

Epistle to the Galatians

The Historical Context of the Galatian Epistle

The Galatian letter, written in 48AD, is a response by Paul that marked the early stages of the controversy concerning a "law-free" gospel for the Gentile inclusion in God's redemptive plan. A group known as the "Judaizers," former Jewish Pharisees, who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, rejected the notion that Gentiles could come into salvation "by grace through faith alone." This was diabolically opposed to Paul's Gospel of Grace for the non-covenant Gentiles.

Judaizers believed circumcision and the works of the Levitical laws of the Old Testament as binding requirements for both Jews and Gentiles to be accepted for salvation. Circumcision was a covenant that originated with Abraham and God and repeated throughout the generations of Israel. Circumcision is what "makes a Jew a Jew."

The Apostle Paul refuted this doctrinal position in nearly everyone of his epistles because it made his revelation of "grace for the Gentile" of no effect to the hearer.

In Acts 15, the Jerusalem Council (50AD) decided that no Gentile would "be placed under the yoke" of the Law of Moses. At this pivotal leadership meeting, the eyewitness accounts of Paul, Barnabas, and Peter presented testimonies that God was accepting the Gentile for redemption apart from the Law. The evidence they submitted was the testimony of the Holy Spirit performing miracles with signs and wonders among the Gentiles who received salvation. Paul, Barnabas, and Peter further testified that the Gentiles who were baptized in the Holy Spirit were speaking in tongues. This was proof of God's acceptance without the Law or circumcision.

The "Judaizers" continued to reject this testimony at the Jerusalem Council. They also rejected Paul as an apostle of Jesus as his ministry to the Gentiles went forward. These Jews were actively sabotaging Paul's missionary activity for several years and finally defeated it after the martyrdom of all the original apostles. This schism caused the early church to eventually embrace the "mixed gospel message" of grace and Law. This was not in keeping with Paul's revelation of "grace through faith and faith alone." It was a "works-filled" doctrine that nullified the Gospel of Grace of "righteousness by faith."

Paul called this gospel message "another gospel" of Christ! It required the Gentile to become Jewish through the Covenant of Circumcision and adhere to "the works of the law" found in the Law of Moses.

These Jewish antagonists believed it was their mandate to bring the Gentile nations into captive obedience to Israel's king. They justified their mission and ministry as a fulfillment of such Old Testament passages as Ps 2:8 and Gen 49:10.

Psalms 2:8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

Genesis 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

In their view, they only attempted to promote the promise to Abraham of a "multitude of descendants" by bringing Gentiles under the Covenant of Circumcision and then the dominion of the law. Again, It was an effort to support their cause by such prophetic texts as Isaiah 2:2-4, Micah 4:1-3, and Zechariah 14:16-19.

Isaiah 2:2-4

2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be lifted up above the hills, and all the nations shall flow to it

3 and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword

Epistle to the Galatians

against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore

Micah 4:1-4

1 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills, and peoples shall flow to it,

2 and many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

3 He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide for strong nations far away, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

Zechariah 14:16-19

16 And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

17 And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain.

18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

Epistle to the Galatians

DATE OF WRITING:

48 AD is the more likely date, although some believe it may be as late as 58 AD.

PURPOSE OF LETTER:

- Galatians is a response to the Judaizers' "perverted gospel message" which Paul called a "different gospel." He is correcting and countering the doctrinal differences between the circumcised Jew and the uncircumcised Gentile (1:6-7).
- Written before the Jerusalem Council in 50 AD, it is a heresy that continued until this conclave of Early Church leaders met to decide the "state of the Gentile conversions. This explains the timeframe for the context of the letter.

INTENDED AUDIENCE:

This is a circular letter written and read aloud to every Gentile church in the region of Galatian.

OVERALL THEME:

Primary Point:

Gentiles were never under the Covenants of Israel or the Law of Moses and are still not

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

Secondary Point:

It is "faith in God" and "faith in the work of the cross of Christ" to justify is what makes a person righteous.

Ga 2:16 "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.

Ga 3:11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."

MAJOR EPISTLE DIVISIONS:

I. Teaching Faith Righteousness independent of the Law and Covenant of Circumcision Chapters 1 to 4

1. Reason for letter – 1:6-10
2. The divine origin of Paul's apostolic calling and the Gospel of Grace message given him for the Gentile (1:11-17)
3. Paul's relationship to the other Apostles and the proclamation of the Jerusalem Council (1:18-2:21)
4. Paul teaches "justification by faith" as different from "observance of the Law" by the Jews (3:1 – 4:31)

II. Teaching Law of Liberty for those who are "in Christ" Chapters 5 to 6

5. Paul teaches on the "Liberty" found in Christ or the Gospel of Christ and why it is superior to the Law of Moses, to which the covenant bound the Jew. (5:1 – 6-18)

Epistle to the Galatians

OUTLINE

I. Introduction 1:1-10

A. Greeting 1:1-5 *-[Chapter 1]*

1. Paul's was calling was from the throne room of heaven by both God and Jesus.

B. Denunciation of the Galatians to turn from grace to the Law and circumcision 1:6-10

1. Paul immediately starts into the issue at hand – the turning away from grace

II. Presentation of the “Gospel of Grace” message as unique to the Gentiles (1:11—2:21)

A. Paul's independence from the other apostles 1:11-24

1. Received the Gentile Gospel of Grace by “direct revelation” 1:11-17
2. Established the Gentile Gospel of Grace message as different from Israel's “Gospel of the Kingdom” message 1:18-24

B. Paul previously communicated the Gentile Gospel of Grace message to the Jerusalem leaders because he was led by the Holy Spirit 2:1-10 *-[Chapter 2]*

1. Leaders did not require Titus, a Gentile, to be circumcised as proof 2:3
2. Paul discredits the teaching of the “false brethren” (called “Judaizers”) 2:4-6
3. Jerusalem leaders embraced the two differing gospel messages Paul presented, 2:7-10

C. Paul confronts the hypocrisy of Peter as proof of a Gentile gospel message 2:11-21

III. Affirmation of the Gentile Gospel of Grace message (3:1—4:31)

A. The Gentile Gospel of Grace message is “grace through faith alone” *-[Chapter 3]*

1. The experiential argument 3:1-5
2. The Scriptural argument 3:6-14
3. The logical argument 3:15-29

B. Clarification of the Gentile Gospel of Grace message *-[Chapter 4]*

1. The domestic illustration 4:1-11
2. The historical illustration 4:12-20
3. The biblical illustration 4:21-31

IV. Practical application of the Liberty of the Gentile Gospel of Grace message (5:1—6:10)

A. Liberty found within the Gentile Gospel of Grace *-[Chapter 5]*

1. Liberty without the Law 5:1-12
2. Liberty brings greater responsibility 5:13-15
3. Liberty occurs by following the Holy Spirit 5:16-26

