

# The Book of Galatians

## Introduction

Some bullet points of information:

- Establishment of a Church in Antioch (Paul's 1st Missionary Journey) (Acts 13:14-52)
- Establishment of the Church in Iconium (Acts 14:1-7)
- Establishment of the Church in Lystra (Acts 14:8-20)
- Establishment of the Church in Derbe (Acts 14:20-23)
- Paul Returns to Galatia (Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey) (Acts 16:1-5)
- Paul Returns to Galatia (Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey) (Acts 18:23)

There is a lot of good teaching in Galatians. A lot of good theology, if you will. The first thing I want to do is give some background. Turn in your Bible to Acts 15. Acts chapter 15 gives us some background information for what is contained in Galatians. Start in verse 1.

Acts 15:1 NKJV - And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

Notice it doesn't say, according to the custom of Abraham. Circumcision was given to Abraham. Then God reiterated it through Moses when He gave the Law. Why might that be? It was because during their captivity in Egypt most of the Israelites had given up on the law of circumcision, even Moses did with his two sons. I only mention this because the exact same thing can be said of the Sabbath. Most modern Christians worship on Sunday, and have done away with the God's Sabbath. They say that is because we are no longer under the Law. The problem is that the Sabbath was established at creation, by God, who rested on the Sabbath and sanctified the day, forever. It is also relevant that there were no Hebrews, Jews, or the like at creation. Even though the Law was specifically for the Hebrews at the time, and the Sabbath was included for them to follow, doesn't mean that because you do away with the old laws, that the previous commandments before the Law are no longer observed. Just something to think about.

And let me also include that the New Testament English translations are incorrect in mentioning the "first day of the week", which would be Sunday. The Greek does NOT say that. An example might be Luke 24:1 where it says, "Τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων..." - *The first of the Sabbaths* (plural). It is a title for the feast of Firstfruits. Firstfruits was always "day one" of the seven-week (seven Sabbaths) countdown to Pentecost.

Greek-speaking Jews understood the clause τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων ([day] one of the Sabbaths) as a title for First-fruits. But this is a lesson in Greek, for another time.

Acts 15:2 NKJV - Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

By the way, they are in Antioch, which is in Syria, just north of Israel.

Acts 15:3 NKJV - So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren.

Now you have to understand that what is happening here is very new to the church. The church initially was Jewish. The first converts were Jews. Remember in Acts 2 at Pentecost, 3,000 Jews were converted and baptized. Now the Gospel of the Kingdom is starting to spread to the Gentiles. First through Peter's preaching to Cornelius and his household in Acts chapter 10. Then there were others going out and preaching in Antioch and about.

Acts 15:4 NKJV - And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them.

Acts 15:5 NKJV - But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

Acts 15:6 NKJV - Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.

Right away you get the impression that this was not an issue that was completely settled. The reason it wasn't settled was because they had never really encountered this before. All throughout the history of the Israelites (Hebrews), then the Jews, God had told them to stay away from Gentiles and all their practices. The reason was because they, that is the Gentiles, would corrupt God's people with paganism and idolatry, (which, I sullenly admit, absolutely describes today's modern churches. And they can't even see it.) They, that is, God's chosen people, even developed an elitist attitude because they were the "chosen" of God. They still are. The Jews that accept Christ, Jesus will be first in line, so to speak, in the Kingdom.

The Jews that were converted to Christianity had always kept the Law and were already circumcised. So this is a completely new issue for the Pharisees who are saying that the Gentiles must be circumcised.

Acts 15:7 NKJV - And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

What do you think Peter means by this? Peter’s preaching to Cornelius.

Acts 15:8 NKJV - “So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us,

Acts 15:9 NKJV - “and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

So what is he saying here? He is saying that God has already decided this theological question. And how did God decide it? By sending His Spirit to them. And when the Gospel was preached to Gentiles, and they believed and were baptized, they were also given the spiritual gifts and signs. And Peter’s point is that if God has acknowledged and accepted them even while they were uncircumcised, not keeping the dietary laws, and other traditions, then why should they try to impose them on the Gentiles?

Acts 15:10 NKJV - “Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

What is the “yoke” Peter is speaking of? The keeping of the Law.

Acts 15:11 NKJV - “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

This verse tells us the Law has nothing to do it, even with the conversion of a Jew, it is not necessary.

Acts 15:12 NKJV - Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles.

What is Paul doing here? He is pointing out that, even after Cornelius, that God was still continuing to do miracles and wonders through the Gentiles.

Acts 15:13 NKJV - And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me:

Acts 15:14 NKJV - "Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.

Acts 15:15 NKJV - "And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

Acts 15:16 NKJV - 'After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up;

Acts 15:17 NKJV - So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does all these things.'

*Amos 9:11, 12*

Is this prophesy in reference to the conversion of the Gentiles that was going on at that time? This prophesy in Amos, quoted here in Acts 15:16-17, was it about what happened in the early church at the Day of Pentecost and the conversion of the Gentiles at this time? Or was he prophesying about something else? I think it's twofold.

How do we understand a quote in the New Testament that is from the Old Testament? Don't we need to go back and read the quote in its entire context to get the correct understanding? Because the Jews already knew the Old Testament very well. But we Gentiles, thousands of years later, do not know the Old Testament scriptures as well as they did. If you don't understand what it meant in its context, you are not going to understand why the apostle is quoting it.

This is the way you should interpret the entire New Testament. The New Testament constantly quotes the Old Testament. You always go back and look at that passage and its context, you understand what it was talking about when it was written, then you bring that idea into the New Testament passage and you will see why the writer is referring to it.

This prophesy in Amos is a prophesy about Christ's coming kingdom and how He is going to restore Israel one day. But it is also a prophesy about the Gentiles being converted and having an equal place in Christ's future kingdom. But when James is quoting it, it's a kingdom prophesy, but why is he quoting it now in support of what Peter and Paul were saying? Because this is what is going to inevitably happen when the Lord returns so we are seeing, in essence, the beginning of it. And that even the Gentiles who are called by His name can freely seek the Lord.

Acts 15:18 NKJV - "Known to God from eternity are all His works.

Acts 15:19 NKJV - "Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God,

Why does he say, "I judge", instead of "we ought to judge"? James had been put in charge of the church in Jerusalem. He was the head guy, so to speak, at the time. The Apostles were, of course, the ultimate authority because Christ had given them that authority, but the Apostles had been commanded not to stay in Jerusalem, but to go out and preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:18-20). So the authority of the head church of the entire Christian movement, which was the Jerusalem church, was passed to James. This was not James the apostle, this was James the brother of Jesus. He wrote the book of James. He was thrown off the top of the Temple for blasphemy. He didn't die right out, so they beat him to death with clubs.

Acts 15:20 NKJV - "but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.

Those last two things, "things strangled, and from blood," may have been reiterated by Moses, but they were passed down by God to Noah. When they got off the ark, God gave them some dietary laws to observe. God told them they could pretty much eat whatever they wanted, but nothing strangled and no blood. Because the life is in the blood (Genesis 9:3-4).

Acts 15:21 NKJV - "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

Essentially what he is saying here is that we don't need the churches to become another place where Moses is read.

Acts 15:22 NKJV - Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

Acts 15:23 NKJV - They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings.

Acts 15:24 NKJV - Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law"; to whom we gave no such commandment;

So he is acknowledging that the people who came for their own church in Jerusalem, who had gone up to Antioch preaching that the Gentiles need the Law, plus Christ, were not sent by them. They were not speaking with the correct authority.

Acts 15:25 NKJV - it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

Acts 15:26 NKJV - men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 15:27 NKJV - We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth.

Do you see what they are doing? They are covering all of their bases. Here are Paul and Barnabas at the church in Antioch with all this uproar going on because of, what some call “Judaizers” today... people that were from the Jerusalem church following down behind Paul and undermining his ministry. So they go down to Jerusalem to meet with the Apostles and elders, if they come back with just Paul and Barnabas and a letter, people might say, “how do we know you didn’t write that letter?” They could be accused of lying. So what do they do? The Jerusalem church, James, sent two very well known men, Silas and Judas, to confirm that the letter was genuinely written and passed on to these guys from the Apostles. And to also confirm, by word of mouth, these same things.

Acts 15:28 NKJV - For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

Acts 15:29 NKJV - that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.

In other words, you can be a good follower of Christ if you can just do this without observing the Law and being circumcised.

Acts 15:30 NKJV - So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter.

Acts 15:31 NKJV - When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement.

Acts 15:32 NKJV - Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words.

Acts 15:33 NKJV - And after they had stayed there for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles.

Acts 15:34 NKJV - However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there.

Acts 15:35 NKJV - Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

So what do you think happened to the Judaizers that came up from Jerusalem and were teaching contrary to this? Firstly, they were publicly put down and shown that they did not have the backing from the church from which they claimed. And secondly, that they were clearly in the wrong. What do you think happened to them? They started going around to all the other churches that Paul and Barnabas had established and tried breaking up the churches there.

I don't know if you realize this, but Acts 15, where we are reading from, comes right after the Apostles Paul and Barnabas had just returned from their first missionary journey throughout the area of Galatia. They spent some time in Derbe, Lystra, and other places that are in the southern part of Galatia. The Judaizers then went behind them and started undermining Paul's teachings there while they were still in Antioch. That is what brought up the occasion for the book of Galatians.

Acts 15:36 NKJV - Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing."

Acts 15:37 NKJV - Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark.

Acts 15:38 NKJV - But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.

Acts 15:39 NKJV - Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus;

Acts 15:40 NKJV - but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.

Acts 15:41 NKJV - And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

What had happened was that while they were previously out Mark started wining because the missionary work was too hard. He wanted to go home and see mommy. Paul didn't take kindly to Mark's abandonment. Paul didn't feel that he could any longer depend on Mark.

Was Paul right? Was Barnabas right? Could you really fault either one of them? Barnabas had a forgiving heart. When Mark decided he was ready again, and wanted to return to the mission, Barnabas was willing to give him another chance. Paul, on the other hand, was on a mission. He wanted someone he could trust and depend on. Their vary lives may depend on each other. Paul wouldn't let anything distract him from his mission for Christ. So he wanted to be sure. I don't think either Paul or Barnabas were

wrong. They just saw things differently, and they did come up with a doable solution. All be it, heated.

Acts 16:1 NKJV - Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek.

Acts 16:2 NKJV - He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.

Acts 16:3 NKJV - Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.

Acts 16:4 NKJV - And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

Now this is a very curious statement. This letter that they are taking to these churches, among the Gentiles, the letter says, you don't need to keep the Law. You don't need to be circumcised. Just do these necessary things.

Then the first church they stop at is where Timothy is, and what does Paul do? He circumcises Timothy. Paul wants him to become a partner in his ministry. Is Paul contradicting himself here? I think he was playing it safe for when they visit the synagogues. Not willing to give any more fodder to any Judaizers. It says that Paul circumcised him "because of the Jews". The Jews knew that his father was a Greek. So they either knew or assumed that Timothy was uncircumcised.

Look what happened to Paul when he took Trophimus the Ephesian (Acts 21:29), a Greek close to the Temple. They assumed Paul took him into the Temple and that started a riot and got Paul thrown into jail.

What was Paul's custom when he went into these cities to evangelize the Gentiles? He would first go to the synagogues, preach the Gospel to the Jews, and when the Jews rejected the message of the Gospel, some rejected, but a few did accept it, but when he was ultimately rejected by the Jews, then he went to the Gentiles.

In fact, some of the early churches were started by splits from the synagogues. Paul would go in and preach the Gospel, most would reject it, but some accepted it. The ones that accepted it he would take out and go and start a church with them.

Why do you think he would do that? Jews would already have a strong background in the Old Testament scriptures. They could be more easily trained in the Gospel and be



ready to spread the Gospel than a newly converted Gentile with no foundational background.

I want you to notice in verses 4 and 5 that they were strengthened in the faith by NOT keeping the rituals of the Law.

Acts 16:4 NKJV - And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

Acts 16:5 NKJV - So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Now all of this is background information for our study of Galatians. But before we get into Galatians I want to ask something. And I'll tell you why in a moment. There were others that came along and challenged Paul's credentials as a true apostle of Christ. How would they do that? Remember, Paul was not one of the twelve. Jesus called disciples and He taught them while He was here. Once He sent them out, He then called them apostles, which is what the Greek word means. Today's Christian do not understand the term apostle.

Anyway, Jesus taught them for 3½ years before sending them out. He didn't teach Paul that way. Paul wasn't even converted to Christianity until after Jesus had ascended to Heaven. All Paul had was a story of how he was on a road and he heard a voice talking to him. And the voice said it was Jesus.

And remember Jesus told the Jews who were seeking a way to kill him that they didn't believe Him even though He had come in His Father's name. But that they would believe someone who came in his own name.

John 5:43 NKJV - "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

Maybe it was just that Paul's cheese had slipped off his cracker? He was a little kookoo? Maybe Paul wasn't really an apostle of Jesus Christ? Maybe he made up some of this stuff.

Now that doesn't explain the letter that the other apostles wrote. But they certainly attacked Paul's person and own credibility.

There is a movement today to do the same thing to Paul. And if you are not well grounded in your Bible, there are some arguments that can absolutely devastate your faith and quite possibly cause you to leave Christianity altogether.

As we start Galatians we are going to see that Paul starts out rather defensive, which is absolutely understandable.

## **Galatians 1**

Galatians 1:1 NKJV - Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),

So the first thing Paul says is that he is not a self appointed apostle of Jesus Christ. He gives his name and title, then goes on to defend that title.

Now what we are going to see here in the rest of this chapter and most of chapter 2 is Paul defending his apostleship... who he is, and where he got his teachings from.

Galatians 1:2 NKJV - and all the brethren who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

Galatians 1:3 NKJV - Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,

Galatians 1:4 NKJV - who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Galatians 1:5 NKJV - to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Galatians 1:6 NKJV - I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,

Now this is after these people had come behind Paul and undermined his work.

