

GALATIANS CHAPTER ONE

Galatia was part of the country that is now called Turkey. Most of the people who lived in Galatia were Gentiles. The Gentile Christians in Galatia had believed the correct form of the gospel but some Jewish false teachers had visited them and corrupted the gospel. These Jews were jealous of Paul and they had spoken against him saying that he was not an apostle. Furthermore they taught that Christians still had to keep the Jewish laws. Paul wrote this letter to remind them of the truth and liberty that Jesus gives. The date of this letter is uncertain but is believed to be 51 AD or shortly thereafter. This would make it the first of the Pauline epistles. C.I. Schofield puts the date as 60 AD but none of the other forty eleven commentators agree with that date.

1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

Paul describes himself as an apostle. He does this in all of his letters where his authority has been questioned. Jesus Christ himself appointed me as an apostle as he did the original twelve. Keep in mind that Paul has seen the risen Savior and has been personally instructed by Him.

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

The churches in Galatia know Paul. He has been there at least once, and possibly twice, before.

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

This verse starts a prayer for peace for the Galatian churches. The lost world doesn't realize and Christians forget, that we are enemies of God while we are lost. God grants us peace from Him when we are saved.

4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

Jesus chose to die because of our sins and for our sins. He did this in order to rescue us from this evil world. This verse was a direct reference back to Calvary. The entire reason for Jesus's death on that Roman cross was to deliver us from this present evil world.

5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

And God always deserves honor and greatness. We put it another way when we say “let us always give God the glory”.

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Now Paul starts to gently remind the Galatians that they have moved away from the gospel of grace that he preached and have voluntarily put themselves back under the law. This was the main reason for this letter. It is ironic that we still have those today that would put us back under some parts of the law. As far as Christians are concerned we are under the moral law but under no other parts. The moral law was in effect before there was a Jewish law and it is still in effect today. If you doubt this I refer you to Mark ch 12 vs 30-31 where Jesus reaffirmed nine of the ten commandments. Only keeping the Sabbath was left out. *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second [is] like, [namely]this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

Now there is a difference. You do not automatically go to hell if you break the moral law. Confession brings forgiveness.

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

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

9 As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Notice first that the Holy Spirit repeats himself. We know that when this happens he intends for us to “get it”. The phrase “let him be accursed” is serious and indicates that unless they turn away and confess then they are going to hell. Think for a moment of the number of churches to day that are preaching “another” gospel. Just for the sake of discussion let's assume 100 denominations. There are many more but of that one hundred there are ninety five preaching “another” gospel. Any preacher,teacher,individual or church that teaches anything other than belief, plus nothing and minus nothing,on the part of the sinner and “grace,through faith,”on the part of God,as far as

salvation is concerned, is preaching another gospel. In other words, anyone preaching that you must work, or pray through, or be good or who adds anything else to Church age salvation is preaching “another gospel” and, according to Paul, is damned to hell.

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

I am not trying to please you (Galatians). I want to please God and I would not be Jesus's servant if I were trying to please people.

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

In contrast to the false Jewish teachers, Paul did not learn about Jesus from someone else. Paul did not even learn about Jesus from the other apostles but learned directly from Jesus himself. After Paul met Jesus on the Damascus road he spent one on one time with Him in the desert of Sinai. Paul's message came directly from God himself.

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

I have always felt, with no scripture to back it up, that Paul's extreme suffering may have had to do with his former persecution of the Church. In other words, even though Paul was doing a great missionary work, God was giving him a taste of his own medicine. The scripture does say that you can do such bad things in your life that even though you are saved, “**the sword will never leave your house**”.

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Paul was an uncompromising lover of the Jewish law. He had studied the law and far outdistanced his classmates in his zeal for traditions. All that changed when he met the Lord on the Damascus road. There were hundreds of human commandments added to the Old Testament law and Paul kept them all until he was saved. Jesus himself clearly stated that the human traditions of man

caused the law to be too burdensome to keep.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

The but here is very strong and shows the contrast between law and grace.