B. Responsibilities of the Gentile Believer under the Gospel of Grace *-[Chapter 6]*

1. Toward those overtaken by faults 6:1-2
2. Toward self to walk in humility and meekness 6:3-5
3. Toward those who teach 6:6-8
4. Toward toward all people 6:10

V. Conclusion (6:11-18)

A. Summary and Justification of writing letter 6:11-15

B. Blessing for those who embrace the Gentile Gospel of Grace 6:16-18

Epistle to the Galatians

Chapter 1

I. Introduction

A. Greeting

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

- Paul is the only apostle to receive his “calling” from heaven. (Acts 9:1-19)
- Paul throughout his ministry had to continually assert his authority as an apostle. No other apostle is known to be called in the same manner; from heaven.
- Apostle means “sent one.”
- The word “apostolos” does not appear in most English translations but does appear in the Greek, Strong’s word 652, Apostolos. In many English versions says “messenger,” but in Greek, Apostolos.
- There are 25 other apostles mentioned in scripture, all of which appear to be selected because of the recognized gift and calling they possessed. Only Paul was commissioned then Paul. Some have purported that God chose Paul to replace Judas, a position not supported by scripture.

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|---|--|
| • Jesus Christ (Hebrews 3:1) | • Matthias (Acts 1:26) |
| • Simon Peter (Matt. 10:2) | • Paul (Gal. 1:1) |
| • Andrew (Matt. 10:2) | • Barnabas (1 Cor. 9:5-6, Acts 14:4, 14) |
| • James the son of Zebedee (Matt. 10:2) | • Andronicas (Rom. 16:7) |
| • John (Matt. 10:2) | • Junias (Rom. 16:7) |
| • Philip (Matt. 10:3) | • James, the Lord’s brother (Gal. 1:19) |
| • Bartholomew (Matt. 10:3) | • Silas (Silvanus) (1 Thess. 1:1, 2:6) |
| • Thomas (Matt. 10:3) | • Timothy (1 Thess. 1:1, 2:6) |
| • Matthew (Matt. 10:3) | • Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25) |
| • James, son of Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3) | • Apollos (1 Corinthians 4:6-9 & 1 Corinthians 3:22) |
| • Thaddaeus (Matt. 10:3), or Judas the son of James (Luke 6:16) | • First of 2 Unnamed Apostles (2 Corinthians 8:23) |
| • Simon the Zealot (Matt. 10:4) | • Second of 2 Unnamed Apostles. |
| • Judas Iscariot (Matt. 10:4) | |

Epistle to the Galatians

2 and all the brethren who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

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

- The salutation Paul wrote in nearly every one of his Gentile epistles. It was a combination of the commonly used Greek (charis, "grace") and Jewish (shalom, "peace") salutations.
- "Grace" refers to God's undeserved favor in a Christian context.
- "Peace," "Peace from God and the Lord Jesus Christ," is synonymous with "the absence of hostility and the totality of God's blessings towards a person(s)."
- Peace or Shalom are closely related in meaning to salvation or "soterio" (GRK: make safe, to preserve, to deliver, to prosper, to heal, to make whole)
 - **3 John 1:2** "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."
- The salutation, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," was also used by Peter & John in some of their epistles written to Jewish Believers.

4 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,

- Paul is stating the reason for God's grace and peace in Jesus. It seems to be setting up the Galatians had turned away from the teaching of faith in the cross and resurrection.
- This issue of "turning away" is the same in the modern church. To "turn away" is to not preach and therefore not to believe in the "finished work" of the cross and resurrection. This "turning away" is for both Eternal Life (John 17:30) and the Abundant Life (**John 10:10**).
- To "turn away" is not necessarily to "backslide into sin" but it is to turn from what God gives freely as gifts to people, namely, salvation and a life of righteousness, peace, and joy.
- There are two Biblical ages: the "present evil age" and "age to come." One is a continuous struggle with everything that is against the mind and will of God while the other is the freedom in harmony with the mind and will of God. Both have direct roots to the "knowledge of good and evil." a state that has affected (or infected) all of mankind.
- The Abundant Life is possible in this "present evil age," but it is conditional as the Believer yields to the leading Holy Spirit who is present with them. Eternal Life is guaranteed once one believes the gospel?
- The "age to come" shall be produced by the presence of God in the regeneration, the "new heaven and new earth."

Epistle to the Galatians

Dr. Thomas Constable Notes on Galatians:

“We are in the world, but we are free (“*by our choices*” for clarity) to live apart from the evil that dominates it, thanks to Christ's work for us.

Not only so, but the Lord will remove us from it by death or translation (rapture). Again, both aspects of our deliverance were probably in Paul's mind as he wrote these words, though the idea that Christ has presently removed us from the world was not. Christ's death transferred the believer from Satan's power to God's power, from one sphere to another (cf. Col. 1:13). “

- Paul is immediately stating the topic for the letter. "Jesus died for sins so as to deliver from the present evil age!"
- Many Christians today believe Jesus just died for our sins so they could go to heaven. This is certainly true but grossly misses the greater things in God's redemptive plan. Paul mentioned just one of them in this verse; i.e., “being set apart until the redemption of the body, “a future event!”

Acts 10:36-43

36 The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—

37 that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached:

38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree.

40 Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly,

41 not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

42 And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.

43 To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

5 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

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| <p>There is Only One Gospel of Christ BUT Two DIFFERENT Messages: One for Israel (mercy); One for Gentiles (grace)</p> |
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B. Denunciation of the Galatians to turn from grace to the Law of Moses and circumcision

6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who **called you in(to) the grace of Christ**, to a **different** gospel,

- Paul IMMEDIATELY denounces the Galatian's turning from the “completed work of

Epistle to the Galatians

the Cross” and the grace that was extended resulting in their acceptance into God’s redemptive plan.

- The Judaizers were preaching that the Gentiles had to become Jews requiring them to first become Jews through circumcision. They also required adherence to the Law of Moses. This is counter to Paul’s revelation of the “Gospel of Grace” for the Gentile.
- The Bible makes a distinction in the term “called” and “chosen.” Everyone, both Jew and Gentile are “called into Christ.” Only Israel was God’s “chosen people.” (**1 Peter 1:15**)
- Jesus said “Many are **called**, few are **chosen!**”

The Parable of the Land Owner (**Matt. 20:1-16**)

Matthew 20:16 “So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.”

The Parable of the Wedding Feast (**Matt. 22:1-14**)

Matthew 22:14 “For many are called, but few are chosen.”

- The number who are “called” is greater than the number who were “chosen.”
- What is the “**different gospel**” according to Paul?
 - It is worth noting that Paul begins by stating that the gospel “message” he preached to the Gentile IS A DIFFERENT gospel.
 - The Judaizers were Jewish Believers from Jerusalem who were of the Pharisee sect of Judaism. They had accepted Jesus as the Jewish Messiah but continued to observe the Law.
 - The Judaizers followed after Paul’s missionary trips countering his message. They were placing conditions upon the revelation of the Gospel of Grace he preached exclusively to the Gentile.
 - Paul preached the message of the “Gospel of the Kingdom” when he was standing before Jews. They were expecting the Kingdom. The Gentile did not know anything about the coming Kingdom of God or the coming King, Jesus.
 - The Judaizers demanded that Gentiles become circumcised, thereby becoming Jews and observing the Law of Moses.