Galatians 1:7 NKJV - which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Galatians 1:8 NKJV - But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Galatians 1:9 NKJV - As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

He is telling these people not to even entertain these people in your church. They are preaching a false Gospel message. And any doctrine that Christians follow today that came after AD 96 when John finished the book of Revelation is a new “gospel” or

doctrine of men. That includes the doctrine of the trinity, Hypostatic Union, the concept of heaven, a pretribulation rapture, the doctrine of immanency, Immortality of the Soul, speaking in tongues, etc.

Galatians 1:10 NKJV - For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

He is trying to bring them back to the Gospel that he preached to them on his 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey... when he was sent out from the church of Antioch.

Galatians 1:11 NKJV - But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

In verse 1 Paul said that he was an apostle, but not through men; that is, his authority didn't come from men. And here he says that the Gospel he is preaching is not according to men.

Galatians 1:12 NKJV - For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

He is telling them that he didn't learn his Gospel message from the other apostles or any other person, but through Jesus, the Christ Himself. Now the question that is naturally going to come up is, "Well, Paul, when did you learn this from Christ?"

Galatians 1:13 NKJV - For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.

Galatians 1:14 NKJV - And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

The traditions of his father are the customs of the Jews. They were the very things that these people, these Judaizers, were saying that Christians needed to observe. Paul is saying, "I used to be that way. I used to preach that you have to keep the Law of Moses."

Why is Paul bringing up the issue that he used to persecute Christians here and that he was zealous for the Law? He is explaining how he himself has done a 180 degree turn. He went from being a persecutor to being persecuted for the exact same gospel message of Jesus as the Christ and His message of the kingdom of God through the resurrection.

What would make a man do that? He is offering this as evidence to show that his Damascus road experience was, in fact, genuine. Because a man is not going to make a total “flip-flop” on everything he has believed in and invested his entire life in for no apparent reason. Paul had status. He was well known for being a scholar. He had wealth. He is not going to give all that up, to the point, as we know now, to giving up his own life for a Christ and a message that was false.

Galatians 1:15 NKJV - But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,  
Galatians 1:16 NKJV - to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,  
Galatians 1:17 NKJV - nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

I want to pause here and turn to Acts 9 where this event actually took place. There are some details here in Galatians that are not in Acts, but there are some details in Acts that are not in Galatians. So if we put these two passages together, we learn a great deal about what actually happened.

Now everybody knows what happened to Paul on the Damascus road. I just want to point out what Christ said to him, and to give an opinion.

Acts 9:1 NKJV - Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest  
Acts 9:2 NKJV - and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

The “Way” is what Christianity was called originally.

Acts 9:3 NKJV - As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.  
Acts 9:4 NKJV - Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"  
Acts 9:5 NKJV - And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

Acts 9:6 NKJV - So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

He has obviously changed his mind already.

Acts 9:7 NKJV - And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.

I want to pause here for one second to explain something about this verse and another account in Acts 22. I don't like when I come across contradictions in our English Bibles without explaining them, if I can, and understanding the problem. Because I don't believe the Bible has errors in its original form, but our English translations, and in fact, every single translation, has errors. But if you go to the original language, I can't remember a time that I wasn't able to figure out the problem. Look at verse 9.

Acts 22:9 NKJV - "And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but **they did not hear the voice** of Him who spoke to me.

Compare this to what Paul said in Act 9:7.

Acts 9:7 NKJV - And **the men** who journeyed with him **stood speechless, hearing a voice** but seeing no one.

Now I like the New King James Bible. That's my default bible. But as you can see there is a problem. It has a few. The problem is in the translation of the Greek word ἀκούοντες / ηκουσαν for hearing in these verses. It can mean to hear with the ear, but it can also mean to hear with the mind, i.e. to understand. We do the same thing in English. When someone explains something and someone else replies, "I see." You don't see with your eyes, you see with your mind. You understand.

Acts 9:8 NKJV - Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.

Acts 9:9 NKJV - And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Acts 9:10 NKJV - Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

Acts 9:11 NKJV - So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.

Acts 9:12 NKJV - "And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

Acts 9:13 NKJV - Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.

Acts 9:14 NKJV - "And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

Acts 9:15 NKJV - But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.

Acts 9:16 NKJV - "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

Acts 9:17 NKJV - And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 9:18 NKJV - Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

Acts 9:19 NKJV - So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

Acts 9:20 NKJV - Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

Notice that word 'immediately'. As soon as he is converted and is baptized Paul begins to preach. Now you have got to have some knowledge before you can preach. Now it does say that he spent some days with the disciples, but as we are going to see, it is going to take more than 'some days' to get the knowledge that Paul (Saul) got.

Acts 9:20 NKJV - Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

Acts 9:21 NKJV - Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?"

Now in verse 22, it says that Saul increased all the more in strength.

Acts 9:22 NKJV - But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

That phrase is something that Paul explains later as we get into Galatians. I want you to keep your place here, assuming that you are following along in your own Bible, and flip back to Galatians 1 again. We're coming right back to Acts so don't lose your place. Look at Galatians 1:16 again.

Galatians 1:16 NKJV - to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,

Galatians 1:17 NKJV - nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Do you see where it says that he went to Arabia? Paul went to Arabia and stayed a while. It was while he was there that something happened to him. That is when I believe Christ was revealing all this knowledge to him. Then he returned to Damascus.

Now go back to Acts 9:22.

Acts 9:22 NKJV - But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.

It says that he “increased all the more in strength”, now that's why he was in Arabia. And he confounded the Jews in Damascus, proving to them that Jesus was the Christ. Then after Arabia, he returned to Damascus, which is what it said in Galatians 1:17, and confounded the Jews with his knowledge. Paul got direct revelation from Christ. That revelation gave Paul knowledge for proving, from the Old Testament scriptures, because that is all there was at the time, that Jesus was the Christ, or Messiah, in Hebrew. At least that is my opinion of how Paul received his knowledge in such a short time.

Acts 9:23 NKJV - Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him.

Acts 9:24 NKJV - But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him.

Acts 9:25 NKJV - Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.

Acts 9:26 NKJV - And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple.

Acts 9:27 NKJV - But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

Acts 9:28 NKJV - So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.

Acts 9:29 NKJV - And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him.

Hellenists are just Greek speaking Jews. Almost all Jews spoke Greek at this time. Since the first diaspora under Nebuchadnezzar, the Hebrews began losing their language. Hebrew was almost a dead language at the time, much like Latin is today.

Go back to Galatians.

Galatians 1:18 NKJV - Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.

This is right after he was let down in a basket over a wall in Damascus, if you remember?

Galatians 1:19 NKJV - But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Now why is he saying that? He said, "Yes. I did go to Jerusalem." But he points out that it was quite some time later, 3 years later, and he had already confounded the Jews in Damascus by this time. Then he points out that he only saw Peter and James in Jerusalem and that was only for fifteen days. Why is he saying that? He is still defending his position saying that he didn't have time to learn all this stuff from anybody or by himself, that Jesus has to be the one who gave him his knowledge. He is still defending his position from verses 1 and 12, saying that he was appointed an apostle from Christ Jesus and not through men.

Galatians 1:20 NKJV - (Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)

He's telling them he isn't lying. He is still defending himself. He is very defensive here. I understand that **very** well.

Galatians 1:21 NKJV - Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

And in Acts it says that he eventually made it back to Tarsus, verse 30, where he was originally from.

Galatians 1:22 NKJV - And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ.

Galatians 1:23 NKJV - But they were hearing only, "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy."

Galatians 1:24 NKJV - And they glorified God in me.

## **Galatians 2**

Galatians 2:1 NKJV - Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.



Galatians 2:2 NKJV - And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

What he means by “privately” was because of the problems that Paul was having in his ministry originated from the church in Jerusalem. So he is going back to the source to try to get the problem resolved. But he went privately to the elders.

Galatians 2:3 NKJV - Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

And he said that because if circumcision was an important part of the Gospel, then Titus should have been circumcised.

Galatians 2:4 NKJV - And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),

I think it is very significant that Paul calls these people (Judaizers) that are spreading gossip “false brethren”. He is basically saying they are not true Christians. Why would they not be true Christians in Paul’s mind? Because they are teaching a false gospel.

Sadly, today’s church, no matter how they dress it up for Jesus, are spreading a false gospel. And just like Paul said in 2 Timothy 4, they will not endure sound doctrine. They just will not, and some just can’t. It’s just not in them to understand truth.

2 Timothy 4:3 NKJV - For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

2 Timothy 4:4 NKJV - and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

These verses weigh the heaviest on my heart personally. I know the truth, but I can’t get anyone else to listen. It is almost impossible to find true Brethren in today’s Christian church.

Galatians 2:5 NKJV - to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Galatians 2:6 NKJV - But from those who seemed to be something; whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man; for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.

Now these people who seemed to be something, as he puts it, are the people that Paul perceived when he got to Jerusalem, were the leaders of the church... the Apostles, the elders. And what he is saying when he said 'they added nothing to me' what he is essentially saying is that they did not indicate that Paul needed to add anything to the Gospel he was preaching. In other words, they accepted the fact of what Paul was preaching among the Gentiles, was sufficient.

Galatians 2:7 NKJV - But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter

Galatians 2:8 NKJV - (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),

In other word, rather than correcting Paul's gospel and telling him that he also needed to teach the Law, the same way that Peter was preaching the gospel to the Jews, the Holy Spirit, was working in Paul and his gospel to the Gentiles. The Spirit was working with Peter in his message to the Jews; and the Spirit was also working in Paul in his message to the Gentiles. Essentially, they are allowing the Holy Spirit to make the decision.

Galatians 2:9 NKJV - and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Galatians 2:10 NKJV - They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

That word 'only' there, in fact, the words "they desired" are not even in the original Greek text, they are supplied by the translators. Essentially what he is saying is 'we should go to the Gentiles and them to the Jews (circumcised), only, or accept, that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do. So what Paul is saying is that the only thing that they added to his gospel message, was that he remember the poor throughout his ministry, which Paul was already eager to do.

It would also serve as a means of softening the Jewish hearts to the Gospel. It would counter the elitist mentality that the Jews had due to them being the actual chosen people of God. It was just typical of the time. So I think that what the Apostles were doing was

to make sure that Paul pay special attention to the Jewish brethren as a means of softening their hearts to Jesus and the Gospel message of the kingdom.

It doesn't say specifically who the 'poor' were here, be it **all** of the poor, or just the Jewish poor, or just the Gentile poor, so this is just my opinion.

Verse 11...

Galatians 2:11 NKJV - Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;

Now remember, Jerusalem is down in the south. Antioch is up north in Syria. It is a good ways away from Jerusalem. But a large church had developed in Antioch and Paul, had been there for a while teaching, he and Barnabas had been sent by that church as missionaries, from that church. In fact, they were to report back to the elders of that church. When they were sent out on their 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey, they were sent by the church in Antioch, commissioned by that church to preach the Gospel, and they were to return and report back to that same church of all the things that they had done. That's the way it is supposed to work.

Now it says that Peter came to Antioch and Paul says that he withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed. Now here we have the first fight that we know of among the followers of Christ. Then he explains what happened.

Galatians 2:12 NKJV - for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

When it says James, it is referring to the Jerusalem church. Then it says 'he', referring to Peter, would eat with the Gentiles.

Now you have to understand that in Jewish custom, a Jew does not even enter into the house of a Gentile. Jews were forbidden to eat with Gentiles, because they were considered 'unclean'. They viewed Gentiles as being unclean people just as they looked at 'clean' and 'unclean' animals.

Remember when Peter went to Cornelius' house to preach in Acts 10, he went into a Gentile's home, and even said in his sermon, that you know it is unlawful for me as a Jew to enter into the house of a Gentile (Acts 10:28). So this elitist mentality was ingrained into the Jewish way of thinking. God had forbidden them to mix with the

Gentiles in the Old Testament as a means of making a pure line for Christ to come into, which is another study all it's own for another day, but the Jewish had come to think of themselves as better than the 'heathen' Gentiles.

So what happened is when Peter went up to visit the church in Antioch, here was a large church that had both a large Jewish and Gentile congregation. And guess what, under Paul's teachings, they had unity. Why did they have unity? Because Paul preached unity, that's why. He preached that there should not be divisions based on race, or culture. So Peter goes up there and observes all of this, and what does Peter do? He drops his culture and he fits right in. He is eating with the Gentiles. Everything is fine. We are all Christians.

Well, then what happened? Verse 12 again.

Galatians 2:12 NKJV - for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

Some Jewish people from the Jerusalem church, which is what it means when it says, "from James", came up to Antioch. And what does Peter do? It says, "when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision."

The Jews that came from Jerusalem, as was their custom, didn't eat with the Gentiles. So Peter goes and eats with them and wouldn't eat with the rest of the congregation now.

Do you think that would be offensive to the Gentiles? Of course it would be. And Paul saw that it would create a problem in the church. So Paul is going to address Peter's cowering to peer pressure.

I have to note here that it was not because James was falling down on the job in the Jerusalem church. The Jerusalem church is in the middle of Jerusalem and Jewish culture. There weren't any Gentiles to speak of to bring this issue up there. It just didn't affect them. It wasn't an issue. They absolutely understood that some of the Jewish rituals were not part of the Gospel, or they wouldn't have agreed with Paul when he went down there. But at the same time, they knew what a problem it would cause in their church if they immediately stopped doing all the rituals of the Law that had been so ingrained in the minds of the Jewish people by this time.

Today's church is EXACTLY the same way. There is so much wrong in today's church. It in no way resembles the church of Jesus and the Apostles. But they cannot let go of

the wrong that they have been taught for so long. They won't even contemplate the possibility of being wrong or admitting they are wrong in any doctrine. They absolutely do not even know how to study their Bibles. We have to be patient with them. They have spent a lifetime on milk and can't handle meat.

But anyway, there was nothing wrong with them observing the Law. There was nothing technically wrong with the rituals that they were doing. They weren't sin. God had commanded them in the Old Testament times. So it just was not an issue.

