a different aspect i.e. that the spiritual seed of Abraham were in view when God made the promises; but in Galatians we are specifically speaking about “In thee shall all the nations be blessed” (Gal. 3:8). Christ is the source and head of the spiritual seed, and in him alone came the atonement which blessed all nations who came under his headship.

**3:17** And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. **18** For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

**3:17–18** God's promise to Abraham's seed (Christ) cannot be changed or affected by a law given to Israel 430 years later. God had established that the inheritance would come to those “in Christ” 430 years before the law was given. The way to be “in Christ” was to follow Christ's teachings (He is “the Word”) with the faithfulness of Abraham (Gen. 26:5) — to have the righteousness of faith (Ro 4:11) or obedience of faith (Ro16:26). Hebrews 11:6 describes this faith:

**“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”**

**3:19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.**

**3:19** Why then was the law given? It was given to restrain the flesh and educate their faith concerning salvation through Christ. God was preparing them for when Jesus would come and set the perfect example; make the perfect atonement; set up the perfect priesthood; and give the holy Spirit to empower believers to live holy, fulfilling the righteousness of God's Law (Ro 8:1-4). The world would not have been ready to understand Christ's mission, sacrifice, priesthood, etc. without the "School-master" of the law.

"It was added" It did not supersede or change God's covenant as 3:15 states (3:15 "no man addeth"), but was supplementary in the program (Rom. 4:12). This proves that the **addition of laws, standards, and ordinances** does not interfere, nor is it contrary to a life of faith, or salvation by faith. God added Moses' law to the Israelites' faith, just as the apostles in Acts 15 added laws to the Christian's faith. Obeying the apostles or church bishops in the application of Scripture is not contrary to "living by faith", but is a necessary part of Christ's doctrine and program (salvation by faith).

"Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" — Christ is the seed to whom the promise was made, and He is now come. He is the one who would bless all nations.

"Ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" —The angels were instrumental in the giving of the law to the Jews (Heb. 2:2). Moses was the mediator between God and the Jewish nation.

**3:20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.**

**3:20** "A mediator is not a mediator representing the interests of one individual; but two parties; however God is one individual"-- Paul is referring to the fact that the promise was to Christ (vs. 16), who is ONE with God. God swore by himself in Gen. 22:16; which means that God's sending of Jesus Christ was not dependant on man, but on God himself. This means that Moses' mediatorial work, and also the law did not supersede or altar God's promise of inheritance to Christ and those who would be "in Christ."

**3:21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.**

**3:21–22** Does the law then interfere with or work contrary to the promise? God forbid: they were made for completely different ends. The law was never intended to give life by atoning for our sins; pardoning us; and giving the promise of the Spirit. It is incapable of doing this (Rom. 8:3,4). If the law could have atoned; pardoned; and given the Spirit, then a just standing and unity with God could have been attained through the law. However, since Moses' Law was in debt to a coming Messiah, and since the Scriptures prove we have all sinned and fallen short of perfect obedience; we can only seek a just standing with God through the promised atonement of Jesus Christ when we follow the “faith” or teachings of Christ and thus become **“IN CHRIST”**. The people in the Old Testament had to obey Moses' Law as an exercise of their faith, but could not look to it as the means of earning a righteous record in Heaven. New Testament believers obey the Law of Christ as the exercise of their faith, but still only look to Christ's atonement for their just standing with God. That “the faith of Christ” means following his doctrine and teachings is proven by the next verse.

**3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.**

**3:23** “But before faith came...” means “Before THE FAITH or doctrine of Jesus Christ came”. Did not Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc. have saving faith? Of course they did. This means the “faith of Christ” -- following his teachings in order to abide in his love and be a recipient of his grace (Jn 14:21; 15:10; 1 Jn. 2:3-5; 3:24, etc.) -- **Following Christ's atonement as our hope of salvation.**

Before Christ's example and teaching came, they were to exercise their faith in God's promises by keeping his law (Acts 26:7). This law condemned them and taught them their need for atonement in Christ. The Law of Moses only made atonement in type, not in reality; because the blood of bulls and goats could not take away

sin. The Mosaic system taught them about law, priesthood, atonement, etc.; which are all essential elements in Christ's system. Finding salvation in Christ is what Moses' law was preparing man for.