NOTE: The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) HAD NOT YET CONVENED to settle this issue. This would occur 2 years later. This was a conclave of early church leadership that concluded Gentiles WOULD NOT be required to become Jews through the Covenant of Circumcision or adhere to the Law of Mose as a prerequisite to receive salvation and to share in the “Blessing of Abraham.”
 - The Gentiles were included in the Redemptive Plan of God because He extended Grace to ALL Gentiles without requiring them to become Jews.
 - Both Jews and Non-Jews were “called into Christ.”

****See **Ephesians 2:1-8** for a fuller explanation

- The Gentile Galatians were considered “unclean” by Jews before God began to pour out the Holy Spirit on them as he did Israel.

Epistle to the Galatians

READ the following references for the first Gentile conversion 10 years after the resurrection:

Acts 10:35-43 Peter preaching to Cornelius and his household who were the first recorded Gentiles to receive Christ

Acts 10:44-46 Cornelius and household receives the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. This was evidence that God was “calling Gentiles into Christ” in the same manner as the Jews

Note in these scripture references, Peter and the six men with him were “amazed” when Cornelius and those with him begin to speak in tongues, a sign that had become Believers. They were not aware of Paul’s revelation of the “Mystery of the Gentile” at this time.

7 which is not another; but some trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

- Trouble is the same word used in **Acts 15:19**

Acts 15:19 “Therefore I judge that we should not **trouble** those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God,…”

- Trouble means "to harass" or to "annoy"; to “agitate.”
- Trouble also means that means to destroy someones “peace and joy,” a characteristic of a legalistic religious system.”
- To “pervert” means “to corrupt or alter the intent.”
It also means to “add something” or “remove something”

Pervert - (*Strong's* g3344. μεταστρέφω *metastrephō*; from 3326 and 4762; to turn across, i.e., transmute, *change* or (figuratively) **corrupt**:— pervert, turn. to turn around, turn around

It is the idea of not so much turning away from as it is to "**change or alter the form**" (transmutation)

"change or alter the form to corrupt the pureness and simplicity of without doing away with the main ideas."

- According to Paul, the Gospel of Christ has TWO differing messages, one for the Jew and one for the Gentile.
 - The “Gospel of the Kingdom,” was preached exclusively to the Jew.” Israel was given a “New Covenant” that was mediated by Jesus for their redemption. [**Isa. 31:31; Heb. 8:7**] Jesus was the Messiah, the Kindred Redeemer of Israel.
 - The “Gospel of Grace” was preached exclusively to Gentiles. The message was Gentiles are included in redemption without becoming Jews first requiring them to become Jews through circumcision and to observe the Law. Gentiles are redeemed “by grace **through** faith alone without works.” Jesus was not the “Savior” of the world who would also be included in the blessing of Abraham.
[See **Romans 3:30; Ephesians 2:8**]

8 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**.

Epistle to the Galatians

9 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**

- Accursed means “to be separated from” (God) forever! It included “all He provides and all His support.” It means to be “damned forever with no hope of redemption.”
- Paul used this word when speaking about himself and his desire to see all of Israel saved.

Romans 9:3 “For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,”

Accursed - (*Strongs* g0331) ἀνάθεμα anathema; from 394; a (religious) ban or (concretely) excommunicated (thing or person):—accused, anathema, curse, x great.

1. a thing set up or laid by in order to be kept for harsh judgement
 - a. Literally, an offering resulting from a vow, and ritual consecration to a god(s). The offering was hung on the temple walls or columns or some other conspicuous place for all to see.
 - b. Something that is “without hope of being redeemed.” This could be an animal doomed to be slain or a person given over to destruction. A person who is “accursed” is set apart for the most dreadful of miseries without hope.
- Paul’s boldness is not trying to “win friends or influence enemies!” He is extremely harsh in expressing his anger, disgust, and frustration with Judaizers that are sabotaging his ministry of bring the Gentiles to faith in Christ. Both his message and his character is being attacked in an effort to discredit him.
- Paul expressed this same sentiment towards those countrymen who were rejecting Jesus and the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Romans 9:3-4

3 For **I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ** for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,

4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises;

5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God.

10 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.

- It is impossible to please both God and please man when it comes to things of the Spirit. Jesus said
- The Judaizers introduced "another gospel" by first to discrediting Paul! This is a known tactic of the devil.

2 Corinthians 5:11 “Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.”

- It seems logical that the Judaizers had been discrediting Paul as a means to dismiss “his

Epistle to the Galatians

gospel.” asserted Paul was preaching “free grace” in order to win converts. This "easy grace" which he advocated faith in Christ alone for salvation carried no responsibility with respect personal sin. A person has to “work out” their salvation.

- This is what many today would call “seeker friendly churches,” who through gaining large numbers of converts, week to week to enhance their own works and personal reputations. Nothing could be further from the truth with respect to Paul. He considered himself to be a “bondservant to Christ.”
- Paul's critics may have also accused him of preaching one thing to some people and the opposite to others (cf. 5:2 and 11). It is understandable how some people might have concluded this (cf. 1 Cor. 9:22). Paul's rebuttal in this verse was that a person can only be the bond-servant of one master (cf. Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13).
- Paul was claiming to have behaved among the Galatians consistent with his commitment to Christ as his Master.
- A bond-servant (GRK: *doulos*) is one who has been set free by his master but chooses to commit his person to serve that master without condition.
- Bond-servants were common through ancient times as a means of protection and a means of sustaining the servants life through the Owners resources.

There were several types of servitude mandated under the Law of Moses with different rules:

1. One type was the “Indentured Servant” indebted to the Master. This form was similar to a mutually agreed contract to work off debt then given freedom after seven years.
2. A second type was the “Bond-servant” who had been freed by chose to serve the Master for the rest of their life.
3. Different rules of servanthood were applied to Hebrew men and women. Also, a different set of rules were applied to servants who were Gentiles.
4. Under the Law of Moses servants enjoy at least one day a week free from every kind of labour. Masters were accountable to the law for their treatment of all their servants, whether Hebrews or foreigners. Slaves were Law of Moses ensured they retained their original kinship, were able to marry, had legal protection from physical harm and from breach of contract, and had freedom of movement and access to liberty.
5. Servants fleeing their master automatically gained their liberty and were free to live wherever they chose. It was illegal to return them to their master. (See Paul’s judgment on slaves who had Masters who were also Believers.)
6. Involuntary slavery, called Chattel Slavery, was illegal in Israel. This was because the dehumanization of the individual. This type of slavery was practiced by many but not all, conquering Gentile armies but not by Israel (**Exodus 21:1-11, Deuteronomy 15:12-18**).