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Paul is making the statement here that he has learned the message directly from God while in the desert of Sinai. He has replaced Peter as the chief apostle from Acts 12 onward. Notice that the risen Savior is referred to as flesh and bone and not flesh and blood, as flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God according to 1 Cor 15 vs 50.

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Paul is reinforcing the idea that he did not get his gospel from men. He did not even go up to Jerusalem to confer with the other apostles. He went to the desert with God and then back to Damascus. It amazes me that so many people are being misled today by following what was taught by Peter and the other apostles when Paul was given the gospel for us. In other words Paul had the latest word direct from Jesus himself.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

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

Verse nineteen is a short verse but it's loaded.

After at least three years in the ministry Paul finally went to Jerusalem to see Peter. He seemed to make it a point to not contact the others with the exception of James, the Lord's brother. It must bother the Catholics to be told over and over that Jesus had half brothers and sisters and that Peter had a mother in law. You only get those one way. This verse also makes it plain that Mary was not a perpetual virgin. Notice here that Paul did not go to get permission from Peter but rather to bring the Jerusalem apostles up to speed on what he was doing in regard to the Gentiles.

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

Paul felt compelled to write “I lie not” since his message was the direct opposite of what the Judaizers were teaching. I also believe it might just have been a manner of speech just as we might say “honestly”. It is important to note that we still have “Judaizers” in some of our churches today. If anyone is trying to have you keep any of the Jewish law except for the moral laws, which have always been in effect, mark that person and avoid them. Now, with that said, we are certainly free to keep other laws such as the Jewish dietary laws on a voluntary basis. We would all be healthier if we did keep those laws.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

Antioch is in Syria and Paul went to set up churches there. Why is this important? This is where they were first called Christians and is also the place where the Textus Receptus comes from. That is the manuscript the King James Bible is translated from. All the other false translations come from the Alexandrian text which came from Alexandria Egypt. What do we know about Egypt? It is a type of the world. So, if this was the only information we had on the various bibles it would be enough. The choice would be a manuscript from the church where they were first called Christians or a manuscript from Egypt, a type of the lost world.

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

23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

Paul had now changed from the foremost enemy of the early church to its leading preacher and missionary. He had changed from a murderer to a born again child of God. Because of this change he now carried the “good news” to all of the Gentile world. There have been many great preachers since Paul's time but all of these are standing on Paul's shoulders.

24 And they glorified God in me.

The Galatians recognized God's handiwork in Paul and glorified God for it.

GALATIANS CHAPTER TWO

Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas,

and took Titus with me also.

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

Fourteen years after his conversion Paul goes up to Jerusalem for the second time. This is a business trip and not for fellowship. He need to get some things settled between the Jewish church leadership and himself concerning adding works to salvation. He is taking Barnabas, who was well known and influential among the Jews. Indeed, it was Barnabas who had helped Paul get started in the ministry. None of the Christians trusted Paul but they knew, and trusted, Barnabas. He also took Titus who he later wrote one of the letters to. Titus was a Greek and Paul's message had obviously gotten round as none of the Jews insisted that he be circumcised. If you recall, this had been a big issue earlier. Paul's business on this trip was to settle the issue of whether or not works were a part of salvation. It is worth mentioning here that Paul met with the church leaders privately. There was no "big stink" created in the church as a whole. Now before we leave these three verses, notice the words "by revelation" in verse two. This indicates that Paul received his instructions directly from the Holy Spirit.

4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

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

Here Paul is doing a little name calling. He has no patience with these false teachers who have come in pretending to be Christians while teaching a works salvation. Those works would be things like keeping the law and everyone's favorite, circumcision.

6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

The thought here is, it does not matter to me who those leaders were. Men

cannot impress God. That is a serious thought. You can please God but no matter what you do you cannot impress him. Paul would have continued his ministry no matter what the church leaders said.

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;

Now the Jewish leaders realize that they are preaching slightly different gospels and are content to let Paul continue as he has been going. It seems to me, and this is just me, that this is the place where the Jewish leadership changed their message to conform to Paul's though this probably didn't happen overnight.

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

Peter had an effective ministry, from God, to the Jews but had not gone to the Gentiles. These two ministries were to be separate for a short while even though both were going in the same direction.