While these things are not harmful, if you make them part of the Gospel, they are harmful. Here in Galatians we will see that if you are depending on your works, in Romans he does too, if you are depending on your works for your salvation then you are lost. He says that in Galatians 4. In fact, he says that you have fallen from grace. Because salvation is not by the Law, it is by grace and faith in Christ.

You just have to understand that in the Jerusalem church it wasn't an issue that they have ever encountered because there weren't any Gentiles in that church. But in a Gentile church, it is an issue. So the question was, do we tell the Gentiles to do these things, or do we tell the Jews to stop doing these things? Paul's solution was, if the Jews want to continue practicing the Law, go ahead, but don't impose it on the Gentiles because it is not part of the Gospel.

Paul is trying to keep his church unified around the Gospel, not around race or culture. Peter even knew this because the Holy Spirit told him when he preached at Cornelius' house. So what is happening is that Peter is not acting on his conviction. He is acting on peer pressure. Because he doesn't want to be offensive to his fellow Jews from Jerusalem. But now he is being offensive to the Gentiles of this church. So let's look at what Paul had to say to Peter.

In fact, I think it is significant that Paul rebuked Peter in front of the whole congregation. And sometimes an elder needs to be rebuked. Things should be 'hashed out' so to speak, but people in today's modern church can't do that and keep unity.

The bottom line is, Paul didn't want to make unnecessary obstacles for the Gospel message. Paul's focus was always on the Gospel. He wanted to keep any stumbling blocks from either the Jews or the Gentiles.

Let's look at how out of control this got...

Galatians 2:12 NKJV - for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

Galatians 2:13 NKJV - And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

“And the rest of the Jews” were the Jews in the church of Antioch. So what Peter was doing was splitting the church. Now all of a sudden the Jews from the church are starting to separate themselves from the Gentiles of the same church. Even Barnabas got into the act. Peer pressure must be a big thing for a lot of people. Even Barnabas it says, started being a hypocrite.

Now Barnabas is a nice guy. Barnabas is the guy that Paul, after his conversion, stood up for Paul to give him a chance and help him with the other Apostles. They wouldn't go near Paul because they were afraid of him. Barnabas took Paul under his wing, so to speak. He got to know Paul first, listened to him preach, then he took him to the other Apostles and told them, “Look, he's a good guy. He's really been converted.” Barnabas is the guy that even went with Paul on his first missionary journey.

Barnabas was even one of the founders of the church in Antioch. And he went down to Tarsus to get Paul to help him with that church in Antioch. And now even Barnabas is getting caught up in the hypocrisy of Peter and going against Paul.

Galatians 2:14 NKJV - But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

Now I have to stop here and take note of something about this quote. Different Bibles place the end of this quote in different places. And it is difficult to know where he stops his quote, in other words, where he stops telling us what he said to Peter, and where he is simply talking to his audience again here in Galatians. If you look at some different Bibles you will see that they end this quote in different places.

I believe it ends at the end of verse 17... that is Paul's quote begins in verse 14 and goes through verse 17. I'll explain why in a moment. Let's read the verses 14-17 straight through and then I will explain why.

Galatians 2:14 NKJV - But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the

manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?

Galatians 2:15 NKJV - "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

Galatians 2:16 NKJV - "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Galatians 2:17 NKJV - "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!

I believe the quote ends here because if you notice the pronouns, Paul is speaking in the first person plural in these verses... we, we, we. Then in verse 18, he begins to speak in the first person singular... I, I, I. So I think beginning in verse 18, he is then giving explanation to the Gentiles about what he had said to Peter.

I also have an opinion on verse 15. When I look at it in Greek, I think Paul is making kind of a sarcastic remark here.

Galatians 2:15 NKJV - "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

A better rendering of this verse is, **'We are Jews, not sinners of the nations!'** In Greek, the word Gentile, nation, and heathen is the exact same word. The English translators translate it differently in English based on their own presuppositional bias. But it is always the same in Greek throughout the New Testament... as well as the Old Testament I might add.

Anyway, this statement seems to be a sarcastic summary of the elitist impression Peter was giving to the Gentiles. What he means is, the impression that you are giving to the Gentiles is this, because we separate from you, we are not part of you pagans. The Jews were making the Gentiles feel like outcasts.

Well, that is my understanding of verse 15 based on reading it in Greek. It is hard to be exactly sure of every word and nuance considering so much time has passed, and language always changes. But the grammar seems pretty clear.

The bottom line is that Paul is telling Peter that he knows that salvation is not by the Law.

Now look again at verse 17. This is such an important statement that it needs to be looked at for a moment.

Galatians 2:17 NKJV - "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!

This verse is important in light of today's modern church. Every false doctrine has consequences. Sometimes small, sometimes huge, eternal, consequences. False doctrines of course, trip up believers, but what's even worse is that they impugn God's character to the unbelievers and almost certainly guarantees that they will not listen to the Gospel message. If the churches won't stop and get their own doctrines correct and unified, then how is the world supposed to view Christ and Christianity? How does Christ look to others if Christians are sinning or fighting among themselves?

Now let's continue on with verse 18. This is where I think that Paul is explaining things to his Galatian audience. Remember, this is a letter where Paul is quoting himself back in Antioch in verses 14-17, then he turns his attention back to the Galatian audience and continues on with verse 18.

Galatians 2:18 NKJV - "For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

What does he mean "build again the things I destroyed?" What was destroyed and what is being built again? I would call it the "wall of separation". In Ephesians 2 Paul talks about the wall of separation between the Jew and Gentile. It is implied in the Law, because when the people would come to worship at the Temple, there was a physical wall around the Temple. Jews could go through the gate to worship, Gentiles could not. The Gentiles had to worship God from afar. There really was a wall at the Temple, so Paul uses it as a metaphor for this division between Jew and Gentile in Ephesians.

And Paul also says in Ephesians that through Christ that that wall has been broken down. What does that mean? It means that Jews and Gentiles have equal access to God now. It doesn't come through the Law anymore.

Galatians 2:18 NKJV - "For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

So what Paul is destroying is that metaphorical wall in the culture between Jew and Gentile, which was sort of implied by the Law. Paul has knocked down that wall with the church in Antioch by building unity between Jew and Gentile in that church. And now here comes Peter and he is building that wall again. And Paul is saying if he were to go along with that, he would be making himself a transgressor.



Galatians 2:19 NKJV - "For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

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

In other words, Paul is now living by faith and not by the Law.

Galatians 2:21 NKJV - "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

What he is implying here is that if you start going back to that, then you are in fact abandoning the grace of God. Paul is implying that Peter's actions are leading back in that direction. And look how angry God got with the Hebrews who wanted to go back at Kadesh Barnea. Didn't turn out so well for them.

### **Galatians 3**

This chapter is one of the most profound chapters in the entire Bible. If you understand Galatians 3 you will understand the Old Testament. The Apostle Paul explains the entire purpose of the Law, the covenant that God made with Abraham, and how those two things relate to each other.

Unfortunately, it is a misunderstanding of those two covenants that is, in part, responsible for the Jews rejecting Jesus as the Christ.

Galatians 3:1 NKJV - O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

Galatians 3:2 NKJV - This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Galatians 3:3 NKJV - Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

Galatians 3:4 NKJV - Have you suffered so many things in vain; if indeed it was in vain?

Galatians 3:5 NKJV - Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?;

Galatians 3:6 NKJV - just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Galatians 3:7 NKJV - Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

Galatians 3:8 NKJV - And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed."

Galatians 3:9 NKJV - So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Let me give you a little bit of background here... Just in case some may have forgotten or are new to the study. The Apostle Paul wrote the book of Galatians for one reason, it was because after he had preached the Gospel of the Kingdom to some people, they had accepted Jesus, been baptized, and formed some assemblies (churches). After this, some Jews who professed to being Christians, came around behind Paul and began to undermine his ministry. They began to tell these Gentile converts that they needed to follow the Law of Moses as well as accepting Jesus as the Christ. In other words, to be a true Christian, they had to take on Jesus plus the Law.

Paul is now here coming back to tell them that this was not true. And that the Law had nothing to do with the Gospel. He's correcting their error. So in verse three he says, "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?" He constantly contrasts their keeping the Law of the Old Testament with the "Works of the Flesh".

Why do you suppose that is? Were the commandments of the Law holy, and good commandments? Of course they were. But if they are looking to please God, they are looking in the wrong place, because that comes through Christ, Jesus.

In verse six Paul says, "...just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Now was Abraham before or after the Law? 430 years earlier, right? Abraham was already accounted righteous before the Law. How was that again? By his faith. Verse 6, "...Abraham **believed** God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

So then he says in verse 7, "Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham." And what he means by that is that those who are trying to earn their salvation through good works, in this case, keeping the Law of Moses, are **not** just before God. Because they cannot keep all the laws of God perfectly and therefore they are condemned before God.

Now really look at verse 10.

Galatians 3:10 NKJV - For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

That is a quote from Deuteronomy 27:26. What is he saying here? The Law has a curse. That's all Deuteronomy chapters 27, 28, and 29 talk about. The blessings and curses for following or not following the Law.

The entire book of Deuteronomy was given by Moses just before the people of Israel were supposed to cross the Jordan river and go into the Promised Land. And Moses was reminding them of all of God's laws and that when they went into the Land they must keep the Law or they would have to endure the curses and be thrown out of the Land.

Now what Paul does in the rest of this chapter is that he contrasts the promises that God made with Abraham on the one hand, with the promises that God made through Moses on the other hand. And he shows how they are vastly different from one another.

I want to show you some of those from the Old Testament because I'm going to lay this ground work, then as we get into the rest of Galatians 3 you will understand what Paul is driving at.

Go to Genesis chapter 12. Let's first look at the promises that God made to Abraham. This is what is called the Abrahamic Covenant.

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

Genesis 12:2 NKJV - I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.

Genesis 12:3 NKJV - I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Genesis 12:4 NKJV - So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Genesis 12:5 NKJV - Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.

Genesis 12:6 NKJV - Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

Genesis 12:7 NKJV - Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Now, before I continue reading, I need to point out a problem with most modern translations here. I mostly use the NKJV of the Bible. I often use the KJV. I also use the LXX a lot. If you use KJV, that is the only translation that gets this right. All other modern translations get it wrong. Although some have a footnote. I don't understand why they put it in a footnote and not correct the text. It's beyond me.

Do you see that word "descendants" in verse seven? That is **wrong**. It isn't descendants, plural. It is descendant, singular. In both the Hebrew and the Greek it is "seed" singular. The word is literally **σπέρματι** (sperm). And it is singular. Now when we see this word "descendants" in the plural you need to think of it as singular. You should make a note in your Bible if you aren't using the KJV. And it means seed or sperm.

The reason this is critical is because in Galatians 3:16 the Apostle Paul points it out that in all of these old promises it is singular and not plural. The reason that is so important is because he is showing them that they were wrong to think that the promises were made to them because they were Jews. The promise wasn't made to the Jews, but to one Jew, which Paul points out is the Christ, Jesus.

Now let's read verse seven again with this in mind.

Genesis 12:7 NKJV - Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your **descendant** (singular) I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Now jump to Genesis 13:14

Genesis 13:14 NKJV - And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are; northward, southward, eastward, and westward;

Genesis 13:15 NKJV - "for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants (**seed**) forever.

How long was God going to give Abraham and his Seed the land? Forever. I want you to make a note of that.

Genesis 13:16 NKJV - "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; **(meaning that He is going to multiply that seed. How is He going to do that? We are going to see a little further down in Galatians 3. Paul is going to tell us.)** so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.

Genesis 13:17 NKJV - "Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

Now turn to chapter 17. God is still speaking to Abraham here.

Genesis 17:7 NKJV - "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in ~~their~~ generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.

Genesis 17:8 NKJV - "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Genesis 17:9 NKJV - And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.

Now go down to chapter 22:15. This is after God told Abraham to take his son Isaac, his promised son, and offer him up as a sacrifice.

Genesis 22:15 NKJV - Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven,

Genesis 22:16 NKJV - and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son;

Genesis 22:17 NKJV - "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your **descendants** shall possess the gate of their enemies.

Genesis 22:18 NKJV - "In your **seed** all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

Now, if you are using the NKJV, as I am, do you notice in verse 17 it says "descendants" plural, but in verse 18 it says "seed" singular? There is absolutely no difference in the Hebrew or the Greek Septuagint. The word is exactly the same in both of those verses. The reason the translators put the word "seed" in verse 18, which is the correct translation, is because this verse is quoted in Galatians and it is clearly applied to Christ. It is interpreted as applying to Christ alone. Not to all the Jewish people.

Now here is the thing about this word, in both Hebrew and Greek, the word is “seed” singular, but it can also be used as a collective group singular. If we are talking about a particular modern church we can talk about one church, but we are referring to a group of people. So what the text does by putting it in the singular this way, it is open to interpretation as to whether he could be talking about one person who is a descendant of Abraham, or a group of people as in the nation of Israel. Because God said to Abraham that He would make of him (Abraham) a great nation. That is obviously plural. By writing it this way, and it is grammatically singular in Hebrew and Greek, it is left open to interpretation. Grammatically it is always singular.

Here is the problem. The Jews interpret it as always being plural. And therefore just because you are born a Jew, that made you part of the promise and you would inherit the land. Which is ultimately Christ’s kingdom. But we are going to see when the Apostle Paul starts to interpret all of this, he is going to refer to a single person and who ever is in that single person will be an heir.

Listen, the covenant God made with Abraham appears to be confusing if you don’t have the New Testament to explain it. The reverse is also true in some places. The New Testament cannot be understood without the Old Testament. Here it is confusing because God first says I’m going to make from you, Abraham, a, singular, great nation. He made that promise to Abraham. But in chapter 17 God changed his name from Abram, which means father, to Abraham, which means father of a multitude. And God changed his name at the same time He changed the promise. First God told him he would be the father of a great nation, then He said he would make him a father of many nations.

Now this seems to be a contradiction. Or at least there is some tension between those two things. There is tension between the seed that will inherit the land is one of his descendants or all of his descendants. It’s not clear here in Genesis. It allows for different interpretations. But Paul is going to interpret and explain it all for us.

Before we get back into Galatians, I have to show you something about the Law.