II. Presentation of the “Gospel of Grace” message as unique to the Gentiles

A. Paul's independence from the other apostles

11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me

Epistle to the Galatians

is not according to man.

- Paul's apostleship was unlike the Twelve, who walked with Jesus in the flesh. His mandate and apostleship came directly from the throne room of heaven beginning at his Damascus Road encounter with Jesus.
- It is evident in this epistle, and other of Paul's letters, the Judaizers continually harassed him personally, attacked his ministry validity and his authority as an apostle.
- The gospel according to the Judaizers was "Christ plus circumcision plus the law of Moses."

Acts 15:1 The Conflict over Circumcision of the Gentile Believer

1 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."

- The Gospel Paul preached to the Gentile was "grace through faith" without works of the Law or a requirement to be circumcised, which a requirement to receive the "promises made to the fathers."

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

- Paul's Gospel of Christ is rooted and grounded in "revelation."
- Paul is saying that his conversion as well as the Gospel he preached came through a revelation of who he was in Christ."
- Many today read the Bible but it is for knowledge only and not for a revelation of Jesus found in it's pages
- The Bible "reveals" Jesus, first and foremost. The Pharisees, who were the religious people of that time, had memorized the entire Old Testament but missed the "revelation of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, the Kindred-Redeemer, the "Anointed One."

John 5:39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."

- It is the gospel (good news) of Jesus that is exclusively "the power of God to save" (**Romans 1:17**) with nothing else added. It simply has to be embraced and believed.
- Revelation is something that **cannot be taught**. It is received by believing what is heard by the Spirit of God.

i.e., "Faith comes by hearing (*ἀκοή akoē: oral instruction*) and hearing by the word (*ῥῆμα rhēma: utterance*) of God." -**Romans 10:17**

"We Believe come to know"

John 6:68-69

68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Matthew 16:17 "Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father which is in heaven."

1 Corinthians 14:6 "But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what

Epistle to the Galatians

shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?"

1 Corinthians 14:26 "How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."

"through the revelation of Jesus Christ"

- "**through**" (the revelation) is a word is a primary preposition "denoting **the channel of an act**" by which something is obtained or received
- Paul ministered to the Galatian church (and every church) because it was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. This is an example of "walking by faith". (**Acts 13:1-3**)
- Faith comes **FIRST** by "hearing" and **THEN** by "responding by believing." (**Deut. 8:3**)
- Paul was the "only apostle" that Jesus revealed the "Mystery of the Gentiles." This mystery (secret) was unknown to the Twelve and to Judaism in general. This revelation emphatically says that "Gentiles are included in redemption without any covenant with God or having to observe the Law.

Ephesians 3:3-7

3 how that by revelation He made known to me (*Paul*) the mystery as I have briefly written already,

4 by which, when you read, you (*Gentiles*) may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),

5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise (*made to Abraham concerning the I*) in Christ through the gospel,

7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace (*Gentile Gospel of Grace*) of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

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

- Paul was once exactly like the "Judaizers" (legalists) with the purpose making everyone come into compliance the Law and circumcision.
- Paul in his life before Christ, was the ultimate "Gospel Policeman" concerning the Law. This legalism was driven by his zeal for Jewish tradition. Just like today, it caused him to persecute his own people who had to believed Jesus is the Jewish Messiah and the Son of God.
- Paul admitted that "his keeping of traditions" led him to persecute those who were turning to Jesus. (Religious people always persecute "spiritual" people, even today)
- Traditions of men (religion) originate from the mind of men and not the mind of God.

Matt 15:6 "Thus **you have made** the commandment (gospel) of God of **no effect by your tradition.**"

(In context, Jesus was preaching to Israel was the "Gospel of the Kingdom")

Epistle to the Galatians

- Not all traditions come against the mind of God. For example, Jesus, Peter, the Twelve, and Paul had a tradition of attending synagogue, which is a good tradition.
- Bad traditions occur when good practices redefine the original intent” of the mind of God. It makes what God speaks ineffective for living in the Spirit because it either adds or takes away.

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

- Paul uses his Jewish pedigree to show he was advanced beyond the Judaizers in learning and also in “zeal for the traditions” of Israel.

Philippians 3:4-6

4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless

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

- Paul has a personal revelation that he was “chosen” by God before he was born. He also was, by revelation” told he would preach the Gospel of Grace to the Gentiles, Israel and kings.

Romans 1:1-3

1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God

2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,
3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,...

Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

- Paul (and Barnabas) begin the ministry of the Gospel of Grace to the Gentiles. The mystery of the Gentile had to be in Paul's theology at this point in time.
- As they “ministered to the Lord,” the Holy Spirit “spoke” directing their steps into the ministry for which they were called.
- Interestingly, Paul was called as an apostle thirteen years prior to this event. During this period he was in preparation for “being sent” in the timing of God.

Separate (GRK: aphorizō)

in a good sense: to appoint, set apart for some purpose; set apart and remain apart from other people for a purpose different from them.

- There are ONLY three other individuals mentioned in the Bible whom God “separated and called” while in the womb.

Epistle to the Galatians

- **Jesus** (Isaiah 49:1-5)
- **Jeremiah** (Jeremiah 1:4-5)
- **John the Baptist (Luke 1:13-16)**

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

- Paul is eluding to the Twelve apostles followed Jesus before the resurrection. More specifically, his reference was to the church in Jerusalem led by James, the brother of Jesus. The Judaizers were part of this congregation and were representing themselves as being sent out to “correct Paul’s doctrine and gospel message to Gentiles.
- Paul is emphatically stating that he does not need the “approval of men” to walk in the calling and ministry given to him by the Lord.
- Paul was also told at his conversion he would “stand before Israel, Gentiles, and kings. Each group had a unique message preached to them.

Israel: the Gospel of the Kingdom

Gentile: the Gospel of Grace

kings: Personal salvation testimony in defense of his standing with God

- Jesus has to be revealed in a person before they can recognize their calling in life.

Acts 9:15-16

15 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.

16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia and returned again to Damascus.

- Paul did not immediately go to Jerusalem but went into the wilderness of Arabia for three years. During this season, the Lord began to unravel the “mysteries” or secrets attributed to Paul.
(Gal. 1:17)
- Paul was a Talmudim (*disciple*) or one who was highly versed in the Torah, the Mishnah, and the Jewish all traditions. During Paul’s time in Arabia, Jesus revealed the “Gospel of Grace” to him. He showed him in a “mystery” (*secret*) it was a different message from the “Gospel of the Kingdom” that He taught the Twelve but the end message brought the same redemption tot he Gentile.

Note: The Mishnah is a written record of the “Oral Laws” (not written Law) categorized by subjects. Over the course of four centuries, the Mishnah expanded into the Talmud (400-500 CE) and recorded the many interpretations of the Mishnah

Epistle to the Galatians

text by hundreds of Rabbis. The Jewish Mishnah and especially the later Talmud, is the equivalent of a modern Biblical Commentary.