**3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.**

**3:24** The law, including the commandments as a plumb-line and the tabernacle sacrifices for atonement, was teaching them their need for atonement, and their inability to be just before God without it. This was to prepare them for Christ's real atonement so they would follow him for atonement, and not trust their "works of the law" for justification. The Mosaic system taught us all the basic elements of Christ's system, so we could learn to live "in Christ", trusting his priesthood, etc.

The teachings of Christ confirm and clarify God's Moral Law through Moses; and the priesthood of Christ takes the place of the ceremonial law and priesthood of the Old Testament.

### **WHAT DID THE SCHOOLMASTER TEACH?**

**--God expects obedience.**

**--God will not have a relationship with those who are not striving to live by his standards**

**--Fallen man, even though he tries to do right, is crooked when compared with God's plumb-line, and needs an atoning sacrifice to make him acceptable to God**

**--You must be living according to God's program to be eligible for the benefits of an atoning sacrifice**

All of this prepared us for living by the "Faith of Christ"; because the same principles apply. The law was a complete system of precepts, priesthood, and sacrifices. The faith of Christ is a complete system of precepts, priesthood, and sacrifice. You must choose which "system" you will follow to be acceptable to God. The Mosaic "system" was dependent on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, so it is not an independent system; therefore it is no longer valid. The Jew must recognize this and turn to the "system" or "faith" of Christ to be made acceptable to God.

**3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.**

**3:25** After we have the real atonement in Christ; the real plumb-line in Christ; the true teachings and love of Christ; the circumcision of the heart in Christ; and the gift of the Spirit from Christ; we don't need the sacrifices and priesthood of the Mosaic system. It has fulfilled its purpose. Our number one concern should be, "AM I IN CHRIST?" (II Cor. 5:17,18); "HOW DO I GET IN CHRIST" (Jn. 14:23); and, "HOW DO I STAY IN CHRIST" (I Jn. 2:24)? In Christ I am dead to the old system, I am free to live unto God, I am Abraham's seed, and I am eligible for God's promised inheritance.

**3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**

**3:26–27** When I put my faith in Jesus Christ, am baptized in His name; and set out to follow his doctrine; I am put into Christ and I also put on Christ by walking in the mind of Christ—Him living through me. **Thus, in Christ, I am the seed of Abraham, whether physically I am Jew, Gentile, bond, free, male, or female. Because I am Abraham's seed, then I am an heir of the promise. This is all mine as long as I remain in Christ (I Jn 2:24) Notice how "putting on Christ" to become God's sons and daughters relates to daily obedience in the following related verses.**

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." **Rom. 13:14**

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." **Gal. 5:24**

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." **II Cor. 6:17– 7:1**

**3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in**

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

**3:28–29** If being in Christ is the way to be just before and accepted by God, then it doesn't matter whether you are a Jew, Greek, slave, free, male, or female. As long as you are a disciple of Christ, and thus his spiritual child: you are then Abraham's true spiritual seed, and the heir to the promises made to Abraham you are the true "Israel of God" (6:16).

## **Chapter 4**

**4:1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.**

**4:1–2** We are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Paul uses the example of a child to illustrate Israel's spiritual growth from the tutoring of the law to the privileges and advancement of legal age. The child, though by his father's will is heir of all his possessions, yet until he is of legal age is master or nothing; but is under tutors and guardians. When he graduates to maturity, he will receive the "adoption of a son", and will then partake of his inheritance.

**4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law. 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.**

**4:3–5** Even so we, when we were, spiritually, children in understanding: we were in bondage under the schoolmaster of Moses' Law – earthly object lessons. But when Jesus came and fulfilled the law and made atonement for man; we who were under the schoolmaster of the law, were now ready to receive the adoption of sons through Christ's teaching, Spirit, atonement, and priesthood. Christ lifted us up from just being mere servants, to now

being sons through him. If we “put on Christ”, we are entrusted with great privileges in the spiritual realities that the earthly object lessons foreshadowed.