Let me ask you this before I go there. The covenant that God made with Abraham, that all the nations would be blessed through him, that he would become the father of many nations, that his seed would inherit the land, how long was this promise for? Look at Genesis 17:8 again.

Genesis 17:8 NKJV - "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an **everlasting** possession; and I will be their God."

How long is everlasting? Now when we got to chapter 22, after Abraham was faithful and willing to offer up his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice, believing that God would raise him from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19), God then came back to him and said to Abraham, “I am swearing to you with an oath that I’m going to perform these promises that I made an oath to you about.” It’s one thing if God says it, but if God comes back swearing an oath by Himself (Hebrews 6:13-17) because there is no one higher that God can swear by, you can take it to the bank, so to speak.

It was after Abraham demonstrated his faith by being willing to offer his son Isaac, then God told him that I am swearing an oath that I am going to perform these things long after you are dead, Abraham. He also said the same thing to Isaac, and then to Isaac’s son, Jacob. And Jacob later became the father of all the tribes of Israel. And what he said to them was, because your father Abraham obeyed my voice, that I swore this oath.

So let me ask you this, after Abraham had died, was there anything that Isaac could do to undo this promise that God made to Abraham? No. Was there anything Isaac’s son Jacob could do? No. No one can undo that promise because God swore an oath. And this promise was unconditional. It was an unconditional covenant.

Now, there is another covenant dealing with the land. That is the covenant that God gave through Moses.

Turn to Deuteronomy chapter 1 real quick.

Remember Deuteronomy is a record of what Moses said after the children of Israel wandered for 40 years in the wilderness and God is getting ready to take them, under Joshua, into the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 1:8 NKJV - 'See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers; to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; to give to them and their descendants after them.'

Now turn over to chapter 28. Deuteronomy is Moses reemphasizing all the laws that God had given them on Mt. Sinai. Laws that they were obligated to keep. And remember that these laws were given 430 years after the promise that God made to Abraham.

Now these are Abraham’s descendants, the nation of Israel, but God made another covenant with them at Mt. Sinai.

Deuteronomy 28:1 NKJV - "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully **all** His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.

Deuteronomy 28:2 NKJV - "And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:

Then He goes on with a whole lot of “blessed”, by the way, Jesus did this as well in His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. These were Moses’ blessing in the old covenant and Jesus made blessings in the new covenant. Moses was a lawgiver that told of a new lawgiver that was coming, which was Jesus.

Here is something that Jesus didn’t do when He gave His blessing in the new covenant. Jesus didn’t pronounce any curses. But unfortunately in the Law of Moses there are curses.

Deuteronomy 28:15 NKJV - "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

There are too many to read right now. Just skip down to verse 49 where the cursing starts getting really interesting if they do not observe **all** of the commandments in God’s Law.

*Also ask yourself if you see this same kind of thing might be happening to America right now.*

Deuteronomy 28:49 NKJV - "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand,

Deuteronomy 28:50 NKJV - "a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young.

Deuteronomy 28:51 NKJV - "And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you.

Deuteronomy 28:52 NKJV - "They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they



shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you.

Deuteronomy 28:53 NKJV - "You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you.

Deuteronomy 28:54 NKJV - "The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind,

Deuteronomy 28:55 NKJV - "so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

Did you know that this literally happened? This happened when Nebuchadnazzar took Jerusalem in the Babylonian captivity and again when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. They surrounded the city and cut off all the routes leading into and out of the city that no food could come into the people. They became so desperate that they began eating their own children. It became so vile. God predicted all this if they did not keep His law while they were in the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 28:56 NKJV - "The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter,

Deuteronomy 28:57 NKJV - "her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

That is disgusting. But God is warning them how bad it will get if they don't obey His law. They knew this ahead of time. Then He talks about sicknesses that will come upon them. But skip down to verse 63.

Deuteronomy 28:63 NKJV - "And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess.

What is God saying to them? If you don't keep the Law perfectly, all these curses will come upon you and I will drive you out of the land which I promised to Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob. First God gave them blessings for keeping the Law, then curses and loss of the land for not keeping the Law.

Now let me ask you a question. Is this covenant conditional or unconditional? It all depends on them. If they keep the Law, they keep the land. If they don't, they lose the land.

So the covenant God made with Abraham was unconditional. The covenant God made with Moses was conditional. So there are two covenants that are side by side that are to Abraham and his "seed". Under Abraham we have promises, but no curses. Then 430 years later we have the Law, to the very descendants of Abraham, and now the land inheritance is all of a sudden conditional.

Now, with all that in mind, let's go back to Galatians 3. Let's review a few verses. Start in verse 5.

Galatians 3:5 NKJV - Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?;

He begins to contrast the Law, which requires absolute obedience, to the faith of Abraham. He is contrasting these two covenants.

Galatians 3:6 NKJV - just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Galatians 3:7 NKJV - Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

Galatians 3:8 NKJV - And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." -*Genesis 12:3*

Galatians 3:9 NKJV - So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Why, because we have the same character as Abraham. We are not putting our faith in our works, we are putting our faith in God's promises.

Galatians 3:10 NKJV - For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in **all** things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." -*Deuteronomy 27:26*

So if you are going to approach God by the Law of Moses, then you have the possibility of a curse as well. And if you are going to make yourself right before God by doing the Law, you have to continue in **all** things written in the Law.

What Paul is doing is, he has the Galatians churches before him, metaphorically speaking, and he is telling them that they need to either approach God through the Law or through the faith of Abraham. Which one do you want to choose?

Galatians 3:11 NKJV - But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." -*Habakkuk 2:4*

Galatians 3:12 NKJV - Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." -*Leviticus 18:5*

Now look at verse 13.

Galatians 3:13 NKJV - Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),

Galatians 3:14 NKJV - that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:15 NKJV - Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.

So now Paul is making an illustration from a human contract or covenant.

Now this next verse is very important to understanding so much of the Bible both Old and New Testaments.

Galatians 3:16 NKJV - Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made.

Now what were those promises? God would give Abraham and his Seed the land as an everlasting possession. All the nations would be blessed through his seed.

Now look at this. This is a critical part of the verse.

...He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many,

What Paul is saying is back in Genesis when God made the promises to Abraham and his "Seed", He was not talking about seeds as of many. Meaning, it's not all you Jews.

but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.

This is why you do not need to become a Jew to be accepted by Christ. Remember why Paul is writing the book of Galatians. After Paul had established some churches in Galatia some from the Jerusalem church were coming in behind Paul and telling the Gentiles that they had to follow the Law and become circumcised as well as follow Christ. Paul is writing to correct that.

Galatians 3:16 NKJV - Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. -*Genesis 3:15; 21:12; 22:18, Romans 9:6; Hebrews 11:18*

This is a difficult chapter. But if you understand it, you will understand the Old Testament. If you don't know the history of Israel, you won't grasp what Paul is trying to say.

I want to make sure that we are clear on this because everything else we are going to talk about depends on this point. Look at the passage in Genesis.

Genesis 13:15 LXX - for all the land which you see, I will give to you and to your seed forever.

It does refer to offspring but it is singular so it should be translated as "descendant" in all the other modern translations. This is a very important distinction.

Genesis 13:16 LXX - And I will make your seed like the dust of the earth; if anyone is able to number the dust of the earth, then shall your seed be numbered.

Here He is still talking about one descendant, but what He is saying is that He is going to multiply that descendant, which was Christ. There will come "sons and daughters".

Genesis 13:17 LXX - Arise, walk in the land, both in the length of it and in the breadth; for to you will I give it, and to your seed forever.

This promise is made 5 or 6 times to Abraham. Then it is repeated again to Isaac, then again to Jacob. Remember that God said He was going to give it, the promise, which was the land, to Abraham and his descendant, Christ, as an everlasting possession. Everlasting means perpetual, from now on, forever.

In Galatians 3:16, Paul identifies that one seed who was to inherit the land as Jesus Christ; and then in verse 17 he goes on to say...

Galatians 3:17 NKJV - And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.

The covenant was the “Law”, which was 430 years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before, by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.

430 years after God made the promises to Abraham, comes along Moses. That is when God called Moses up on Mount Sinai and He gave Moses the Law. But in the law God told Israel that they could dwell in the land as long as they kept His law; but if they broke His law, He would drive them out of the land. This is repeated several times. It is also in Deuteronomy 28 and 29. He told them if they obeyed His law, they would be blessed and keep possession of the land; but if they didn't obey the law, they would be driven out.

The point Paul is making here, he is contrasting the promise that God made with Abraham with the promise that was in the law, which God made with Moses. The promise that God made with Abraham was an everlasting inheritance and it was completely unconditional. There were no strings attached. In fact, when God, in Genesis 22, tested Abraham God then swore an oath to Abraham that He would fulfill all these promises to him. And when He promised it again to Isaac, Abraham's son, and to Jacob, his grandson, God said He was going to do this because of what Abraham did on Mount Moriah, later to be called Mount Zion, with giving up his son, Isaac. Today Jerusalem is built on this site.

So after Abraham's faith was tested, God then confirmed the promise by an oath, which means there were **no conditions** attached. No matter what happens this promise will be fulfilled as an everlasting inheritance to Abraham's seed, Jesus Christ. Under the law, the Jews had a conditional covenant, as long as they kept the law, they could keep the land. That's what it boils down to. If they didn't keep the law, they were driven out.

The point the Apostle Paul is making here in Galatians 3:16 is first the promise of the everlasting inheritance was to Abraham and one of his descendants, Christ, not to the Jews at large, so to speak. And then in verse 17 he says that the fact that the law came 430 years later, cannot overturn the promise that God had previously made. So the conditions that were attached to the law are not going to overturn what God said to Abraham.

So we have an unconditional covenant regarding the land; and then we have a conditional covenant regarding the land... under Moses. How is all that going to work? We are going to see in a minute.

Look at verse 18...

Galatians 3:18 NKJV - For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

When he says "the inheritance" here, what does he mean? He is talking about the covenant he made with Abraham; it's the land.

Let me just show you that real quickly. Look at Genesis 15:1...

Genesis 15:1 NKJV - After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

Genesis 15:2 NKJV - But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

Genesis 15:3 NKJV - Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"

He is talking about his servants are the only heirs he has. This is after he left his homeland and went to the land that God told him He would give to him (Abraham) and his descendant as an everlasting possession. But Abraham is saying Lord, how are you going to fulfill your word because I don't have any children?

Genesis 15:4 NKJV - And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."

Genesis 15:5 NKJV - Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

Genesis 15:6 NKJV - And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Genesis 15:7 NKJV - Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

Genesis 15:8 NKJV - And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"

Genesis 15:9 NKJV - So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

So there was a ceremony where God confirmed His promise here with animal sacrifices. I want you to notice that the word inherit is used here twice with regard to the land. That is the only promise that God made to Abraham that is the "inheritance". There are other components to the promise... his descendants would be as the stars of heaven, right? All nations of the earth would be blessed through him and his descendant, singular.

Those are also components of the promise; but when he says the inheritance, in Galatians 3:18, he is talking about the land. In fact, God told him, "I want you to walk up and down from the north to the south this is going to be your land."

Galatians 3:18 NKJV - For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Galatians 3:19 NKJV - What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.

What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed, singular, should come to whom the promise was made; (And who was that seed? Jesus.) and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Galatians 3:20 NKJV - Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.

Galatians 3:21 NKJV - Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.

Galatians 3:22 NKJV - But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Galatians 3:23 NKJV - But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

Galatians 3:24 NKJV - Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Galatians 3:25 NKJV - But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Now look at verse 26.

Galatians 3:26 NKJV - For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Remember, Paul is writing to Gentiles... they are sons through Christ. Paul's going to make this point here.

Galatians 3:27 NKJV - For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Galatians 3:28 NKJV - There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:29 NKJV - And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

“And if you are Christ’s,” what does that mean? You have been baptized into Christ so you are included in His inheritance. So if you are Christ’s, and because Christ is Abraham’s seed, the specific seed that the promise was made to, if you are in Christ, what does that make you? It tells you... you are heirs according to the promise. What do the heirs inherit? The land. Is the land in Heaven? But you are not to inherit it yet. Christ hasn’t received it yet. Paul says we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. He talks about this in Romans chapter 8.

In Galatia, which is in north-central Asia Minor, or modern day Turkey, the whole problem was that the Jews had come and told the Galatians that unless they became Jews, in other words, unless they were circumcised and followed the law they would have no inheritance.

Paul’s point is that the Jews got it wrong because the promise was not to them as descendants of Abraham, but to Abraham and his one descendant, which was Jesus. So the Jews were claiming something that wasn’t theirs to begin with. Then Paul goes on to show them that they do not have to become Jews to inherit, but by being in Christ it is their inheritance. And it is not going to come through the Law. It is going to come through the promise that God made to Abraham. In modern “lingo” we like to say, by grace, not by works.

The promise was that Abraham would have a son. Sarah said she couldn’t have children so she gave Hagar to Abraham that they would have a son through her. Hagar did have a son, Ishmael, but God said, no, that Sarah was going to have a son, even in her old age. In fact He said, “This time next year Sarah will have a son.” He said the boy was to be Isaac, and “in Isaac your seed will be called.” Paul explains this clearly in Romans 9. This goes hand-in-hand with Galatians 3.

The following Scriptures explain the promise, first given to Abraham, then to Isaac, then to Jacob. Each time God appeared to these men, He reiterated that the eternal land



inheritance was for them personally, and also for their 'Seed'. The only way these mortal men can receive such an 'eternal' inheritance is through resurrection. God's promise was sealed with an oath when Abraham obeyed, being willing to offer his son, Isaac, believing that God would fulfill His promise through resurrection (Hebrews 11:17-19). Those who have the faith of Abraham receive the promise to Abraham and to his 'Seed.'

Scriptures for Abraham's and Jesus' 'land inheritance', where His kingdom will be forever, are: Genesis 12:7; 13:14-15; 15:18; 17:7-8; 26:1-4; 28:3-4; 28:12-14; 35:9-12; and 48:4. I suggest reading the KJV, because it is always singular, or checking the Greek grammar for yourself.