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

- Paul's uses his initial introduction to speak with Peter as proof he had validation and standing in his revelation and ministry.

Acts 9:26-30

26 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.

27 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.

28 So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.

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

30 When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

- It is worth noting, Paul spent as much of his ministry defending his calling and his message as he did evangelizing and overseeing the churches he was sent to.

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

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

21 Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

22 And I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea which were in Christ.

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

24 And **they glorified God in me.**

- Following Paul's life, we find that he never bragged on himself or his accomplishments but always glorified God in word and in deed. He conscientiously lived his life as an example for others to follow.
- Paul's life choices, reflected in his letters, show he was acutely aware of any thought, word, or action that might displease God. His life was a life of humility before God and men. His enormous transparency caused him to lead by example giving no thought of himself.

1 Corinthians 4:16 "Therefore I urge you, imitate me."

1 Corinthians 11:1 "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

Imitate is a Greek word, *mimētēs*, from which we derive the word "mime." or a "person who mimics every nuance of someone else." The Bible calls this a "disciple."

Epistle to the Galatians

Chapter 2

B. Paul previously communicated the Gentile Gospel of Grace message to the Jerusalem leaders because he was led by the Holy Spirit

1 Then, after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas and took Titus with me.

- Paul PRESENTS, NOT DEFENDS, the “Gospel of Grace” he is preaching to the Gentile.
- The conflict that arose in the early church was, “Does the Gentile (non-Jewish) Believers have to be circumcised and observe the requirements of the Law of Moses?” This would include dietary laws, festivals, seasons, and rituals as an example.

NOTE for Context concerning the Jerusalem Council:

*****Acts 15 [Read the entire chapter for greater clarity]*****

Paul would, two (2) years later, present testimony to the **Jerusalem Council** convened to settle the issue of the Gentiles conversion requirements.

- Paul received seven (7) revelations which he called “mysteries” or “secrets” that God had not revealed in Israel’s prophetic program.
 1. They Mystery of the Incarnation (I Timothy 3:16)
 2. The Mystery of the Blindness of Israel (Romans 11:25-26)
 3. They Mystery of the Church (Body of Christ) (Ephesians 3:1-10)
 4. The Mystery of the Indwelling Christ (Colossians 1:25-28)
 5. The Mystery of the Headship of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-32)
 6. The Mystery of the Translation of the Church (I Corinthians 15:50-58)
 7. The Mystery of Lawlessness (II Thessalonians 2:1-9)
- One such” mystery” was The “Mystery of the Church or the “Body of Christ.”” (**Eph. 2; Gal. 3**) Simply stated the Gentile was included in God’s redemptive plan solely by “grace through faith and faith alone!”
- Peter, James, John and all the Jewish segment of the church had no understanding of Paul’s revelations. Believers who were Pharisees were adamant that Gentiles needed to be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses. (i.e., Ten Commandments, Sabbath, tithing system, baptisms, and all rituals and observances.)
- When the Gentiles begin to receive the Gospel of Christ it caused “no small stir” in the early church. The church for ten years following the resurrection consisted of ONLY Jewish Believers. As covenant Jews, they continued to follow the Jewish customs of the Law of Moses and their traditions. This included circumcision.
- Paul refuted the Gentile Believer was exempted because introduced the New Covenant for Israel and “Grace” to the Gentile. His gospel to the Gentile was

Epistle to the Galatians

the “Gospel of Grace” without any covenant or any works found in the Law. It was strictly “grace through faith” for acceptance by God.

The outcome of the **Jerusalem Council** was as follows:

- God granted “grace” to the Gentile so as to be included in redemption.
- Gentiles would not be required to be circumcised nor follow the Law of Moses. The things codified in the Law were sabbaths, seasons, dietary, tithing, baptisms, etc. It is worth noting that these items were all “types and shadows” of what was to come “in Christ.”
- The Gentiles were encouraged to “remember the poor” and not eat from the offering meal of idols. The latter was a concern because of the influence idols would have in corrupting “faith in Christ.”
- Paul would go exclusively to Gentiles to preach the “Gospel of Grace”
- Peter would go exclusively to the Jews to preach the “Gospel of the Kingdom”
- Paul’s calling was to stand “before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. This was different from the Twelve who were called to Israel. (**Acts 9:15**)

2 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.

- Paul was making the point that he went to Jerusalem because the Holy Spirit instructed him to do so. He was NOT being “called on the carpet” to defend his ministry or message. This verse leaves the impression that he may NOT have gone to Jerusalem had it not been for the direction of the Holy Spirit.
- Paul was not asking permission to preach the Gentile Gospel of Grace. His purpose was to clarify the “different gospel message” he preached to the Gentiles. It may also be inferred because of the Holy Spirit’s involvement, his trip to Jerusalem was an effort to “maintain the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (**Eph. 4:1-3**)
- “The gospel which Paul preached” was unknown to the Twelve and the Jerusalem Church. His gospel message was “grace alone is extended by God to Gentiles” for their redemption and right standing.
- It is likely the Jerusalem leadership had heard from the Judaizers what God was doing through Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles. There was conflicting positions in the Gospel message which needed to be resolved. It is important to note that both the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace included redemption and “forgiveness of sin.”

SEE Acts 15ff

- Other than Peter, it is likely Paul little time with James, or the other apostles. Paul referred to himself as “least” but “not inferior” to the others. He also stated that he was

Epistle to the Galatians

as “one born out of time” because he did not physically walk with Jesus but met Him through an epiphany on the road to Damascus between 4-7 years after the resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:8, Eph. 3:8)

Paul’s inference is that Titus was NOT required to be circumcised by the Jerusalem Leadership so why are the Judaizers requiring it.

3 Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

- One point of Paul's argument is that Titus, a Gentile, came into the presence of the Jewish Leadership of the Jerusalem church and was not required to be circumcised. This was against the cultural norms among the Jews in this time.

Paul’s challenge can be framed with this question:

“If the church leaders did not require adherence to Jewish customs and traditions, why are the Galatians accepting this from those who are NOT in leadership?”

- Gentiles were considered to be “unclean.” An observant Jew would be required to go through ritual cleansing to be accepted in back into Temple worship.
- The New Testament identifies Gentiles as "Greeks, Heathen, and sinners."

Peter upon entering the household of Cornelius, a Gentile Roman Centurion.

Acts 10:28 “Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.””

- It is noteworthy to mention that Paul distinguishes between circumcised and non-circumcised people in ALL of his letters and teachings. There were two different messages that provided the same result -redemption and freedom from the “wrath to come.”
 - He taught a that a Jew was saved “BY faith” in God to fulfill the “Promises made to the Fathers.” This indeed was fulfilled in the person of the Seed, Jesus Christ. This was involved believing in the prophesied New Covenant and it’s Mediator, Jesus. (**Jer. 31:31; Isa. 53:1-12**)
 - He taught the Gentile was saved “THROUGH faith” in God’s grace being extended to them without having to be circumcised and observe the Law of Moses. Believing in God’s grace toward them, they would be ALSO be included in the Promise and Blessing made to Abraham. (**Romans 3:30; Ephesians 2; Galatians 2:8**)
- The Promises made to the Fathers is the “whole world” would receive the Blessing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through the Seed, Jesus.