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

10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

In other words, Paul told off Peter in a face to face confrontation. This was necessary here, since, as Peter's sin was public, so must his correction be. I see nowhere here that Peter resisted. He knew he was wrong. This is ironic in that it was not the Gentile churches that were poor but rather the Jewish churches. Peter, James and John wanted the Gentile churches to continue their help.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

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

Paul is telling off Peter because Peter was being a hypocrite. He fellowshiped with the Gentile converts as long as other Jews couldn't see him but hid that fact when other Jews came around. It is important that even though these two groups had different styles of worship their gospel was the same. I believe it was Dr Ruckman who once said ,”If we locked all the local Independent Baptist pastors in a large room there would be sweet fellowship for an hour and by the end of the third hour blood would be running out under the door.“

These next four verses are very important.

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

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Paul is emphasizing over again the fact that we Christians are not under the law. This is true for most of the law but we still keep the moral law. The moral law was in effect from the beginning and was continued by Jesus himself. Here are the verses;Matthew 22:37 **Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 22:38 This is the first and great commandment.**

22:39 And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 22:40 On these two commandments

hang all the law and the prophets. Then Jesus put it in a slightly different way in John 13:34 **A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.** Now if you think about this you will see that if you keep the ten commandments, with the exception of keeping the Sabbath, then you are doing what Jesus instructed. All nine of those commandments are covered by those few verses. If now, we break any commandment we can go directly to the throne of God and ask forgiveness.

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

We have a living spirit and living soul in a dead body. Keep in mind that our bodies are not yet saved. This unsaved body is dying day by day. The Holy Spirit is stressing again that Christ lives in us.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Verse 21 is a no brainer. If we could be saved by keeping the law, or by anything else we do, then Christ did not need to die for our sins. In that case he died in vain. There are two things wrong with that. No one was ever saved by keeping the law and no one, I say again, no one, ever kept the whole law.

GALATIANS CHAPTER THREE

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

Paul is not being very diplomatic here. What a way to start this chapter.

He had told them the truth about Jesus Christ. They had understood about Jesus' death and resurrection and what it meant. But then they did not continue to follow the truth but returned to the law.

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

This is why we need to keep an eye on our new converts. Once a person is saved, and learns the truth, others will come in and try to pull them away with

false doctrine. There are churches right here in our area that never lead anyone to Christ but they surely will try to lead new converts away. Some of the worst are those that come in and tell the newbies that they aren't saved until they get the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speak with "other tongues". Now, we know that we get the Holy Spirit immediately when we are saved but a new convert often does not know that. There are many other ways new converts can be led away but that is probably the most often used one.

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Question here. Paul is asking how it is that they started under grace but are now going back to the law which never saved anyone. Looking back over two thousand years we can see that it isn't only the old Jewish laws we have to contend with but there are now all sorts of man made laws that have crept into the churches. One group keeps the Sabbath. One group says there are seven sacraments you must keep to be saved. Another group says you must be baptized for salvation. Yet another group says there must be no instrumental music in the church. These are just a few of the new man made laws.

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

Paul was referring to experiences, like the miracles that God did (verse 5). Paul found it hard to believe that the Christians would forget them. Personally witnessing miracles affects people deeply and isn't likely to be forgotten..

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

Paul is simply reminding them of the miracles they had witnessed him perform. He reminds them that he was never able to do miracles before his conversion on the Damascus road. All the miracles they had seen came from the Lord Jesus Christ and none of these miracles could be performed by the Judaizers.

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Salvation has been the same from day one. What worked for Abraham works

for us. Notice that Abraham was saved by believing just as we are. You all know John 3:16 **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.** And Romans 10:9-10 **That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

Except for confessing that Jesus is the only begotten son of God, we are required to believe just as Abraham was.

7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

That verse is loaded. Paul is saying that we Christians are now the children of Abraham. Now, we do not replace the Jews. They are still God's chosen people. What Paul means here is that no Jew is better than we are. In fact, we are better off than most Jews today since we have the Messiah and the God of Abraham.