**Illustration: Though my son is heir to my automobile, he cannot be trusted with the keys. He must, at 15, be under instruction and tutoring. His immaturity could cause his death or someone else’s if given the keys without being prepared. Once he has matured and been taught, he is no longer under the tutoring and having an instructor with him at all times. Now, he is ready for his license and is entrusted with greater privileges. But, is he free to trespass the law? Is he free to sin? Is he free to drive according to immaturity? No, he is free, because the law is now in his heart, and he is self-disciplined, so he needs no tutor. He is given freedom with the assumption that he “wants” to obey the law and drive safe; NOT so he can drive unsafe. He now drives with carefulness from inner maturity, not simply outward tutoring.**

In Christ we don’t have the continual ritual object lessons, sacrifices, priesthood, etc.; but we are rather free to serve from our spirit with spiritual sacrifices, spiritual cleanliness, accountable to Christ or spiritual priest. This arrangement has greater privilege and liberty; but also greater responsibility that is entrusted to us with greater condemnation if we fail. Moving away from the earthly objects to spiritual realities is that step of maturity that Paul is speaking of.

**4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.**

**4:6** Christ’s teaching and atonement has brought believers to a spiritual level of relationship with God they did not enjoy previous under Moses’ Law. The Spirit of God writing God’s Law in the hearts of believers is a blessing due to Christ’s fulfillment of all the OT types and the establishment of the New Covenant. Because they are mature, clean, repentant, changed, and have put on Christ; they are acceptable to be called sons and daughters ([I Cor. 6:16–7:1). God has confirmed this acceptance by giving them the Spirit (seal of his acceptance; Eph. 1:13.14), which testifies within them that they are sons, crying Abba, Father. Abba referring to filial

affection: and Father to civil respect; as though we say, my Daddy and my Lord.

**4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**

**4:7** Because of Christ's work, we who follow Christ are no longer servants (immature sons), but mature sons. This makes us heirs to the kingdom through Christ. As long as we abide in Christ, we are certain of the inheritance.

**4:8 ¶ Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?**

**4:8–9** Paul asks how it is that after experiencing the bondage of idolatry; and then the glorious sonship through Christ: they would want to turn back to rites and ceremonies that cannot atone for their sins or bring them to God. They had come from heathenism to Christianity, and now were intrigued with Judaism as though it were higher than Christianity. The beggarly elements are the object lessons in the ceremonies of Judaism, which could not atone for sin. Why turn back to these when Christ has set up the spiritual realities which fulfill all these types and shadows? Christ's atonement and priesthood is on a higher spiritual realm, and turning back to earthly ritual is a sign of childhood tutoring, which the Jews were under until Christ came. Paul shows them that what is intriguing them is due to immaturity in them.

**4:10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.**

**4:10** You are seeking after the earthly rituals to the neglect of the spiritual realities! They were being taught that one must observe Jewish Sabbaths, feasts, circumcision, and sacrifices to be acceptable to God.

**4:11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.**

**4:11** If these people were unconditionally secure, Paul could not say this, but they weren't. They must continue in the true faith of Christ to remain "in Christ" and be saved.

**4:12 ¶ Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.**

**4:12** "Be as I am" Follow my faith in Christ standing free from superstition and useless dependence on ceremonies; for I am a man of like passions as ye are. I understand the human tendency to lean on these outward ceremonies; but I have followed Christ instead, and so can you. I'm not beseeching you due to some harm caused to me by your apostasy (referring to vs. 11); but because I love you, and want to help you. You are not hurting me, but yourselves. This seems to be the meaning of these words, though others have put other construction on these statements, which may be true as well in the context.

**4:13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. 14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. 15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. 16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?**

**4:13-16** How often a preacher pushes himself and his family to extremes to help bring converts to Christ only to be criticized and judged by them later. How often carnal people judge your spiritual ability or condition by looking at your physical ability or condition. This is foolish. Paul had a physical weakness, but it was DUE to his spiritual condition, and AIDED his ability - II Cor. 12. Often people start out loving you; but once you tell them "no" or correct them, they turn on you.

**4:17 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.**

**4:17** They have stirred up your zeal, but *not* in a good direction. They want to separate you from us apostles so you can just be zealous about them alone and they can make merchandise of you.