Genesis 12:3 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.**”
- Paul, throughout his ministry, taught that God was the “God of BOTH the Jew and the Gentile” and He showed no partiality to either. This was a major paradigm shift for both

Epistle to the Galatians

cultures.

Romans 3:29-30 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,
30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith

In **Ephesians 2:1-8**, Paul explains how God provided the gift of salvation for the Jew differs from the Gentile. To the Jew, redemption occurred **by** “covenant faithfulness.” One required faith in God by covenant; the other required faith in Christ alone apart from covenants or Law

- The Gentile was “THROUGH faith in Christ alone apart from the Law of Moses.” So the Jews were saved **BY** faith in God to inherit the Blessing of Abraham, the Seed who would redeem them: Jesus.
- Both results were the same concerning the blessing and redemption of the world. The gospel message differed because of a difference in the relationship with God. Gentiles had **NO** relationship with God or **NO** covenant. The Jew did.

4 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),

- Paul is again refers to Judaizers, believing Pharisees, whom he deemed “false brethren.”
- The liberty Paul indicated was the freedom that is in Christ apart from the requirement to observe the Jewish Law or enter into a Covenant of Circumcision with God. So again, Gentiles **were never** to be under the Law of Moses!
- The church today has been so steeped in the Law of Moses that grace, if it is even mentioned, is of **NO EFFECT!** This was Paul’s point! Grace plus anything is no longer grace but bondage to legalism!
- Organized religion always seeks **UNIFORMITY** at the expense of **UNITY!** It neglects the mind of the Holy Spirit by replacing it with the “mind of man.”

Personal Testimony: The Lord spoke to me many years ago, “When you see men begin to organize, you will see the influence of My Spirit lift so much so they will not realize He has gone.”

5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the gospel’s truth might continue with you.

- One of the most difficult things to realize is the bondage of legalism brings on so many levels. It will always counter the freedom found in the Spirit. Someone once called it, “The freedom of one’s chains!”
- Paul's passionate stance against even leadership was for the sake of the work of the gospel among the Gentiles.
- Paul was “called” to preach before three distinct audiences. This was not the case for the Twelve and the circumcision.

Acts 9:15-16 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear

Epistle to the Galatians

My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.

16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake

6 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.

- Many Believers are intimidated by the status of people who appear to “be in the know.” In doing so, God becomes limited in their life. They are “comparing themselves by themselves,” which is the wrong standard.
- Paul’s strength was always in his weakness! He came to realize it allowed the Holy Spirit to move him at will. Because of this close dependency there is an intimate relationship with Jesus.
- Paul knew he was operating out of direct revelation from heaven – an unstoppable, immovable position that gave him both purpose and strength. He had the “mandate” and support of heaven, therefore, no need to confer with any man.
- Paul was not intimidated by the statute of others in leadership. His ministry is one of walking in the fear of God and not in the fear of man. While he esteemed Peter and the Twelve, he would not back down to any person who would come against his “revelation of Christ”, and the “mysteries.”

7 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

- The gospel “for the uncircumcised,” the Gentile, was committed to Paul by revelation and recognized at this meeting in Jerusalem. That said, we find in later letters and the accounts of his missionary trips found in Acts, he continued to be persecuted by the Judaizers, the non-Believing Jews, and kings. This was predicted by Jesus when Paul was converted and called into ministry.

Acts 9:15-16

15 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.

16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

- Paul’s was believed because of his testimony of God working among the Gentiles with signs and wonders. This was the same result Peter was experiencing. (Acts 15)

Mark 16:20 “And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.”

[Peter and the Twelve]

Acts 15:12 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.

[Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles]

8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised

Epistle to the Galatians

also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),

- The evidence God was working with both Peter's and Paul's different gospel messages was "signs and wonders." One of the signs was the new Believers were "baptized in the Holy spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues."
- The expectation, even today, should be signs and wonders are supposed to follow the preaching of the Gospel.

Mark 16:17 "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues...."
(Acts 19:2)

9 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.

- These verses (7-9) are significant revelations to the early church. It was a "mystery" to them that was not wholly understood nor accepted by all Jewish believers.
- Another point Paul made was that "two gospel messages" which comprised the "Gospel of Christ." The Gospel of the Kingdom had been committed to Peter (and the Eleven) by Jesus, and the Gospel of Grace to Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. Both Gospel messages were exclusive to its specific audience: Jew & Gentile.
- Those present perceived God was involved with the "acceptance and conversion" of the Gentiles due to the manifestation of the gift of tongues. It was a "sign & wonder" presented in the testimony of Paul and Barnabas. More so, Titus, a "Greek," who was with them, was the living proof of a conversion experience and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

Acts 15:7-11

7 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.

8 So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us,

9 and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke (*Grk: teaching; the Law*) on the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved in the same manner as they

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

- Paul desired the same thing and proved it when he took up an offering for those in distress during a famine in Jerusalem. (**Romans 15:26-27**)

C. Paul confronts the hypocrisy of Peter as a proof of a Gentile Gospel of Grace message

Epistle to the Galatians

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

12 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.

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

- Peter's hypocrisy highlighted the proof of his non-commitment to the Gospel of Grace to the Gentile. He obviously knew God was accepting Gentiles because he preached the gospel to the first Gentiles a few years earlier. It was also revealed that Gentiles were not to be considered "unclean."
- This event happened before the death of King Herod (Agrippa) in 44 AD, and six years before the Council of Jerusalem (dated c. 50).
- The Book of Acts is entirely silent this confrontation.

14 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?"

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

- "Jews by nature" means "nature -growth, germination, or expansion; naturally produced; native disposition."

Paul is saying, It is the Jews nature and culture to be a Jew because we are separated from the rest of the world by covenant and the Law.

An interesting fact, is "Jews are the only peoples to have been persecuted beyond belief, spread to the four winds, and yet continue to maintain their national identity which is "Jewish." No other culture can say that.

- In the Jewish mindset, Gentiles were, by nature, sinners. Therefore, they were not a part of any relationship, privilege, or standing with God.
- The interesting point is that Jesus fellowshiped with sinners. His earthly ministry was directed to Israel; therefore, these "sinners" had to be Jews. These Jews had departed from strict adherence to the Law of Moses. They were, like today, considered "social or ethnic" Jews. When Jesus called Peter to Himself, Peter responded, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man!" (**Luke 5:8**) Peter though a Jew was not a zealous Jew (like Paul). Neither were the other eleven disciples.
- Jews also believed that God did not hear or respond to sinners.

John 9:31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.

Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

16 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

Epistle to the Galatians

shall be justified.

- The question Paul is imposing is, “Why would a Jew who is more knowledgeable and obligated require sinful Gentiles to keep the Law, since the Jew knew the Law could not justify even them?”