And I know that Amillennialists say that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob received all there was to this promise through Joshua when leading the children of Israel into Canaan after the wilderness. But Steven told us in the New Testament that Abraham did not even receive one foot of the Land God promised to him, (Acts 7:1-5). And Paul in Hebrews says that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not receive the fulfillment of the promise, but that its fulfillment was delayed so that we might share in it along with them, (Hebrews 11:39-40).

## **Galatians 4**

Galatians 3 and 4 are impossible to understand if you don't know the Old Testament. Or at the very least a good working knowledge of the Old Testament. Galatians compares two covenants. It compares the covenant that God made with Abraham to the covenant that God made with Moses. But there are really three covenants that are all intertwined that have to do with salvation:

The Abrahamic Covenant, where God gave Abraham the "promises". The scriptures constantly refer to "the promises". Whenever you hear that phrase in the New Testament, its talking about what God said to Abraham. What were the promises that God made to Abraham? First, that he would have a child when it wouldn't be possible under normal human circumstances. He promised that that child would become a great nation. Then He later said that Abraham would become the father of many nations. And that through his Seed, which is Christ, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Then He said that both Abraham and Christ would inherit the land forever... as a "permanent inheritance."

Next we come to the Law of Moses, which we call the Old Covenant. This was a covenant that God made with Abraham's descendants. It contained 613 Laws for them to

keep if they wanted to dwell in the land, that is, the promised land. The problem was that they were unable to keep all the laws.

Then there was a third covenant, which Jeremiah referred to as the new covenant. The “New Covenant” is the means by which Israel could receive the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.

You have to look at it this way. The Abrahamic Covenant basically told what God was going to do. It is the “what” of God’s plan. Then the Law came as the first “how”. The problem was that people just couldn’t keep the Law. The New Covenant is a second “how”.

Let’s go to Jeremiah and learn a bit about it. It is in chapter 31. Let me give some context for when this prophesy was made... the Jews had gone into the Land under Joshua, but they had nothing but trouble. They were always being harassed by their enemies. They were driven in and out of different parts of the land.

When David came along, he had to conquer all of these enemies because they had not all been conquered under Joshua. He left the Jebusites. Then the prophet Jeremiah came along and prophesied that God was going to drive all of them from the land completely. God sent Nebuchadnezzar from Babylonia to do it. The northern tribes of Israel had already been taken over by the Assyrians at this time. The southern tribes were the only thing left. They had split because of King Solomon’s disobedience to God through idolatry and worshiping of other gods.

So when you get to Jeremiah, it appears that the promises that God made to Abraham are failing. But why are they failing? Because the people didn’t keep the conditions under the Law. So Jeremiah comes along and he is predicting that they are about to be thrown out of the land.

But at the same time, there is a promise here that is going to correct all that had led up to this, which was their inability to keep the Law of Moses, therefore, their inability to keep the land.

Jeremiah 31:31 NKJV - "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

Now a covenant is a contract. If you make a contract with someone. Let’s say it a lease on a building or something. Then a few years later, you start thinking this isn’t working

out, and you want a “new covenant”... a new lease. Well, that new covenant supersedes the old covenant.

Jeremiah 31:32 NKJV - "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

What was the covenant that God gave Israel when He lead them out of Egypt? The Law of Moses on Mount Sinai.

And do you see that last clause in verse 32, “My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.?” God is removing all guilt from Himself.

Jeremiah 31:33 NKJV - "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Jeremiah 31:34 NKJV - "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

So what we see here is that the essence of the new covenant is ‘forgiveness’. So that the results of sin are not received by the person. If your sins are forgiven, what does that mean? They aren’t held against you anymore.

Who is God making this covenant with? The “house of Israel”. So Israel is coming under a new contract that will supersede the old contract. Not like the old contract, which they broke, and in the new contract there is forgiveness. And in the new contract, everyone that is within this ‘Israel’ that He is talking about, is going to know Him on a personal level.

The Old Covenant and the New Covenant are about the realization of the promises made in the Abrahamic Covenant... the very first covenant. Have you noticed, the entire Bible is based on the Abrahamic Covenant. The entire Bible is God’s working out of the promises that He made with Abraham. The entire Bible.

Anyway, through the Law, those promises couldn’t be realized because of man’s failures. Through the New Covenant, those promises are realized through someone else.

This new covenant, how is it implemented? It was through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And how do we know that? Because He said so at, what we call, the Last Supper (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24).

Did Christ establish the New Covenant at that meal? No. It was on the cross. He was simply explaining to them, the disciples, what He was about to do the very next morning. So Communion is symbolic of what Jesus did on the Cross. Communion is a symbolic representation of His death.

Also, Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:6 that God had made “us”, the Apostles, ministers of the New Covenant.

So the New Covenant was instituted at Christ’s death and resurrection. You know, the resurrection is proof that Christ’s death was acceptable by God as a sacrifice for us. It is also proof that He provided a way for us to realize the Abrahamic Covenant. Because the only way the Abrahamic Covenant can be realized is by the resurrection. Why is that? Because Christ’s kingdom is eternal. The inheritance is eternal. How is a corruptible person, meaning a mortal person, who is only going to live 60-80 years, going to inherit something that lasts forever? The Christian’s hope, although most Christians today don’t even know it, is the resurrection. And Christ is a prototype for our resurrection. The resurrection is God’s proof that the Abrahamic Covenant is possible for all.

When we get back to Galatians 4 we see what Paul is doing is showing the inadequacy of the Law to bring about the realization of the inheritance that God had made with Abraham... the “eternal” inheritance.

Go in your Bible to Hebrews 9:15 for a minute. I want to show you something that’s very interesting. Hebrews is the other book that talks about these covenants and how they relate to one another.

Hebrews 9:15 NKJV - And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

“Those who are called” refers to those who were called under the first covenant. Those who lived back then before Christ came and were under the Law.

It also says, “the eternal inheritance”. Well, what is the eternal inheritance? It’s the Promised Land that God said they would receive as a permanent inheritance.

So what he is saying is, even under the Law, they could not receive that covenant. The saints of the Old Testament, they couldn't do it. Even they have to come through Christ because He is the only One who can make it permanent. And for only one reason. Why is it that Christ is the only One who can? He is the only one that lived a perfectly sinless life. What was it that caused the Jews to fail under the Law? It was the failure to keep the commands of God. It was the failure to live perfectly and holy before God. Jesus is the only One who has ever done that. If He hadn't live righteously He couldn't have been a spotless sacrifice... a requirement by the Father.

All that just to get into chapter 4.

Galatians 4:1 NKJV - Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,

Now when he says "heir" here he is referring back to what he said in chapter 3 verses 24-25. (Go back and read those verses.) A tutor is for children. And the tutor was the Law. The tutor was the teacher and the students couldn't measure up to the teacher.

Galatians 4:2 NKJV - but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

"Until the time appointed by the father," what does that mean? It is until he completes his education, and becomes an adult. He can now take responsibility for himself.

Galatians 4:3 NKJV - Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

Galatians 4:4 NKJV - But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

Galatians 4:5 NKJV - to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Galatians 4:6 NKJV - And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

Galatians 4:7 NKJV - Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

He is telling the Gentiles that they are now included and it isn't just for the Jews. The Gentiles are also "sons of God".

Galatians 4:8 NKJV - But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.

Now he is talking to Gentiles again.

Galatians 4:9 NKJV - But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

Galatians 4:10 NKJV - You observe days and months and seasons and years.

These were all the Jewish requirements under the Law. I want to point out something here. It is not wrong to observe those days. They still have important prophetic significance. But it is wrong to observe those days as a means of righteousness or as a means of pleasing God.

Galatians 4:11 NKJV - I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

Galatians 4:12 NKJV - Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all.

What does he mean by that? It sounds a little complicated, but think about it. If he became like them why do they need to become like him? He became free from the Law. In that way he became like them. They were never under the bondage of the Law. But now they are trying to go back to the Law again.

The “Judaizers” were running around behind Paul telling everyone that accepting Jesus was fine, but they needed to keep the Law as well.

Galatians 4:13 NKJV - You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.

Galatians 4:14 NKJV - And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

Do you know what he is talking about here? What was Paul’s physical infirmity; what was the “trial in his flesh”? He is reminding them how they had received him earlier. They had received him with open arms and didn’t pass any judgment on Paul because he was nearly blind.

Galatians 4:15 NKJV - What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.

The thorn in the flesh that Paul had prayed for God to remove and God said no... that His strength was made perfect in weakness.

2 Corinthians 12:8 NKJV - Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

2 Corinthians 12:9 NKJV - And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

In fact, look at Galatians 6:11.

Galatians 6:11 NKJV - See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!

The Apostle Paul, we learn from the last verses of 2 Thessalonians, hand signed all his letters; but he didn't write them personally. It was too difficult for someone that was nearly blind.

2 Thessalonians 3:17 NKJV - The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

To write an entire epistle was too difficult so he had his traveling companions do the writing for him. Then he signed them; And he always signed it with a phrase. Basically, it would say, "Grace be with you." or "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." That kind of thing. And that was the signature phrase that ended all of Paul's letters.

Galatians 6:18 NKJV - Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Romans 16:24 NKJV - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Philippians 4:23 NKJV - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Ephesians 6:24 NKJV - Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

1 Corinthians 16:23 NKJV - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

2 Corinthians 13:14 NKJV - The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Colossians 4:18 NKJV - This salutation by my own hand; Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

1 Thessalonians 5:28 NKJV - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

**2 Thessalonians 3:17 NKJV** - The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. **2 Thessalonians 3:18 NKJV** - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

1 Timothy 6:21 NKJV - by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.

2 Timothy 4:22 NKJV - The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

Titus 3:15 NKJV - All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Philemon 1:25 NKJV - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Hebrews 13:25 NKJV - Grace be with you all. Amen.

I might add that Paul also opened all but the book of Hebrews in the same way. And there was a good reason for excluding Hebrews at the time. But it was basically the same, but with mention of the Father. Example:

Galatians 1:3 NKJV - Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,

In every one, but notice one thing, he never once mentions the Holy Spirit. There is a good reason for that as well. But that is a lesson for another time. Paul is letting us know that that is how you could identify Paul's letters as opposed to the letters that the "Judaizers" would try to pass off as Paul's. And when he did write something, he wrote it in huge letters because that is all he could see.

And that is what he is talking about when he says, when I came to you you did not despise me for the infirmity of my flesh. Here is Paul, healing people that have problems with their bodies, he would lay hands on people and they would receive miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, and sometimes even the gift of healing. But here's Paul, almost blind himself, preaching the Gospel. And he asked God, God, can you take this away? It's kind of a problem for my ministry. And God said, "No" (1 Corinthians 12:8-9).

Now Paul did receive his sight back when blinded on the Damascus Road, but not totally. Paul liked to boast. He had a pride about him; the wrong kind of pride. And I think this may have been the way that God kept Paul humble. But that is just an opinion.

Paul's whole point in bringing this up is to contrast their behavior now, as opposed to their behavior before. When he came around the first time, on his first missionary journey, they accepted him regardless of his sight problem. They didn't have glasses back then.



Galatians 4:16 NKJV - Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

This verse is very personal to me. It is my signature phrase on my e-mail account. Every e-mail I send out is signed with *Galatians 4:16*. I often wonder how many people actually go and look up to see what it says. But I am always discussing scripture with people and I am always look down on for telling them the truth of what the Bible actually says. Christians today DO NOT want to hear the truth. They will lie and spread rumors, and do anything thing they can to discredit me to others to stick to a doctrine that I have proved to them behind closed doors, with the Bible alone, that was false. Rather than admit they could be wrong, or have been misled about something, they absolutely will become an enemy for me trying to speak the truth. They will absolutely lie to others. And in most every case, these are pastors, that I am speaking with. This is the state of today's Christianity... Although it was probably like that from the beginning.

Now look at this in verse 17, it's important.

Galatians 4:17 NKJV - They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them.

It says, "They zealously court you," who is "they"? It's the Judaizers. I actually don't like that term, "Judaizers". But in today's jargon, it is becoming more and more popular. It's the people going around behind Paul and undermining his ministry.

And "court you", what does that mean? It just means that they were trying to get others to follow them instead of Paul. Then it says, "but for no good". In other words, their intentions were wrong. They were trying to build their own kingdom. They wanted others to follow them instead of Paul.

That is absolutely a problem in today's church as well. Too many pastors trying to build their own little kingdom. So they tell people what they want to hear instead of the truth of God's word.

Then it says, "they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them." Now what does that mean? Think about it. "they want to exclude you". I thought they wanted you to join them? Why does it say they want to exclude you? First of all, what are these people excluding them from? They are saying you are excluded for the promises because you are not following the Law. That's what they are saying. Yeah, you got part of it, but you don't have all of it. Therefore, you are excluded from the inheritance.

And why did they do that? So that the followers of Paul would want to be with them instead of Paul. They are trying to turn these Christians into Jewish missionaries.

Galatians 4:18 NKJV - But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you.

Galatians 4:19 NKJV - My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,

What does he mean by that? What does birth have to do with this? And what does Christ being formed in them mean? The birth refers to when they came to Christ. They became believers... when Paul talks to these churches, the ones the he established, he considers himself to be like their father and them to be his children.

It's a metaphor, of course. Not literally. John did the same this in his writings... called them his little children as well. It's just that he showed them the Gospel and they became believers and children of God because of his ministry. So he is offering them his love and teaching as a father would his own child.

It says, "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again", again, what does he mean by that? He is saying, "Maybe it didn't take the first time. Maybe you missed something."

"...again until Christ is formed in you," again until the thinking becomes conformed to the true message of the Gospel so that the Apostle Paul is not always having to come behind them and correct them because they are going astray.

The problem is that they had not developed a mature understanding of the things of God. And that's why they were so easily led astray.

Galatians 4:20 NKJV - I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.

Galatians 4:21 NKJV - Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

In other words, did you actually read the Law? Did you actually read what you are trying to put yourself under? I think if they had read the fine print of the Law they might have second thoughts about wanting to be under the Law. It came with some harsh punishments for any transgression.