**4:18** But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

**4:18** I don't expect you to only grow when I am with you, rather it is good to study and grow in GOOD things at all times; but beware of false teachers.

**4:19** My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, **20** I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

**4:19–20** Paul feels like he is having to convert them all over again. He is anxious to speak with them, and be convinced that they are still on track, because he doubts it at the present. They cannot be "in Christ" unless Christ is "in them", which is not a simple, painless matter; but a travail to bring forth a new birth into truth. They cannot find salvation "in Christ", unless they are living according to the rules of Christ's system, and not any other system - including Moses'. If they are looking to the earthly object lessons which cannot pay for their sin debt, then they are still in debt or bondage to that sin debt. If they look to Jesus for their atonement and follow Him, then they are free from their sin debt, and are thus liberated. Moses' system was only a type and could not pay for sin.

**4:21** ¶ Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? **22** For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. **23** But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. **24** Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. **25** For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. **26** But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. **27** For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. **28**

**Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.**

**4:21-31** Paul relates an allegory. An allegory is a figurative way to relate a story. It implies a deeper meaning than that which is obvious.

The allegory of Hagar and Sarah is this. Abraham had two wives: Sarah was a free woman; and Hagar was a bondwoman. Every child Hagar had was born in the same bondage she was in. She could not give them freedom, because she did not have it to give. Sarah was a free woman, and all her offspring were therefore free. This pictures earthly Israel and earthly Jerusalem under Moses' Law, which could not pay for sins, but was in debt (bondage); and in contrast spiritual Israel and spiritual Jerusalem under Christ's system, which was not in debt, but free -- Jesus' blood pays for sins, and can redeem his own.

Hagar, the mother of the Arabic peoples, represents the Law of Moses from Mount Sinai in Arabia and also the earthly Jerusalem -- this system is in debt, and cannot give freedom from the debt of trespasses. All those born to this earthly Jerusalem under the law are in bondage (debt), just like Hagar's children. The law system cannot give freedom, and so Judaism's sacrificial system cannot make us free from the curse of the law which is due to our sin debt.

Sarah represents spiritual Israel, which is the Heavenly Jerusalem looking to Jesus as Savior and Lord. Since this kingdom is free -- Due to Christ's blood being able to truly redeem all in debt from trespasses; all those born into this kingdom are free-born. The way to freedom therefore is to be born again into Christ's kingdom, not struggle under the laws rituals. The Jewish writers believed that everything in earth was a type of something in Heaven; and Paul is using this idea to present the superiority of the Gospel system.

The verse in Isaiah 54:1 refers to Barren Sarah producing more children than the natural woman with a husband and speaks of this with reference to the conversion of the Gentiles. Because we are the children of promise (Spiritual children of like faith with Abraham), as Isaac (supernaturally born); and not just children after the flesh (bloodline of Abraham, but not like faith), as Ishmael was in type (of natural generation); then we are recipients of God's promises to Abraham. But just as Ishmael mocked Isaac. So those born of Abraham's natural generation now mock and persecute those born again by faith in Christ. Because of this God will cast out Judaism and those who adhere to it against their own Messiah. They will not inherit the promises to Abraham. If we are in Christ, we are children of promise – the children of Sarah – children of the Heavenly Jerusalem – and thus heirs to the promises.

**NOTE: Does “bond” and “free” mean one has to obey, and the other one doesn't? Not at all. Sarah had to obey Abraham, Isaac obeyed his father, and Jesus obeyed his Father. “Free” and “Bond” has to do with debt (bondage). It has to do with whether or not we will get an inheritance from the Father. “Bond” means I am the child of a servant, who is in debt; and I am inheriting that debt or bondage. “Free” means I am not in debt, but am a child of the king; and will inherit the kingdom. Jesus' priesthood and atonement pays my debts (trespasses) and makes me a child of His Father. Moses' system could not pay for sin or free from the bondage of trespasses against the law of God.**

**All still must obey the Law of Christ, which is the law of His Father. Paul said he was “free-born”, which means he was a legal Roman citizen with all the privileges - and not in debt - no need of redemption from Roman slavery. Jesus said the Jews were not free-men, though they claimed they were, because they were living in sin; servants of sin; and they were rejecting their atonement in Christ. “Free” in the Scripture never means free from obedience to righteousness and holiness! "Liberty" means free from the debt of trespasses committed – which Moses' sacrifices could not give and were never meant to give – they were only earthly tutors and objects lessons for the**

immature until Christ could come and set up the spiritual realities which were for mature saints.