17 “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!

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

19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

20 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.

21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

- Paul is saying if the Law could provide a consciousness of righteousness in a person THEN “Why did Jesus have to die for sins?”
- The Law strengthened a knowledge of sin and its ravaging effect. The rules of the Law condemned people both because they “did the wrong things” and “did not do the right things.” All have sinned and come short of glory God...except Jesus.
- It is imperative to understand that Paul is speaking ABOUT the Jew and NOT ABOUT the Gentile in verses 15 through 21
 1. The Jew is a Jew by nature through his covenant relationship identify with the “One true God.”
 2. The Jew knows he cannot be justified by the Law (Christians know this also)
 3. The Jew knew that the Law was righteous, but that it could not produce righteousness in a person’s heart. This is evidenced by continual animal sacrifice for sin.
 4. The question is, “After being justified and sin is discovered in the Believer, did the cross produce sin?” NO, NO, NO!
 5. Trying to add to the Law to overcome sin makes one a transgressor.
 6. Trying to add to grace to overcome sin made the cross of no effect
 7. The Law produces death in a person, not life, because it is constantly condemning the person
- Jews considered themselves as "set apart and holy" by God. They believed Gentiles, not "chosen or called by God," to be "sinners.”
- It was the Law of Moses that produced this 'mindset'. The Law was holy; therefore, the people to whom the Law was given and who observed it, MUST BE holy also.

Epistle to the Galatians

Chapter 3

III. Affirmation of the Gentile Gospel of Grace message

A. The Gentile Gospel of Grace message is “grace through faith alone”

1 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?

2 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?

- Paul embeds several questions in these two verses challenging the Galatians to consider “HOW” they came into salvation.
 1. Has someone cast a spell on you? What changed?
 2. Did you not I clearly preach the gospel (of grace) and did you not hear it and receive it?
 3. Did God affirm your conversion and acceptance because you believed what I preached?
 4. Did you receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues?

Note: Today there are those who preach that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues was only for the Apostles who used it as affirmation that God was with them. This view does not reflect the testimony found in this scripture.

- The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is one of several signs that a person being accepted by God; “born again.” It is also a sign to others of their salvation status. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is only available to born again persons.
- God always has “signs” of His involvement in either a situation of the life of a person. Our life should be one of signs present.

“These Signs shall follow those that believe...”

Mark 16:17-18

17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

18 they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Acts 19:1-5

1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples

2 he said to them, “**Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?**”

So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

3 And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?”

So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”

4 Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Epistle to the Galatians

Acts 10:44-46

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

See also Acts 2:3-4 -120 people were baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

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

4 Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

5 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? —

- The apostle James taught that it is “works which proves a person has faith in God. i.e., “a life of faith exhibited by the faith of the person.”
- Paul taught that faith in God manifested His the works by the “power of the Holy Spirit” who was active in the life of the Believer because He was “with them, in them, and came upon them for service.”

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a “sign” but He is also manifested for “power.”

James 2:20-24

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only

- The question is, “Does God respond to our requests because we are faithful and obedient to obey the rules of righteous living or is it by hearing His voice and responding?”
- Both in Romans 10 and here in Galatians 3:5 the “Word of Faith” means the “Gospel.” It is NOT a reference to the Bible but a reference to the ‘proceeding word’ that is currently going throughout the earth from the throne room of heaven.
- This in NO WAY dilutes or diminishes the effectiveness and importance of the Bible in the life of people.

Romans 10:17” So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

See **Romans 4:1-25**;

- Abraham was considered righteous because he believed God not because he obeyed God through circumcision (Genesis 15:6)
- David affirms this truth as to how a person is made righteous or in right standing before God.

Epistle to the Galatians

Psalms 32:1-2

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

- The heirs of Abraham are those who believe God for their inheritance.
- The inheritance is gained in Christ: blessings, peace prosperity, deliverance, safety, life eternal. More so, the “Blessing of Abraham” is simply “protection.” Protection from the “wrath of God” and the eternal judgement for personal sin.
- The point Paul is trying to convey is, Gentiles are blessed in the "same manner" as Abraham. He was blessed...BY FAITH in God! The effect of that choice was “he was declared a righteous person.” Only people who put their faith and trust in God are “righteous” in His sight.
- Faith is what made Abraham pleasing to God

Hebrews 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

8 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.”

- Paul’s point is that Abraham, a Gentile, receive justification and righteousness by faith and not works before the Law of Moses existed. This is an indication that ALL Gentiles be accepted by God in the same manner by faith.
- Abraham was given this promise BEFORE the Covenant of Circumcision which was the beginning of the Nation of Israel. This is what is called "The promise of Abraham."
- In the Covenant of Moses, the nation of Israel was given the standard by which they should live separated from the world unto God for His purposes.
- In the New Covenant Jesus instructed the Twelve to “go into the world” to preach the Gospel.
- The Blessing of Abraham is the SEED, Jesus, who would bless all of mankind with salvation.

ALL of the families; nations of the earth will be blessed and not just Jews.

For further study see: Gen. 12:3; Gen. 18:18; Gen. 22:18; Gen. 26:4; Gen. 28:14

9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Epistle to the Galatians

10 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.”

- The Law Introduced a Curse because no Jew could keep the Law (except for Jesus)
- Paul is speaking about the Jew and not the Gentile in the following verses. Only the Jew was ever under the ordinances of the Law of Moses and never the Gentile.
- Now in Christ the new creature is holy and not under the Law.
- Paul is conveying the thought in context that those Jews who would require adherence to the Law of Moses are placing themselves (and the Galatian Gentiles) under the curse which comes from disobedience to the Law.

Deuteronomy 27:26

Whoever places themselves under the “Law of Moses “becomes cursed
Whoever puts themselves under the “Law of Faith” is blessed.

11 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 “Behold the proud,
His soul is not upright in him;
But the just shall live by his faith.”

- A proud person does not seek God or His mind, will or agenda. A humble person seeks God and puts faith in what God shows them.
- A person who is “upright” is said to be upright, honest, just, conscientious, scrupulous, honorable mean having or showing a strict regard for what is morally right
- “Uprightness” implies a strict adherence to moral principles. a stern and upright minister. honest stresses adherence to such virtues as truthfulness, candor, or fairness.

SEE New Testament References: Romans 1:17; Hebrews 8:7-13

12 Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

Leviticus 18:4-5

4 You shall observe (perform; maintain in your life) My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the LORD your God.

5 You shall therefore keep (My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live)revived; quicker; maintain a sensitivity towards God) by them: I am the LORD.

- The idea is that the Law, while unable to “make a person righteous,” was to given to “keep a person on the path of righteousness towards God.”

Romans 10:5 “For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.”

[only Jesus could live by the Law]

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

Epistle to the Galatians

13 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”),

- **This scripture is the most “misunderstood & misapplied” verse in the Bible!!!!**

- Jesus redeemed the Jew from the curse of the Law by fulfilling it for them and making a New Covenant for the Jew. [SEE Jeremiah 31:31 & Hebrews *

Jeremiah 31:31-32

31 “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—**

32 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.