Galatians 4:22 NKJV - For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.

Who is he talking about? Sara and Hagar, and Isaac and Ishmael. Sara, the freewoman, with her son, Isaac. And Hagar, the bondwoman, with her son Ishmael.

What he is going to do now it go back to the Law of Moses, the Torah, and what he is going to show from that text what it actually says.

Galatians 4:23 NKJV - But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,

“...according to the flesh” just means like everyone else procreates. But “through promise” refers to the miraculous birth according to the promise that God made to Abraham. “At this time next year you shall have a child,” and that time the next year, Isaac was born (Genesis 17:21).

The other miraculous birth was Christ’s birth with Mary. So we have the old lady birth, and the virgin birth. Both are miracles.

Galatians 4:24 NKJV - which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar;

Galatians 4:25 NKJV - for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children;

And what he means by that is that the city of Jerusalem was under the control of the Jewish people who were under the Law. And they considered that to be their covenant and their right to keep the land... even though they weren’t exactly keeping the Law.

Galatians 4:26 NKJV - but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Galatians 4:27 NKJV - For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband."

That’s a quote from Isaiah 54:1.

Galatians 4:28 NKJV - Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

When he says “we” here, he doesn’t just mean we Jews, but “we” Gentiles who have been included in the promises.

Galatians 4:29 NKJV - But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.

What does that mean? The Jewish people who considered themselves under the Law were persecuting Christians who did not consider themselves to be under the Law, but who were really the recipients of the promises through the new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah through Christ.

Galatians 4:30 NKJV - Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

That's a quote from Genesis 21:10. God is saying here that those Jewish people that are so fixated on the Law, that think that they can justify themselves by keeping the Law, they are like Hagar and Ishmael. And what is God saying? Throw them out of the inheritance.

The bottom line is, without Christ, even God's own covenant people, will not receive the inheritance of the kingdom.

Galatians 4:31 NKJV - So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Galatians 5:1 NKJV - Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

Do you see that? **Do not** be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. It only leads to condemnation.

## **Galatians 5**

So, recapping a little, the book of Galatians was written specifically because there was a problem, and Paul was addressing that problem. It was a group of Jewish Christians from the Jerusalem Church going around behind Paul on his missionary journey trying to convince newly converted Christians that they also needed to follow the Law. Ultimately saying that it wasn't enough to be sanctified by Christ's sacrifice on the cross but they needed the Law of Moses as well.

Where does it show that the Gentiles were brought into the covenant with Abraham, in the book of Galatians that we have looked at so far? Galatians 3:16, 3:26-29.

Galatians 5:1 NKJV - Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

The 'yoke of bondage' is obviously the Law. And Paul, in Romans chapter 7, talked about how it was impossible for him to keep the Law; and how it condemned him because he couldn't keep it.

Well, now that is gone because we have a new contract with God through His Son, Jesus, the Christ.

Now, let me ask you something. Read verse 1 again. Does that mean it is wrong to observe the Jewish festivals? Or anything like that? Is Paul saying, "Don't touch any of that stuff. Leave it alone?" No. Of course not. The Law showed how to be perfect in the eyes of God. It just couldn't be done by anyone but the Christ. They just can't use it as a means of salvation or pleasing God.

Things like the Jewish feasts have so much prophetic significance and give us God's original calendar as a timeline for biblical events. They should, in fact, observe these things to serve as a memorial of the things that God has done in the past. Because people tend to forget God if everything is going well with them. Sometimes almost immediately.

For example, the dietary laws, is it morally sinful to eat pork? I know it seems so if it is prepared just right. No. Then why did God tell the Jews not to eat pork? It is because of the symbolism involved. The Law was given as a teacher. It said so in chapter 3. So you need to ask, what does 'you can eat that, but you can't eat that symbolize? Or what does 'don't touch a dead body' symbolize? These things are all symbolic of a pure heart. And a pure life. Separation between what is clean and unclean. And God's covenant people, the Hebrews, could only touch what was clean. What is dedicated to God.

It is a moral story that they actually acted out every day when they prepared their foods. All the feasts have moral teachings in them that are fulfilled in the New Testament. Scripture says that these things were a shadow of things to come (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1). They are a shadow in that they are allegories. It helped to serve to put it in the Jewish mind that there are things that are acceptable to God, and there are things that are not acceptable to God. The food has nothing to do with it. The food is just an illustration. The purpose was not just for health benefits, or that it is morally wrong to eat this or morally wrong to eat that. The purpose was to show a clear distinction. And

that God's people must leave some things behind and to accept other things that God has put before them.

We, parents, use these kinds of things with our kids when they are small. But then we expect them to mature and grow up. We don't let them run out into the street. Can you guess why? Sometime we even have to punish them severely to prevent them from running out there. But when they get older and understand more clearly, we don't worry about them crossing the street.

Galatians 5:2 NKJV - Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.

He is telling the Gentiles that if they are going to be circumcised as an adult, you are going under the Law, and they have basically made Christ of no use.

Galatians 5:3 NKJV - And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

Now this is actually a very stern warning. You can follow the Law, but you have to keep all 613 of them every day, all of your life. There are 613 commandments in the Law of Moses that are binding. And a great deal of them have the death penalty. They have harsh penalties. Essentially what Paul is saying is, if you are going to place yourself in that contract, the one that God made with Israel through Moses, all the curses go along with all the blessings (Deuteronomy 28 and 29).

You have to make a choice. You cannot be under both covenants, where one supersedes the other. You have to make a choice. It will be the same at the Great Tribulation. Those who are on the fence are going to have to choose one side or the other.

Galatians 5:4 NKJV - You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

You cannot remain in a covenant relationship with God through Christ and still put yourself under the Old Covenant. You have to choose. Verse 4 is explaining verse 2 here.

I want you to pay attention to this next phrase 'through the Spirit'. Paul starts talking about the Spirit throughout the rest of this chapter. He mentions it quite a few times. But you will notice that he is contrasting the old covenant and keeping the Law with a life in the Spirit. He puts these things in contrast to one another.

Why? Did the Holy Spirit of the Father have anything to do with the Law? Sure. In fact, when Moses told the children of Israel to build a tabernacle, when God gave him all of the instructions, it specifically said that God was going to pour out His Spirit on the craftsmen so they could fashion things just right (Exodus 35, if I remember correctly). So God would essentially be assisting them. Yes, God's Spirit worked in the Law.

But there is something different about this new covenant. What is different between the new and old covenants with regard to the Holy Spirit, which is a part of the Father? And the individual's relationship to the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is promised to dwell in those under the new covenant under Jesus, the Christ.

There is something else that is within our hearts besides the Spirit. But it is very much connected with the Spirit. Do you remember the promise from Jeremiah 31:31 about the New Covenant? Jeremiah wrote that God said, "I will write My law in their hearts" (Verse 33). And the New Testament even quotes that. With Hebrews 8:10 being an exact quote, and 2 Corinthians 3:3 making the same implication although not the exact same words.

This is the Law of Christ. In fact, it is termed the Law of Christ in Galatians 6:2. But I want you to notice how all the times that he talks about the Spirit throughout the rest of this chapter, which leads up to talking about the Law of Christ in chapter 6.

Galatians 5:5 NKJV - For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

What does that mean? What is the "hope of righteousness by faith" that we are waiting for? And it's by means of the Spirit? The Resurrection. At the Resurrection our salvation will be completed.

Did you know that your salvation is not complete yet? Because your salvation is of your spirit, and your body. And your body is still mortal now. You will die. One way to put it is that your spirit has been converted, but your body hasn't yet. And it won't be until the resurrection. And the resurrection is the hope of the Christian. That's what we look forward to. Although most modern Christians can't even tell you what it is that they believe in. They believe in pagan Greek mythology and don't even realize it... what is termed 'Immortality of the Soul'. The belief that when you die your spirit will either go straight to heaven or hell. Of course, no one has been judged yet so we'll have to come back for the judgment, the Great White Throne judgment, to see if we get to go to heaven, where we supposedly just were. And then we get our new glorified bodies? All

that dancing around from body to spirit to body, that's reincarnation, not resurrection. Anyway, that's a lesson for another day.

Galatians 5:6 NKJV - For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

When he uses that term, 'in Christ Jesus', he is talking about all those who are in that covenant that makes you a part of Christ. And Paul connected that with your baptism back in Galatians 3:27. Then from verse 28 he is talking about your "status" in Christ.

Galatians 5:7 NKJV - You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

In other words, you started out well, but now you are getting off track.

Galatians 5:8 NKJV - This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.

Now that is a powerful statement. This "persuasion" refers to the pressure that is being applied to you to, basically, leave the security of Christ in the New Covenant, and put yourself under the Law. This whole line of reasoning is not coming from the One who calls you, which is Christ. In other words, it's coming from somewhere else. And I think he means it demonic... the thing that is undermining the Gospel of Christ.

Galatians 5:9 NKJV - A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

What does that mean? This is an illustration. But a very important one. You put a little speck of leaven in some flour and it works its way through the entire thing. In other words, if you allow a little bit of this wrong teaching in the church, it's going to infect the whole place. Do you think the devil stops at the door of the church?

Galatians 5:10 NKJV - I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

Galatians 5:11 NKJV - And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.

Paul is being persecuted by who? The Jews. Everywhere he went, he went into the synagogues and preach Christ, for the Old Testament, I might add, and what would happen? Some might receive the message, but the majority would turn against him. He got ran out of town several times. I know exactly how he feels. Jesus did too, in fact. People just do not like to hear the truth. 2 Timothy 4:3... they will NOT endure sound doctrine. Some things never change.



In any case, it was the Jews that were causing all the problems that the Gospel had in the early years. So he is saying, if I am still preaching what the Jews are preaching, then why am I being persecuted?

Galatians 5:12 NKJV - I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

Now this statement is actually very, crude, in Greek. It's comparing circumcision, you know what happens at circumcision, it's a crude way that Paul is saying that he wished they would just castrate themselves.

Galatians 5:13 NKJV - For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:14 NKJV - For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

What does He mean by that? Not the phrase, but that all the Law is fulfilled in it. Without thinking you will obey the spirit of the Law itself.

You know, Jesus met a lawyer. And the lawyer, or scribe, asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus asked him what was written in the Law? And he told Jesus "...To love the Lord God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:26-27). Well, Jesus commended him for that. He didn't say, "Well, you have to keep the feasts, you have to be circumcised, you gotta' do this, you gotta' do that." No. What this man had done is that he had come to a mature understanding of the reasoning behind the Law. And what the Law was really for. It wasn't intended to be a big long list of do's and don'ts. It was intended to bring a person to maturity, in order to shape his or her character into something more like God's character. He gave Jesus an answer that show a mature understanding of what the Law was intended to do.

What the Apostle Paul is doing, is that he is simply carrying that over and telling Christians that this is really how you should view the Law.

Galatians 5:15 NKJV - But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

Galatians 5:16 NKJV - I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Now this is the second time he has mentioned the Spirit. He said this right after he mentioned “biting and devouring” one another. He was warning them about this. And the reason was because when you get a legalistic mindset, where you read all the rules and check them all off as you go, when you have that kind of mindset, what happens in a church? It becomes critical and judgmental. Oh, he’s not doing this. Or she’s doing that. Look at his hair, or her dress. And in some cases, if they would just ask or actually listen instead of thinking they have it all right, or criticizing or judging what someone says without actually understanding first the full meaning behind it. He says that you can devour one another.

But then he says, instead, or in contrast to all of that, walk in the spirit. In other words, walk in the mature understanding of these things, that the Holy Spirit brings by God writing Christ’s laws in our hearts. So, if you walk in the Spirit you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

This is actually very hard to find in today’s Christians. Although they constantly say that they are walking in the Spirit and acting in love. They can’t discern between arrogance and truth. Being blunt with the truth sounds crude to them. Acting in the Spirit would mean digging deeper for the understanding of what was said by someone and being patient for a complete understanding before making a judgment, criticizing, or gossiping. They constantly make comments like, “It’s how they live their life.” My guess is, they really don’t know how the other person lives their lives.

I have seen, in every church I have ever been in, people who have spend 30 years in church, and are absolutely, without a doubt, still sucking momma’s milk. They are still not eating meat. Yet they look at others as if it were turned around and they were the meat eaters.

So there is a different way of approaching life. Rather than being legalistic and checking off all of the do’s and don’ts, instead, to have the Spirit of God to change your heart, which is supposed to happen at your conversion, although you are supposed to continue to mature; so that you are walking by these principles that are intended. And when you do that, you don’t need all of those regulations.

But you know, verse 16, is an important scripture for someone who is struggling with some things in their life.

Galatians 5:16 NKJV - I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

There is a promise there.

Galatians 5:17 NKJV - For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

So according to this verse you have something that hinders you from following the principles of the Laws of Christ, which are found in the Sermon on the Mount.

You ought to put a note in your Bible next to verse 17 to compare with Romans chapter 7; because Romans expands a great deal on that concept. Actually, so does chapter 8.

Now this next verse, 18, is a conditional statement.

Galatians 5:18 NKJV - But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The New Covenant, which has the indwelling Spirit, the old law has no jurisdiction over you anymore.

Who are the ones led by the Spirit, by the way? Christians. At least it is certainly true that Christians are supposed to be led by the Spirit. They are the only ones that have the Holy Spirit. But are all true Christians led by the Spirit? No. Because they are not really willing to give over control of their lives completely. They are “holding out”, so to speak. You have to have an attitude of submission to the One you are following.

As a Christian, you do have the Spirit, but you also have a choice because you also have your old nature as well. Before we become Christians, all we have is our old nature. It has some good as well as bad characteristics. When we become a Christian we receive the Holy Spirit which is a strong influence in our lives. It will cause you to feel guilty for doing something sinful and will call you back. But you do still have free will and you have to choose.