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

This is a quote from Genesis twelve where God promised Abraham that in him would all nations be blessed. Notice also that now we are justified by our belief. If there is any doubt in your mind, we are the heathen spoken of there.

9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

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

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

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

In other words, make up your mind. You can live under grace and go to

heaven or try to live under the law, and fail, and go to hell. Paul doesn't mince words. Live by the Law instead of by faith and go straight to hell when you die. Faith and the Law have nothing to do with each other.

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

The law was a curse and produced death because humans could not keep it.

If a law had been given which we could keep then it would not have been necessary for Jesus to die. The Law could not give life and as a result Moses (the Law) could not go into the promised land. It took Joshua (Yeshua, Jesus) to get them to the promised land. Old Testament Joshua is a type of Christ.

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

Did you ever think that Jesus might have died by some other means. Suppose, for instance that he had been beheaded. This could not be. He had to be crucified on a tree. Deuteronomy 21:23 says (**for he that is hanged [is] accursed of God;**) This type of hanging is by nailing but is hanging nevertheless. Remember that all the sins of the world were placed on Jesus while he was on that cross. This is what caused the Father to turn away from him. In other words he was accursed.

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

Paul called the Christians in Galatia brethren as they all belonged to the same spiritual family. Since Paul wanted to persuade them that they should believe the truth he chose something that they were familiar with. The Galatians understood how people made a legal agreement which they then had to abide by.

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

Paul then explained about God's agreement with Abraham. This agreement is often misunderstood. Read it carefully and you will see that the promise was not for all of Abraham's descendants but for one in particular. That person was Jesus Christ.

17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

This verse continues what Paul was saying in verse 15. Nothing could change God's promise to Abraham. God gave the Law to Moses, but those laws did not change God's earlier promise to Abraham.

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

Now we can have a right relationship with God because of God's promise to Abraham. Remember that that promise was the coming of the Messiah. Abraham did not earn or deserve God's blessing but received it by believing God.

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

The Law did have a purpose. God gave his laws because people sin and those laws showed people what sin really is.

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

A mediator is a middle man who tries to bring two differing parties into agreement. Moses was the mediator between God and man concerning the Law. Now Jesus is our mediator.

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

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

The scriptures say that everyone in the world has a strong desire to sin.

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

This is a reference to the age of grace and faith and not a reference to personal faith. Many Old Testament saints had personal faith. The "we" in the verse is a saved person. The sinner can not keep the law and he could not get

out of it. Now,after Calvary there is a way,but only one way.

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

The Law gave us something to compare ourselves to and thus made us appreciate the way we are now saved by grace. What was impossible has now become possible through Jesus Christ.

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

Some use this verse to believe a Christian can behave any way he chooses. We know this is not so because of many other verses in the Pauline epistles. Common sense should be enough.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

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

This is baptism into the Spirit and is not talking about water baptism. Verses 2,3,5,and 14 make this clear.

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

For the saved there is no difference spiritually between any of these groups mentioned. This verse is often used to teach that homosexuality is ok but that is nowhere in the verse. If it was an abomination 4500 years ago it is still an abomination today. Now,let me add this; A homosexual can be saved. To exclude that class of people one would have to exclude other groups such as drug addicts,alcoholics,child molesters or any other group,of sinners, you care to name. The bible does say "whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved".One other thing needs to be added. There does come a time when God turns a sinner over to a reprobate mind and will cease to draw that person to salvation..

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

Paul reinforces it one more time. Both Jew and Gentile,men and women,slave and free are saved the same way and are the same in God's sight. God is not a respecter of persons.

GALATIANS CHAPTER FOUR

Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

Paul is illustrating the spiritual conditions of the Galatians who had fallen for the false teaching of the Judaizers. As spiritual babes they have no more maturity than a child.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

When he says “elements of the world” it has two meanings. First in other places Paul describes the law as a “beggarly element” in verse nine, so, one of his meanings is that they were under bondage to the law. The deeper meaning is that those under bondage to the law are no better than lost people. Paul has stressed over and over that the Law never saved anyone.