## Chapter 5

**5:1** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. **2** Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. **3** For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

**5:1-3** Christ made us free from the condemnation of the law by paying our sin debt, which the sacrifices of Judaism could not accomplish and were never meant to accomplish, but only in type. Though Paul himself was circumcised, and still a law observing Jew, yet he had forsaken Judaism as a means of justification. The Gentiles' only motive for adopting Judaism (signified here by "circumcision") would be as a means of finding acceptance with God. They were not born Jews, had no civil obligations, had been baptized into the faith of Christ for acceptance with God; so why take on Judaism? For them to take this step now could only be to gain greater acceptance with God, which could not be — they were working away from God, not towards him.

To seek circumcision (the law system) as a means of securing acceptance with God at this point would be a rejection of the faith of Jesus Christ as their hope. This would leave them under obligation to keep the whole law perfect, which is the only way to be justified by the law; because the sacrifices of the "law system" are incapable of taking away sin. They could not keep the law perfect, so they would be in big trouble. They were also offending God and Christ. They were implying that Jesus' atonement wasn't necessary or not enough; and that the law system of principles, priesthood, and sacrifices could make them acceptable to God apart from Christ. The law was not something you could take part of and leave the rest. If they chose circumcision as an added point in acceptance with God, they were binding themselves to observe all the law, because the obligations, once acknowledged, bound you to every

part. It was either justification through Jesus Christ or through perfectly keeping the law, and they were making the wrong choice – one they could not accomplish.

**5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.**

**5:4** To seek justification by keeping the law means you have fallen from salvation by grace though the faith of Christ. You either have atonement and forgiveness in Christ, or you gain a clear record by perfect obedience to the law. Salvation by grace means you are not perfect, and God's accepts your obedience and faith in Christ as perfect righteousness by grace. He can do this because Jesus paid for your sins. This is what "Faith imputed for righteousness" is all about. Abraham had the righteousness of faith, and it was imputed for complete and perfect righteousness by God's grace and Jesus' atonement. No one can be justified by the law; because the plumb-line of the law only reveals our crookedness and need of a saving atonement; which the blood of bulls and goats could not accomplish.

**5:5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.**

**5:5–6** We through the Spirit mortify the flesh (Rom. 8:13), walk in a faith that works by love in obedience to Jesus Christ; and do this in hopes that as he sees our faith, he will count us righteous by his grace. So we walk by faith waiting for the hope of being counted righteous by Jesus' gracious atonement. In the "faith of Christ" the only thing that saves or avails as efficacious for salvation is a faith that works by love. If you don't have this, you will be lost — grace is only given to those who obey Christ with a faith that works by love. Just as circumcision was necessary to be in the Old Covenant, so "faith that works by love" is necessary to be in the New Covenant.

**5:7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? 8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. 9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.**

**5:7–9** We must be careful who we listen to! A little heresy will grow and ruin the whole church just as a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. This particular teaching that you have received is not coming from the Lord who called you to salvation; but from another spirit.

**5:10** I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. **11** And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. **12** I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

**5:10–12** Paul declares that his preaching the Faith of Christ as the only means of acceptance with God without requiring Judaism of Gentile converts brings persecution from the Jews. This fact proves that Paul is not preaching circumcision and Judaism as necessary along with Christ, or he would not be persecuted by the Jews who were zealous for their ways. The cross was offensive, because the Jews didn't see themselves in need of a dying savior; and couldn't accept this dying savior as sufficient for Gentiles without Judaism. Paul wished that God would destroy the false teachers who were trying to subvert the faith of the Galatians. He expressed confidence that they would not be led astray completely.

**5:13** For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

**5:13** Now Paul proceeds to show what Christians under grace are accountable for. They are free from the ceremonial laws and rites of Judaism, but are not free from the morality of the law, which was taught by Christ. If they lived after the flesh, they would not inherit the kingdom of God: which proves they were not unconditionally secure. They had to live holy, righteous, and in the Spirit, which caused them to fulfill the righteousness of God's Holy Law.