From the point of becoming a Christian, according to Paul in Romans 7, we have a constant struggle in our lives between our old nature and our new nature, which is driven by the Holy Spirit of God. And it is up to us which nature we allow to dominate us. Is that not what the term “grieving the Holy Spirit” refers to? It is. We have the choice to walk in the Spirit, or walk in the flesh. If we continue to walk in the flesh, the Spirit of God will continue to call you back. But if you keep walking in the flesh and ignoring the Spirit, there comes a time when God will “give you up” as it says in Romans chapter 1... and other places as well. Look at Hebrew 3:12-14.

Hebrews 3:12 NKJV - Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in **departing from the living God;**

Hebrews 3:13 NKJV - but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," **lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**

Hebrews 3:14 NKJV - For we have become partakers of Christ **if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,**

And you see that word 'hardened' in verse 13. That too is a process. It refers to the hardening of your heart. It is no longer sensitive to the Holy Spirit, because of continual sin.

But at the Resurrection, that old nature is going to be gone. We won't have that pull contrary to the Spirit of God anymore.

That's why our salvation is a process. It's not completed yet. If it were completed we would never sin. But we do sin because sometimes we resist the Spirit of God. Sometimes we just do it out of ignorance. But sometimes we know better and we still do wrong.

And I have heard the question, at the point in time when our salvation is complete and God does away with that old nature, do we still have free will? Of course you do. You have always had free will and you will always have free will, but the circumstances of your choices change. Before you are presented with the Gospel, you have a free will but you don't have the choice to receive the Gospel because you have never heard the Gospel. Right? So your circumstances have changed.

Now when your old nature is taken away in the Resurrection, you have no pull in that direction anymore. There is no temptation. You still have a free choice, but you are not going to choose something you are not tempted to do. Our current body is mortal and has the old nature, even with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But at the resurrection, we have a new glorified body, which is the same as our old, yet made perfect. No flaws. No blemishes. No fat. Just perfection in immortality. Although we are never totally immortal, because we still have to continually eat of the Tree of Life to live forever (Genesis 3:22 and Revelation 2:7). It's not that when we are resurrected that we are really immortal. The Bible says that only God is immortal (1 Timothy 6:15-16). We will not be independent of God, but rather always dependent on God. Because He is the one who will give us the fruit off of the Tree of Life, that we can eat and live forever. That is exactly what the Bible teaches (Revelation 22:2, 22:14).

So our body will be transformed and in the transforming of our body, our human nature is transformed. So yes, in our Christian life, from the time of baptism to the time of the resurrection, we should be going through a process of conforming our lives to Christ. That will be a process. And we should always be moving forward in that process. In other words, we should be gradually leaving behind the things that displease God. And as we are obedient to the Spirit as we are led, and we leave behind those things that are displeasing to God, He shows us more things. And the closer you get to the light, the more of the filth you can see in your own life. Some things that displease God, as a new Christian, you may think it is no big deal, but as you get closer and closer to Him and start seeing his holiness, and righteousness in contrast to yourself, you see that small thing as, even being offensive to you now. And that is when you clean up the little things. We are all in a process.

However, don't get the idea that just because we are in a process that we are not quite sons of God yet. Or if we die that our eternal destiny is not secure yet. It is secure from the moment of your salvation... the moment that you become a follower of Christ. When you receive the Holy Spirit, your destiny is settled. You are legally God's child even though sometimes you may not be an entirely obedient child. You will live with Him in His kingdom as long as you don't forsake Him.

I want to clarify that. When we say that salvation is a process, some people get the idea of what the Catholic Church teaches, that your destiny is not secure until you stand before the judgment. That is not what the Scriptures teach. So that have a long to-do list that you have to do to make sure that your destiny is settled. No. Your destiny is settled when you leave that baptistry. The only caveat is that you remain in Christ. You don't have to worry that if you screw up sometimes that you are no longer a child of God.

That's where the Catholics came up with purgatory. The whole idea of purgatory is that even after your death you need to pay for some of your sins, and not just your past sins, but the part of your nature that is corrupt needs to be purged out of you. But the Bible says that the blood of Christ does all of that. So the whole concept of purgatory undermines what Christ did on the cross. There is no such doctrine in the Bible. It was made up to support other wrong teachings.

Look at 1 John 5:12-13.

1 John 5:12 NKJV - He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

1 John 5:13 NKJV - These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may **know** that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

And that is exactly what the Scriptures teach throughout the New Testament. You can know with confidence, without a doubt, that no matter what happens to you, your destiny is secure. You don't have to go to purgatory or do a long list of to-dos to secure your destiny. Your destiny is secure the moment you say yes to Christ. Again, the only caveat is that you remain in Christ. Because that's where your security is. If you leave Him, if you depart from Him, of your own free will, and you leave Christ, and the message of the Gospel, then your security is gone. Your inheritance is gone. Your destiny is gone. That is so clear in the book of Hebrews. And other places as well; but Hebrews repeatedly points this out again and again. Jesus Christ is the one who receives the inheritance (Psalm 2) and He will share that inheritance with us. But you must remain in Him. No one can take it from you, but you can give it up of your own free will. If you step outside of Christ, there is nothing out there but flames.

Let's continue reading.

Galatians 5:19 NKJV - Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

Galatians 5:20 NKJV - idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

Galatians 5:21 NKJV - envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

That's a pretty powerful statement. Obviously that doesn't mean that if you have done one of these things in your life, that you will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. It says if you **practice** such things.

All of those things just listed are things that stem from our human nature. He calls them the works of the flesh. The Holy Spirit is there to whisper to us when we are tempted by the flesh. He serves as a reminder that we now have a higher calling so we will choose not to give into that temptation... that old nature.

Now he is going to contrast those things with the "fruit of the Spirit" in the next verse. First of all, what is fruit? It's the product. When you plant a tomato plant you expect to get tomatoes. So what is produced by a life that is being led by the Spirit. So he is going

to gives us the things that are the product of walking in the Spirit. It's the external evidences of it.

Galatians 5:22 NKJV - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
Galatians 5:23 NKJV - gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Does that mean that every person who is "saved," for lack of a better word, is going to be producing all of these things. And if they aren't producing all of these things are they failing as a Christian? Is that what he is saying? No? Why? The terminology of 'fruit' brings to mind the analogy of agriculture. You don't just plant something and leave it. You have to tend to it. And the fruit doesn't come instantly. In some cases, it can take years. It is only after the plant or tree matures does it produce fruit. And even then, the fruit that is produced first is kind of scrawny and not all that great. But the following year, with tending, it will produce some really good fruit.

It is the same way with the Spirit. It is a process. We receive the Spirit when we become a child of God, but there is still some work to do on the inside. It takes time. And we have to mature in the faith. But as the Spirit works on us, it prunes it's plants. And pruning can hurt.

I very often pray for God to help humble me. But I also always ask that He do it gently.

You know, you can compare these things, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. It absolutely relates to this.

We have the Holy Spirit because it is the counter to the desires of our flesh. Without the Spirit, we could not walk the life of a Christian. Conversion is a work of the Spirit in the heart.

Galatians 5:24 NKJV - And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Now this is not a one time thing. You have got to crucify your flesh, or your old nature, every day.

Galatians 5:25 NKJV - If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.  
Galatians 5:26 NKJV - Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

I think he says that because that seems to be the legalism of the Law.

Before going on to chapter 6, my wife has a question or comment about verse 21.

Galatians 5:19 NKJV - Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

Galatians 5:20 NKJV - idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

Galatians 5:21 NKJV - envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Some people might look at that last clause, "...those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God," and think, if I am a Christian and I do these things then I won't inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul is saying that not those who have done these things, even as a Christian, as a one-time deal, but that if this characterizes your life then you have shown the indications of someone who has turned their back on Christ. Or never actually had the Spirit of God to begin with. Paul is assuming they do have the Spirit and are true Christians, but when he is talking to the collective group, whose lives are characterized that way.

The New King James version makes it clearer by saying that it is "...those who **practice** these things..." not just do these things, or have done these things. In the King James it makes it sound like if you did these one time. The word practice implies an unrepentant attitude. Actually, not just implies, but is unrepentant. Because when a person is living like this and they are a true Christian, the Spirit of God is not going to leave them in peace. The Spirit is going to be hammering them. And if they keep resisting the Spirit, they are going to keep hardening their heart. The Spirit is going to force them to fall away, or get back on the right track. It may take a while. The Spirit can work on somebody for a long time, sometimes for years.

What Paul is saying here is that you have two paths. One path is envy, murder, drunkenness, all these kinds of things, and those of you who choose that path, the end result of that path, if you look in the far distance to where that path goes, it does not go into the kingdom of God. But if you choose the life of walking in the Spirit, a different path, it goes to the inheritance and the kingdom of God. So there is always the warning to stay on the right path. Because, over time, you are going to harden your heart. And the



farther you go down that path, the harder it is to get back. So don't even take the first step.

The other dimension of this discussion is Paul's warning that while God's grace is sufficient to cover our mistakes, is that we are not to abuse that grace. And there is a teaching that is so common in most Christian denominations. Its a sort of easy "believism" kind of a gospel that teaches that once you make a profession of faith in Christ that your destiny is secure no matter what you do. The "Once Saved Always Saved" crowd. The problem with that teaching is, number one, it's not true, number two, it gives you a false sense of security when you are in sin.

We have seen this first hand in our own Bible study with a group and someone was visiting. As we were going through the book of Hebrews and were reading some passages, from some questions that came up on the subject, (Hebrews 6:4-8, Hebrews 10:26-31, and Hebrews 12:14-17) this girl got very upset. She had been taught in a Baptist church, as I was, that you can never lose your salvation no matter what you do after accepting Christ. And there are many other scriptures throughout the entire New Testament that make the same statements. But these kinds of churches tend to not read those parts of the Bible. Look at John 15:1-6 and tell me what you think that means. Or Colossians 1:21-23; 1 Corinthians 9:23-27; Romans 11:17-22; and 2 Peter 3:14-18. Notice the conditional statements, and the requirement of continuing, or abiding, in the faith. And there are more implications stated throughout the New Testament. How do you ignore so many passages that state something so plainly? Yet every Christian denomination has their "sacred cows" and just simply ignore those parts of the Bible. Daisy had a question on Romans 6:5-6.

Romans 6:5 NKJV - For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

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

It sounds like we were crucified with Christ, but at the same time it is an ongoing thing?

Actually, Romans 6 shows both of those ideas. So let's look at it. We'll start in verse 1. Actually, look at the last verse of chapter 5.

Romans 5:21 NKJV - so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now what he has been talking about in chapter 5 is the concept that Daisy is talking about, that we have been saved, our flesh has been crucified, all of that. We are restored to Christ. Chapter 6 then deals with how do we live after that. And what kind of influences are we going to deal with.

Romans 6:1 NKJV - What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

As you can see, there is certainly a choice here. Even though we have been crucified with Christ, do we still have a choice to continue in sin or not? Yes, we do. But then he says, should we, you know, live in sin because our sins are paid for? Christ paid for all our sins, let's go live in sin. Then Paul says,

Romans 6:2 NKJV - Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Now when he uses that phrase 'died to sin' he is talking about your conversion. And he is actually talking about your baptism because he is going to mention it in the next verse.

Romans 6:3 NKJV - Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

Verse 3 is explaining verse 2 when we died to sin.

Romans 6:4 NKJV - Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

When you go down into the water, you are buried... buried into death. Christ was crucified, we were not crucified, isn't that right? When are we crucified with Christ? In our baptism. And it is done in a symbolic way. Christ was crucified and put in a tomb. So we are symbolically entering the tomb with Him. That's really what we are doing when we get baptized. We get into a tomb. The baptistery is a tomb. The water is death. But then we come up out of the water, symbolizing the resurrection.

Romans 6:5 NKJV - For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

Now that word "likeness" means symbolic. And that is what baptism is. It is a symbol of Christ's death. And that is what he is talking about. If we have been united to Christ

through the symbol of baptism, which is a symbol of his death, we also united to Christ through the symbol of baptism by coming out of the water, which is symbolic of His resurrection.

Now those words “in the likeness” in this part of the passage are not actually in the original text. It simply says in the Greek, “we shall be in the resurrection”. He is tying the resurrection with baptism. And there really is a regeneration of you inside. And you really did receive the Holy Spirit. You didn’t just go through the motions.

Then look what he says after that.

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

“Our old man **was** crucified with Him,” it was crucified when we went into the water. “That the body of sin might be done away with,” that’s the purpose.

Romans 6:7 NKJV - For he who has died has been freed from sin.

We are dying in a symbolic way. Verse 8... and he is still talking about our baptism. It’s a symbolic death.

Romans 6:8 NKJV - Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

Again, this is the second time, he is tying the resurrection with your baptism. Assuming it is a genuine baptism in every sense of the word. But he doesn’t just leave it here. He goes on to talk about the struggle that we are going to be faced with. Look at verse 11.

Romans 6:11 NKJV - Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In other words, when you come out of that baptistery, you need to have a new frame of mind. And your new frame of mind is, “I have died with Christ. My old nature is dead.”

Now did it really die completely? No. It’s a new beginning. But when we are baptized, according to Acts 2:38, we receive the Holy Spirit. And by the Holy Spirit coming into us we have now received the potential to crush our old nature when it shows its nasty head. Before we had no way of doing that. That is why Paul said, “I die daily” in 1 Corinthians 15. We need to crush our old nature every single day.

Yes. There was a one-time event. But there is also a daily event. And now we have the power to actually fight back our “old man”.

Steven commented that the last two clauses in verse 6, “that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” It is in the subjunctive mood in Greek, so does not give an absolute but the intention. It is not just a possibility, but what God intends to happen because of this action.

Now go down to verse 15.

Romans 6:15 NKJV - What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

Romans 6:16 NKJV - Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

Again he is talking about that path that you have to take every single day. One path is characterized by the works of the flesh, Paul said back in Galatians, the other path is being led by the Spirit of God. So you always have that choice. Every day you've got that choice. He is pointing to the end results in these paths.

Romans 6:17 NKJV - But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

And what is he talking about there? You responded to the Gospel with an act of faith, which is your baptism.

Romans 6:18 NKJV - And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Go down to verse 22.