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Concerning Jesus Christ, he was born under the Law. He lived under the Law and he kept the Law while he was on the earth. If he had failed to keep the Law he would have sinned. Here is that word again, dispensation. We are under a different dispensation. In other words, we are a different group of people than those alive in Jesus's earthly ministry. Things changed for the better when Jesus rose from the dead. That empty tomb is our assurance that Christ can, and will, do as he promised.

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

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

I am stressing verse six because it sometimes comes up, especially from new

Christians, the question of whether or not the Holy Spirit really lives in us. In most of us it must be an awful place to live. We know he lives in us because God says he does. 1Cor ch 3 vs 16 **Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and [that] the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?** Same book ch 6 vs 19-20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Those two verses should be enough to settle that question forever. Now we need to concentrate on making that dwelling place a more pleasant place for the Holy Spirit to live.

8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Why are you turning again to the Law? If you turn back to the Law then you no longer have the freedom we enjoy in Christ.

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

In other words, you have put yourselves back under the ceremonial law.

Remember that we are no longer a keeper of sabbaths or holy days

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

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

Paul addresses them again as brethren so he is not doubting their salvation but he is concerned that though they are saved they have backslidden into keeping the Law and will be worse than useless since they will now be spreading that false teaching.

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

When Paul came to Galatia the first time he was in poor health. In spite of

that he had become close to the people of Galatia and they had come to love him. I have always heard it taught that Paul's problem was his eyesight and that makes sense as God blinded him on the Damascus road. While he did get back his sight he very likely had eye problems from then on. In chapter six of this book he mentions writing in large letters just as a person with poor eyesight would do.

15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

The Galatians had loved him so much on his previous visits that they would have done anything for him. Now they seem to have turned away completely from him and his teachings.

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

The “they” refers to the Judaizers and the bad effect they were having on the Galatian congregations. This problem was affecting the entire area and all the local churches in it. Remember that this was a circular letter intended for all the churches in that area.

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

This is the flip side and Paul says it is a good thing to be zealously affected by the correct teaching. They should be ready to carry this zeal, for the correct gospel, forward even after Paul is gone. Let's talk about zeal for a moment. Zeal is the overwhelming desire to please God and to “get it right” so that you can pass that along to the lost. Paul is speaking primarily of preaching Christ, and Him crucified and risen.

19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

Paul led them to Christ and he is their spiritual father. He fears that he will have to work even harder now to turn them back to the truth. The second part

of verse 19 mentions Christ being formed in us. Where Christ is formed in us certain things are bound to follow. Such a person will speak the word boldly. They will bear spiritual fruit and will give cheerfully. Such a Christian will read and study the Bible and will spend time in prayer.

21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

Paul is stressing again the comparison between law and grace. He says, do you not hear the difference?

The following verses, to the end of the chapter, are a comparison of bond (law) and free (grace).

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

This is a reference to Hagar and is about a race of people and where they are located. It is not about a mountain. Remember the Hamitic curse. The descendants of Ham were to be “servants of servants” and I do not see anywhere in scripture that that curse has been taken away.

26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Notice the “but” at the beginning of this verse. This shows that it opposes the preceding verse. The Jerusalem “above” refers to the New Jerusalem to which Christians belong.

27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

Many more Arabs than Jews.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Christians share the promises made to Abraham. I believe this verse refers to the promised Messiah and not to the land promised to Abraham's

descendants.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

Paul, writing over two thousand years ago, says that the descendants of Hagar persecute the Jews “even so it is now”. Today, two thousand years later, they still persecute the Jews and want them wiped off the face of the earth.

30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

If you happen to be an Arab then you need to read and study the Book. What God said thousands of years ago, concerning the status of Hagar's children, is still in effect today.

GALATIANS CHAPTER FIVE

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

This applies to us just as it did to the Galatians. Paul is saying “know what you believe and stand fast in that knowledge. It is said another way in other places. Remember the line “do not be blown about by every wind of doctrine. Know what your church believes and why they believe it.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

This can apply to our present day situation. If you were saved out of a denomination that keeps some form of its own law then be happy that you are out of it and do not ever consider going back.