**5:14** For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **15** But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

**5:14–15** They were accountable for the “Law of Christ” (6:2) which is the law of love. Jesus taught that the entire message of the OT law and prophets was LOVE – God’s Love expressed in man’s circumstances. So, if while they were under grace, they were not loving one another, they would destroy their hope of the inheritance. “Under Grace” does not mean you can disobey without repentance. **You must be led of the Spirit to be under grace. To be led of the Spirit, you must renounce your flesh, and follow Jesus Christ - This is being led of the Spirit.**

**5:16** This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

**5:16** Paul gives a command: Walk in the Spirit. This is a law we must obey. We must walk, talk, obey, love, react, etc. just as the Spirit teaches through the Word of God. We cannot be Antinomians in our faith. Those who truly walk in the Spirit fulfill the righteousness of God’s law (Rom 8:1-13) and in doing so; do not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

**5:17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

**5:17** “Ye cannot do the things that ye would” means you cannot act by natural inclinations or reflexes; but must deliberately by choice and effort walk in the Spirit and mortify the deeds of the carnal mind – Rom 8:1-13. You must discipline and deny yourself just as Jesus taught. This victory over the flesh comes through God’s Spirit (Rom 8); otherwise we are continually defeated in this struggle (Rom 7)

**5:18** But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

**5:18** Only when you are “in Christ” and “led of the Spirit” are you not “under the law”; but “under grace”. This is very important to understand. **It is a day by day walk!** It is a matter of jurisdiction and accountability. When I am following and obeying Jesus Christ, I am under his gracious administration and have the benefits of His atonement and priesthood. When I am not under Christ’s gracious administration, then I am automatically under the jurisdiction of God’s moral law APART FROM GRACE, and will face the law in

judgment without a gracious priest or atonement to save me. Those who are led by God's Spirit will not have to face God's Law apart from Christ's gracious atonement on judgment day.

**5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

**5:19–21** This is a summary of the works of the flesh, and a solemn warning that all who take this course, whether once professing Christ or not, will not inherit the kingdom of **God!**

**5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.**

**5:22–26** This is the only acceptable way for a Christian to act, if he wishes to remain "in Christ". These are daily character traits that must be developed by prayer, discipline, and continuing right choices. These virtues are spiritual, not carnal: spiritual love, spiritual joy, spiritual peace, etc. Any of these spiritual virtues, when taken out of the context of holiness, can become nothing more than sin and wickedness. Love is not virtuous unless you are loving what God loves. Peace with the Devil; Joy in sin; and Faith in error are all evil; so they must be kept in their God intended context. These virtues cannot be defined by human feeling; but only by the Word of God as understood by the example of Jesus and His apostles. Everything Jesus ever did or said was the fruit of the Spirit – even cleansing the temple and Matthew 23.

**All who are Christ's now, have, in their repentance and decision to follow Christ, rejected the flesh, world, and Devil. This crucifixion is not something that God did to you apart**

from you seeking and choosing it; but something you chose when you took up your cross to follow Jesus. “Crucified with Christ” is not just some abstract legal transaction; but a choice you make daily by choosing to walk daily in the Spirit, and denying daily the inclinations of the flesh.

Notice the “flesh” is not just your physical body, but the values and pursuits of the “self–life”. Self preservation, self glory, and self exaltation is opposed to the Spirit of Christ, which is LOVE. If you are not crucified to the world, then you cannot understand God’s true love.

## **Chapter 6**

**6:1** Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. **2** Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

**6:1–2** The Christian is under the Law of Christ, which fulfills the moral requirements of Moses’ Law (Rom 8). We must not only do right, but do it in the right attitude and motive. We must love our brother and help him in meekness. We must bear others’ burdens in humility and love. Jesus taught that the golden rule was the message of the law and the prophets in a “nutshell”.

**6:3** For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. **4** But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. **5** For every man shall bear his own burden.