Romans 6:22 NKJV - But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

“Having been...” there he uses the perfect tense, a past action with continuing results... and the “end, everlasting life”, the end of walking that path with the Spirit is everlasting life. Because if you continue in the Spirit you will not go down the path that leads to destruction.

This next verse is so misused in today's churches. People think this is the verse you use for how to tell people to come to Christ. It's not. It is talking about Christians. Verse 23 is talking about baptized Christians who start following the wrong path.

Romans 6:23 NKJV - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

“For,” that means because, “the wages of sin is death,” that is, the wages of following those things that Paul talked about in Galatians, fornication, uncleanness, envy, murder, etc. If your life is characterized by that, it is going to lead you away from God and into the Lake of Fire.

What he is doing is contrasting the two destinies of the two paths.

## **Galatians 6**

Galatians 6:1 NKJV - Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass,” now here, what he is talking about is if we see somebody in our midst, who is a baptized Christian and he has been following Christ, but he starts getting tangled up in some of those things, some of those works of the flesh, you need to restore him. Some say just kick him out. No. You are to try to restore him.

Also I want you to notice the word ‘overtaken’. Overtaken doesn't mean he had one slip of the tongue. It means that he is being driven by this sin rather than him having control of it and being able to put it down. And that is what happens with sin. If you give in a little, it start to gain control of your life. If you give in just once, it is easier the next time. Just don't go there. Unless God directly intervenes or some Christian brothers and sisters intervene, you will end up on that wrong path.

What does spiritual mean? It is an adjective derived from the noun spirit. There was, in the early church, because of Gnosticism serious salvation issues within the church. Gnosticism taught that man was a dual being. It is called dualism. Man has a spirit and a body, and they are completely separate and distinct entities. And they say that the body is corrupt because it is made of matter. That is why they say and/or believe the man Jesus and the spirit Christ are two different entities. That the Christ came down from

heaven to live in the man Jesus at the time of His baptism, then it left Jesus when He was crucified and died, and went back to “the heavenly realm”.

In their theology, someone could actually indulge themselves in sin, like fornication with temple prostitutes and it wouldn't corrupt their soul. In other words, they can do anything they want in the flesh, even murder, and it was alright because it was only their flesh doing it. That was just their mentality. People can find ways to justify anything if they want to.

That is how the modern church actually follows so many pagan practices within the Christian church today and call it Christianity. If they are “Berean” enough, (I reference Acts 17:11, because that is the way every Christian should be, although nearly none are.) If they are “Berean” enough to actually listen to the truth and/or research for themselves what the Bible actually says, but they are comfortable doing it the way they currently are, they find ways to justify what they know is wrong. I have experienced it firsthand right here in Timpson among a few actual pastors.

In any case, back to the Gnostic point of view for a moment... these were the group that John wrote the book of 1 John about. To warn true Christians of the influence on Gnosticism within the church assemblies. John actually says, that anyone who denies that Christ became flesh, is an antichrist (see John 1:14 and 1 John 4:1-3). The entire Bible talks about clean and unclean, holy and unholy things **cannot** abide together. Yet modern Christians say that Jesus was fully divine and fully human at the same time. It is a doctrine that was brought forth by the Catholic Church and is called Hypostatic Union, which is just a fancy way of saying “two natures” theory. Modern Christians can't even bring themselves to contemplate this false doctrine due to their own presuppositions based on what they have been taught for so long, even though it is a logical contradiction from the start.

Galatians 6:2 NKJV - Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

What is the Law of Christ? It's the ten commandments of Christ. You know Christ was the new Law giver. Moses brought the Law from God for Israel. Christ is the new Law giver that Moses spoke about in Deuteronomy 18.

Go back in your Bible to Deuteronomy 18 for just a moment. This is Moses speaking.

Deuteronomy 18:15 NKJV - “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,

Deuteronomy 18:16 NKJV - “according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’

Horeb is the place where they received the Law on Mount Sinai.

Deuteronomy 18:17 NKJV - "And the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good.

Deuteronomy 18:18 NKJV - 'I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

“A prophet like Moses,” means what? The one who brings God’s law. The Lawgiver. That is what Moses was best known for.

Deuteronomy 18:19 NKJV - 'And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.

Now that scripture right there is quoted several times in the New Testament and applied to Christ. In fact, when John the Baptist came the Jewish leaders asked him if he was Elijah or are you “that prophet”, that is the unnamed prophet like Moses. He said, “No.” But then he identified Christ.

You know, in the book of John, Jesus is quoted, many times, as saying, “the words I say are not Mine, but the words of the Father.” So He was alluding back to that passage.

Go over to Isaiah 42. And this passage that we are going to read is quoted in Matthew 12 and applied to Christ.

Isaiah 42:1 NKJV - "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

“My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights!” Who do you think that Servant is? As if you didn’t know. “I have put My Spirit upon Him;” When did that happen? At His baptism, in the form of a dove, by John the Baptist. “He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. That would be us.

Isaiah 42:2 NKJV - He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

He isn't going to be like John the Baptist screaming the message out loud. What did Jesus do? He went aside and talked to those people who wanted to hear. He didn't go out broadcasting up and down the streets. People came to Him and He talked to them.

Isaiah 42:3 NKJV - A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.

“A bruised reed He will not break,” that is something very easy to break. In other words, He is going to be very gentle.

Isaiah 42:4 NKJV - He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law."

The “coastlands” refer to everyone else outside of Israel... the coastlands shall wait for His law. That is Christ's Law. That is the Law of Christ that Paul is referring to in Galatians 6:2. And it is the law that Jesus delivered on a mountain just like Moses did... the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5-7. It is the most important passage in your Bible. It tells you how to be a Christian. You need to be very familiar with it. It is the Law of Christ. There are **Ten Commandments of Jesus** in it.

1. Control your tongue (Matthew 5:21-26).
2. Guard your eyes against lust (Matthew 5:27-32).
3. Keep your promises (Matthew 5:33-37).
4. Defeat evil with good (Matthew 5:39-48).
5. Don't be arrogant (Matthew 6:1-18).
6. Don't covet, have faith (Matthew 6:19).
7. Do not judge (Matthew 7:1).
8. Beware of Dogs and Pigs (Matthew 7:6).
9. Ask for what you need (Matthew 7:7-11).
10. Do to others as you would have them do to you (Matthew 7:12).

If you don't know what the Law of Christ is, you are not following Christ. How can you follow someone if you don't know what they said?

Galatians 6:3 NKJV - For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

This is the opposite of humility. And the elders in a church should look out for this one. If they think someone is “self-seeking” or “boasting”, to borrow Paul's term, for



themselves, the elders should get together with that person and spend some time to find out if this is truly the case, or maybe they just misunderstand this person's blunt truthfulness, because this characteristic should disqualify that person from a leadership position. And not to use this as an excuse for not agreeing with that person on some issue. That would go back to "justifying" yourself for making an incorrect decision that we just talked about concerning the Gnostics.

Galatians 6:4 NKJV - But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

Anyone want to take a stab at that verse? What does he mean? A clue is that it is related to the previous verse. You judge yourself. Where is your focus? Is your attention focused on other people's faults so that you can exalt yourself? Or is your attention focused on your faults. If it's on your own faults, it is going to humble you. If it's on other people's faults, it is going to make you proud and arrogant. If you focus on your own faults, what does it say, then you will have rejoicing. Think Matthew 7:1.

The way to overcome the "the speck in your brother's eye, and the plank in your own" is not to compare yourself to others, but to Christ alone. If you can't compare yourself to Christ, then there is still work to do. We should strive to imitate Christ. He is the example.

If someone says that they are a good Christian, you should respond, compared to who? And by what standard? If it's, for example, society's standard, maybe society is wrong. Jesus should be the standard because He is the only One that was "without sin" even though He was "tempted in all points as we were," to quote Hebrews 4:15.

And that is the verse that should tell you that that "two natures theory" can't be true. Divinity cannot be tempted. Anyway, let's continue.

Galatians 6:5 NKJV - For each one shall bear his own load.

Now look at this verse compared to verse 2.

Galatians 6:2 NKJV - Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Verse 2 says, "bear one another's burdens", verse 5 says, "bear his own load". Now which is it? Do you bear your own load? Or do you bear another's? You shouldn't have the expectation that someone else is going to look out for you. If the entire church were bearing their own load, yet reaching out to others in need with humility, we would have

a completely different Christianity. We would have the Christianity of Jesus as handed down by the Apostles and only **one** denomination.

I think Paul is saying there is a balance here. That way no one can say, “you guys are supposed to bear my load, so I’m not going to do anything.”

Galatians 6:6 NKJV - Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

This verse is used by a lot of preachers to say that they ought to be paid well. Maybe the “Do not be deceived” in the next verse should be at the end of verse 6.

Galatians 6:7 NKJV - Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

The word “sow” means to plant. It’s a farming term. And whatever he plants, that is what he is going to harvest. It is a principle that applies across all of creation. But why does he say, “God is not mocked” when he makes that statement? You are not going to reap what you did not sow. You are not going to fool God. He is not going to bend the rules for you. What you reap, you sow. You cannot expect to get around the principles that He has laid down, which is, what you plant, you harvest. If you plant corruption, you will harvest corruption.

Galatians 6:8 NKJV - For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

That an explanation of verse 7.

Galatians 6:9 NKJV - And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

This is a very important verse to those who are discouraged. A lot of times, life seems difficult and long... and the ‘pay off’, so to speak, for living a godly life seems so far away sometimes. But we can’t get weary. We can’t quit. We have to keep moving. This is the battle. You cannot give up, Marine. Remember the brotherhood. The promises that God made are true.

Galatians 6:10 NKJV - Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

This is a very important verse when we are talking about charity. Because, priority is our own people. We have limited resources to help others, right? The top priority is our own. Those of us who are members of the assembly who are in need. That's our number one priority. If we have something extra and want to help someone that is not a believer, fine. But our priority has to be our own. But you do have to use wisdom.

Galatians 6:11 NKJV - See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!

We've talked about this verse before.

Galatians 6:12 NKJV - As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

Now he is going back to the whole point of writing this epistle. Which is Jewish Christians were going around saying that the Apostle Paul's message was incomplete. The Law was also necessary. "...only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ." So their zealotry for the Law of Moses, that they were pretending to possess, was driven by something that was not honorable. They did not want to be looked down on by other unbelieving Jews. They wanted the status of being a 'righteous' person in the synagogue. They didn't want to be looked down upon on what the other Jews considered to be false teaching about Christ. They didn't believe in Jesus.

Galatians 6:13 NKJV - For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

So they can say, "Look, I'm making converts. I'm getting these people circumcised."

Galatians 6:14 NKJV - But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Now how could Paul boast in the cross of Christ? Think about that? Did he have anything to do with the crucifixion? Was Paul even there? Did he help God with His plan? If you are going to boast in what somebody else has done, what are you doing? You're saying, "I didn't do anything." I have nothing personal to boast about. You are putting your own works in the trash, because the only works that have any value is what Christ did. It's like what John the Baptist did, stepping down (John 3:30). It's not about you. It's about Him.

Then Paul finishes the verse saying that worldly things are dead to him and he is dead to the world. The word 'world' is used as a metaphor for his old lifestyle. Just like what we talked about in Romans 6.

Galatians 6:15 NKJV - For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

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

The 'rule' refers to the previous verse. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, **but** a new creation." There is a contrast between two ideas. One that circumcision avails something. Circumcision is important as a symbol that I am keeping the Law. So it includes, not only the act of circumcision, but in the whole concept of keeping the Law in order to be righteous before God; as opposed to, a new creation. What is that? If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17.

2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

What does that mean? It means a changed heart... a changed character... a change on the inside that works its way out. So what you have is a contrast between an external thing, and an internal one. Salvation is a transformation. It's not a reformation. It's not just an improvement. Reformation is something that you decide to do for yourself. You are going to change your behavior. That is not what the Gospel is about; although we should after we're transformed; But salvation is a transformation and it's supernatural and God does it on the inside. And after you become a Christian, you find that your desires become different than before you were a Christian.

So what he is saying to you in verse 15 is that there are two paths, and this one over here is of no value to you as a Christian. But following Christ, that is the path to take. So then he says, verse 16, as many as walk according to this rule, he says, "peace and mercy upon them, **and** upon the Israel of God."

What does he mean by that, "the Israel of God"? Does he mean the whole nation of Israel? No. Because he qualifies it **of God**. Is the whole nation of Israel **of God**? Belonging to God? No. Because most of them don't believe in Christ. Is he including us in that statement? Yes. Remember what he said at the end of chapter 3? By the way, God calls Israel His firstborn son in Exodus as a collective whole. But much of Israel has been cut off, and many others have been grafted in Paul said in Romans. What about

those believers that were grafted in? Look at Galatians 3:26... and he is writing to Gentiles.

Galatians 3:26 NKJV - For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:27 NKJV - For as many of you as were (Does is say circumcised?) baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Is Christ a Jew? Yes. Is He Israel? Is He the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Absolutely. If you are in Him, does that make you in Israel? Of course it does. And verse 29 says so...

Galatians 3:28 NKJV - There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one **in** Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:29 NKJV - And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

So when he says, in verse 16 of chapter 6, "...as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, **and upon the Israel of God.**" What he is doing is calling the whole collective body of believers, whether they are strictly Jews or not. He is calling that whole collective body, Israel. And why does he call them Israel? Because it was through Abraham, Isaac, then Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, that the promises will be received. Therefore we inherit the promises. Those who have been cut off do not inherit the promises.

Galatians 6:17 NKJV - From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Paul is talking about the abuse and persecution, the marks, he took for the Lord Jesus. He is making a contrast from what the others were doing with their false teaching in verse 12 and himself. They were doing it so they could escape persecution by the other Jews. What was Paul saying? "Look. I've got the marks." He had the scars for proof of the abuse that he took for his stance for truth.

If your leaders do not hold truth above everything else, get away from that church as fast as you can. If the absolute truth is not the main pursuit, then you will be lead astray.

Galatians 6:18 NKJV - Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

That's Paul signature line. He closes every epistle with it.