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

If you are a Jew, or a Gentile convert saved by grace, and insist on going back under the law then you would be required to keep the whole law and that is impossible. He is also saying that you think you are justified by the law but that is not the case. The phrase “fallen from grace” is used nowhere else in the Bible and does not mean that a person can lose his salvation. Here it means that if you place yourself back under the law you will not enjoy the freedom, and joy, Jesus gives the believer under grace.

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

Notice that nowhere in this letter does Paul ever say that these Christians are in danger of losing their salvation. They are in danger of voluntarily giving up the freedom they have under grace.

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Neither being circumcised nor being uncircumcised has anything to do with our salvation. That was a Jewish covenant that pointed forward to the work of the Holy Spirit at the time of our salvation when our spirit was cut away from our body. Remember this verse? **For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.** That is Hebrews 4 vs 12 and from that I take it that the word of God is the two edged sword that the Holy Spirit uses for this operation.

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.

In other words, this heresy did not come from Christ but from the false teachers.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

This short verse is loaded. If you put a teaspoon of yeast in a large bowl of flour, water and some sugar the whole thing rises up into a big pile of dough.

That is what Paul is referring to here. If we allow just a little false teaching to creep in then pretty soon the entire set of doctrine is corrupted. For instance, take the matter of eternal security. Before the year 1800 the only

group teaching that you could lose salvation were the Catholics. Slowly that false teaching, along with many others began to spill over into Protestant denominations. After all, it makes perfect sense. The problem is that it is false teaching and that is a perfect example of a little leaven". Now the only denominations holding the line against that are the Baptists and Presbyterians.

This verse has other applications as well and they apply to our modern lives. If, for instance, you drink a little alcohol that may lead to drinking more or even may lower your inhibitions and cause you to fall into serious, life changing, sin.

If you watch just a little pornography that will lead to watching more and may well lead on into domestic violence or broken marriages.

Those are just a couple of examples of a "little leaven". I am sure you can think of others.

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

In this verse, Paul seems to have become more confident in the Galatians. He now believed that they would continue to believe the truth. From the last part of this verse it is apparent that Paul considered the false teachers to be lost. When Paul uses the phrase, "he that troubleth you", he was no doubt referring to the leader of the group as there were likely several of these false teachers.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

Paul is beginning to show his anger. He asks the question, if I were returning to the law why would the Jews be continuing to persecute me.

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

Here he really shows the anger.

He wishes these false brethren were dead. Do notice that he leaves it up to God and does not intend to kill them himself. Paul isn't the sweet, loving type. Compare this with 1 Cor 5:5 **To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the**

Lord Jesus. In this case he is dealing with a saved person but still turns him over to Satan to be killed. Paul certainly considered those who would harm the Body of Christ, either through false teaching or gross sin, to be worthy of death.

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

Just because you have this liberty in Christ do not think it is license to go all the way to the other side. It is not a license to sin but rather the freedom to know that if we do sin He will forgive us if we confess it.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

There it is again. The entire moral law summed up in these eight words.

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

Because of the false teaching, the Christians were fighting and arguing with each other. They were behaving like wild animals. Paul warned them that their behavior would destroy their friendships and their church.

There is an old saying, taken from this very verse, that can be applied to Christians today. "If you bite and devour each other, sooner or later you will be lunch".

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

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

When we become Christians, our natural desires do not suddenly disappear. These desires can be very strong but the Holy Spirit teaches us how to live the right way. If we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us we will live to please God.

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

We Christians are free from the law but we are not free to please ourselves. Now we obey the Holy Spirit. I would urge those of you who are not doing so to spend more time in study and prayer until you can know when the Holy

Spirit is acting in your life. That is how you do it; prayer and study of God's Word.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now Paul contrasts the work of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. Let's look at a few of these that might not be familiar.

Witchcraft includes Wiccan, so called white witches, fortune telling and even horoscopes. Now, I do not go to the Greek often as I believe it is usually a mistake to do so but in this case it's too good to ignore. The Greek word used is pharmakeia from which we get our word pharmacy so it isn't a stretch to include illegal drugs under witchcraft. I do not speak Greek but I do speak Strong's Concordance.