**6:3–5** We must not judge our godliness by comparing ourselves among ourselves, but by comparing ourselves with Christ’s teachings and example. When we match up with this, we can rejoice in this alone; and not that we are better than another. For we must all answer for ourselves before Christ.

**6:6** Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

**6:6** Those who are taught the Word of God ought to help support the one who gives up his time to preach to them the gospel. This is part of the Law of Christ (I Cor. 9)

**6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**

**6:7–9** Don't be deceived by teachings of unconditional security or false security — because God will not be mocked. You will not disobey one precept without suffering for it. You will not disregard God, and get by with it. If you pursue the flesh, world, and Devil, you will be damned. If you pursue obedience to Christ, you will inherit everlasting life. So don't be weary in obeying Christ, for in due season you will get eternal life – if you don't faint by the way. This principle is mentioned right after Paul speaks of giving and supporting the preacher; because this is one area people resist and are sluggish to obey. Paul wishes them to know that the principle applies here as well as everywhere else.

**6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.**

**6:10** Because of verses 7–9, we should take every opportunity to obey Christ and do good to all men, but especially to fellow believers. This reminds me of another verse of the same stripe: Eph 6:8 *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

**6:11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.**

**6:11** Paul penned this entire letter with his own hand to be sure they knew it was authentic. Normally he used an amanuensis.

**6:12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.**

**6:12–13** A carnal man could practice outward Judaism without much pain or cross bearing in the regions of Galatia; but Christianity

was more strict. It required a changed heart; a crucified flesh; and a true faith and love. Those who only cared for the “fair show”; but did not like the crucified life or persecution; would easily prefer circumcision to Christianity.

These circumcised Jews did not obey the law themselves, they just boasted in their circumcision; and wanted to glory in making another convert to circumcision. They glory in that which they think makes them acceptable without them dying to self; but they reject that which is truly acceptable to God and requires death to self. Consider John the Baptist’s remarks to the Jews who came to his baptism about trusting in their circumcision and relation to Abraham, but not having good fruit (Matt. 3:5–12; Luke 3:7–14)..

**6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.**

**6:14–15** Christ was crucified because he testified and stood against the sin of the world. This crucifixion also purchased the only redemption available to man. We need to fully side with Jesus against the sin of the world and suffer with him in this stand even against our own sin. Paul is not going to glory in some false security; but in the cross of Jesus Christ, which he has taken up and by it been crucified with Christ to the values and lusts of this world. The world is “estranged” from Paul, and Paul is “estranged” from the world by means of denying himself, taking up the cross, and following Jesus. The only thing that matters in the eyes of God and Christ is whether you have denied yourself; taken up your cross; been crucified with Christ; and by this become a new creature in Christ. Just as circumcision was required to be in the Old Covenant, so being a new creature is required for being in the New Covenant – “In Christ”.

**Notice Paul doesn’t say that “praying the prayer” avails in Christ. He doesn’t say “simply trusting” avails in Christ; but that being a new creature by being crucified with Christ to the world avails in Christ.**

**6:16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.**

**6:16** As many as walk according to this criteria; they are the true spiritual Israel of God; and Paul blesses them with God's true peace and mercy. The unbelieving nation of Israel is no longer the "Israel of God", but is apostate. The believing Jews/Gentile church is God's remnant – the true children of Abraham – the children of promise – the Israel of God. The unbelieving "nation of Israel" is "earthly Israel" and under judgment until they repent and say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord".

**6:17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. 18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.**

**6:17–18** Paul had suffered so for Christ; and his body had so many scars for the cause of Christ; that he felt his integrity ought not to be called in question any more.

**COMMENTS:** As you can clearly see the issue in Galatians is not whether or not Christians have to "obey rules" and live holy; but whether or not Christians had to obey the ceremonial rituals of Moses' Law to be "clean" and "acceptable" in the sight of God. The rituals of Moses' Law could not make us clean and acceptable to God, but were types and shadows of Christ's future atonement and priesthood which would be the means of making us clean and acceptable to God. Those who trust in Christ as their Lord and Savior will be led by His Spirit and will thus be empowered to fulfill the righteousness of God's Moral Law (Rom 8:4). Jesus' sacrifice and priesthood completely take the place of the types and shadows in Moses' Ceremonial Law.