Uncleanness. Uncleanness here isn't speaking of bodily cleanliness though we should certainly keep the temple clean. Here it is referring to mental cleanliness. Stay away from things that influence the mind in negative ways.

Pornography and demonic movies come to mind.

Lasciviousness is outrageous intemperance of any kind and can range from gross overeating to sexual perversion.

Idolatry is the putting of anything before God. That could be money or football or any of a thousand other things. I once heard a man say that he was faithful in his church attendance until football season rolled around. That man is an idiot.

Variance and emulations are related. They describe arguing and jealousy.

Seditions are rebellion against established authority.

And finally;

Revellings which is party time taken to new levels. The word orgies come to mind along with other drunken craziness.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Remember that this is fruit singular. You should strive to have them all. This is how you tell if you are growing as a Christian. You should be adding these fruit as time goes by.

Notice that all of this fruit is a part of God's character and he desires it to be part of ours.

If you have the fruit of the spirit you will get along with people and even more important, you will get along with God. Look back over that list and you will see that this is what it is designed to do.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

We have the power to refuse wrongdoing and obey the Holy Spirit. Almost no one changes completely when they are saved. Sometimes it can be a long process with the Holy Spirit cleaning us up as we yield to Him..

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

This verse probably refers back to verse 15. It is important for every Christian and every church to let the Holy Spirit control us.

GALATIANS CHAPTER SIX

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

As Christians we are not perfect and will sometimes fall into sin. When that happens we have clear instructions from the Holy Spirit on how to handle that situation. We are told to go to the person privately first and if that doesn't work then to go to the person with a witness. I assume that the one going

should be the pastor along with a deacon or a member who can be trusted to keep his mouth shut. I say one who can be trusted because you don't go around gossiping about private church business. If that doesn't work then the church may be called on to vote the person out until such time as they repent and ask the church for forgiveness. If that happens then we are to restore the person to full fellowship.

We have recently seen a local example of how not to handle a situation. In that case the pastor stood before the church and pointed to several families and told them to get out. Wrong. That is a dictator, not a pastor, and I can assure you he will pay for that.

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

This one should be self explanatory. Stay in prayer for fellow members especially those who are sick. If you know of a physical need which you can meet, do so.

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

Do not fall into the trap of comparing your work to the work of others. It is human nature to compare ourselves to those who do less and thus become puffed up and self righteous. Remember that all of us fall far short of what God expects.

5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

We have just been told to bear each others burdens and now we are told to bear our own. In other words do not use the church for unnecessary things.

If you have a physical need and can meet it yourself, then do so. This also has the meaning of bearing others burdens in addition to your own.

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

I take this verse to mean help your pastors and teachers. That is, if during your studies God shows you some nugget that you had not seen previously then share it. I am talking about clear scripture here and not private revelation.

Two other ways to say private revelation are trouble and heresy.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Notice that this is a commandment and not a suggestion. God is not deceived even if you are. “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. Thank God that works both ways. There was an old saying that went something like this. Go ahead and burn the candle at both ends. You will pay for it after age forty”.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

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

A lost opportunity never comes again. If you miss that chance to witness it will never return.

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

Paul is mentioning his near blindness. This is just me, and not scripture, but I believe Paul never recovered completely from his sudden blindness on the road to Damascus. I think this was the “thorn in the flesh” that Paul asked God, three times, to remove from him.

12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

These people want you back under the law but they can't even keep it themselves. But if they can get you back under the Law they will consider it an accomplishment and brag on it.

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor

uncircumcision, but a new creature.

These two verses can be summed up like this. We have absolutely nothing to brag about. Whatever good we do is through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The only thing we should be bragging about is what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us.

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

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Paul really had the scars to show. 2 Corinthians ch 11 vs 24 and following show us some of the “marks” he had. **Of the Jews five times received I forty [stripes]save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; [In] journeyings often, [in] perils of waters, [in] perils of robbers, [in] perils by [mine own] countrymen, [in] perils by the heathen, [in] perils in the city, [in] perils in the wilderness, [in] perils in the sea, [in] perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.**

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Verse eighteen was a short prayer for the Galatians.