SEE **Hebrews 8:7-13** for further explanation.

The Hebrew Epistle was written to Jewish Believers and NOT Gentile Believers in the Body of Christ.

- The Gentile was never under the Law of Moses therefore they (we) were NOT “cursed.” We were “hopelessly LOST” because we had no covenant or promise available to us until Christ came and God extended “GRACE.”

Ephesians 2:12-13

12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world.**

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

It is IMPORTANT to understand this foundational truth!

Gentiles were outside the covenants of God and Israel!

The traditions of every Christian denomination since Paul’s revelation of the “Mystery of the Gentiles” has inferred that we as Gentiles were at one point under the Law and covenants of Israel. This is a false doctrine!!!

To FULLY understand this, READ the **entire chapter** of **Ephesians 2**.

Pay close attention to the personal pronouns “we, you, us, etc.” Sometimes “us” means the Jew and other times Paul is talking about the Gentile.

Context, Context, Context!

- ALL Pauls writings and teachings reflect the “rhetorical question and answer” style. It was atypical of the rabbinical teachers of that time.
- He is NOT saying that the Galatians were “redeemed from the curse of the Law but it is the Jew who was redeemed.
The implication is that the Judaizers, because of their lack of understanding, were trying to put the Galatian Gentile under a system that was bringing a curse upon the Jew; a system through which Christ fulfilled thereby delivering them out from under it.

Epistle to the Galatians

- The Jew was redeemed from the curse of the law so that the Gentile could be blessed and included in the redemptive plan of God. The Gentile could not be redeemed from the curse of the law or be a recipient of the blessings of the law because the law was exclusively given to Israel.

Ephesians 2: 14-18

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,

16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

14 that the **blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles** in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

- It was only after Jesus fulfilled and abolished the Law of Moses that redemption was opened to the uncircumcised Gentile nations.
- Jesus instituted a NEW covenant with Israel, a blood covenant, that satisfied and fulfilled the requirements to the old covenant of the Law of Moses.
- God had redemption, which is part of the Blessing of Abraham, in mind for the Gentile also.

Isaiah 42:1 “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.

Isaiah 42:6 “I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness,
And will hold Your hand;
I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people,
As a light to the Gentiles.

Isaiah 49:6

”Indeed He says,
‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles.
That You (Jesus) should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

Luke 2:30-32

30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation
31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,
32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles.
And the glory of Your people Israel.”

Epistle to the Galatians

Romans 3:29-31(* This is difference of how Gentiles and Jews are saved)**

Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,

30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised **“by faith”** and the uncircumcised **“through faith.”**

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

15 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.

- Paul is showing how the Law never applied to the Gentile
- The promise was given to Abraham before the covenants of circumcision and the covenant of the Law of Moses. The promise was to ALL people but the covenants was exclusively Israel.
- The promise made to Abraham and his Seed is superior to the covenants made about and for Israel.

16 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.

17 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.

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

19 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.

- The Law of Moses for Israel was not Plan A! It was Plan B. It was added because sin and it's dominion over man continued to increase exponentially. Men became more wicked and ungodly with time.

“If God had not given the Law there would not have been a virgin birth!”
-Andrew Wommack

- The covenant between God and Jesus could not be replaced by the covenant between God and Israel
- The covenant between God and Christ occurred in heaven.
The covenant the had two purposes:

1. **It was a plan of redemption and restoration for all of God's natural creation. The natural Creation would be redeemed and restored to the place it was before the fall in the garden. An idyllic existence.**

Epistle to the Galatians

2. Man would become a completed, new creature that could not ever fail. Man would become a "living spirit" who possessed a soul and lived in a body. He would become exactly like Jesus, a "spirit-man" and a natural man.

1 Corinthians 15:45-49

45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.
47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

20 Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.

21 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.

- The gospel is not about bad people becoming good people. It is about "dead people being made alive." It is not able doing good works. Good (God) works follow the change in nature.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 5:24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Romans 6:4 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.

1 John 5:11-12

11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

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

Romans 2:14-16

14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves,

15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)

16 in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

Epistle to the Galatians

- Christ is the life giving spirit who gives life to man
- "All" is a specific reference to the Jew
- The Jew is saved "by faith" in believing the promise given to Abraham to be blessed by God through the "seed" from his loins. The years of bondage is a type shadow of 430 of "redemption" that would come to Israel. Jesus was the "Redeemer of Israel"
- The Gentile is saved "through faith" in Christ. Romans 3:28-31. Jesus was the "Savior" Gentiles totally apart from covenants or the Law. Biblically, the Gentile was not redeemed, he was saved!

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

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

Romans 3:30 "since there is one God who will justify the **circumcised by faith** and the **uncircumcised through faith.**"

- Jews who adhere to the Law were taught about Jesus "by faith" in what the law said. The law and prophets all pointed to AND led them the Redeemer which is Christ.
- The Gentile came to Christ "through faith" TOTALLY APART AND WITH NO KNOWLEDGE of the law. It was completely GRACE extended from God.
- Faith is having an absolute conviction. This conviction can be based on a lie or based on a truth.

Romans 3:30 Jews are saved "**by faith**" in believing the promises of God concerning the SEED spoken of in the covenants of circumcision and the Law. All of which pointed to Christ.

The Gentile was saved "**through faith**" in Christ without the Law or covenants.

25 But after faith has come, we (Jews) are no longer under a tutor.

- "after faith has come" is a direct reference to Jesus as the "Christ"; the "Anointed One"; the expected "Messiah" of Israel
- IMPORTANT:
To understand Paul's epistles, you have to "identify the personal pronouns" within EACH and EVERY verse. This tells you either "who is speaking to" or "who he is speaking about."
(He switches back and forth between circumcised and uncircumcised; Israel and Gentile, etc.)

26 For you (Gentiles) are all sons of God "**through**" **faith** in Christ Jesus.

- The idea of Gentiles being "sons of God and co-heirs" to the promises made to the fathers of Israel was a very foreign concept to both the circumcised and uncircumcised.
- Paul switches to speak directly to the Gentile Galatians about how they came to Jesus
- Notice the term Paul used, "**through faith.**" This phrase is used in other of Paul's epistles when referencing "how a Gentile came into redemption"
- Jews came into redemption "**by faith**" in the Promises made to the Fathers to provide

Epistle to the Galatians

redemption.” (**Romans 3:30**)

This term is also consistent in Paul’s writings when referring to the Jews.

- Paul’s point was that both Gentiles and Jews are one in the same spiritually. Both are in Christ because they accepted the work of God in Christ by or through faith.
- There are several “mysteries” (secrets) Paul received by direct revelation which were unknown to the Twelve. Paul is indirectly applying his revelation of the “mysteries” to this narrative.
[i.e., “Mystery of the Gentiles” (Eph. 3:4-6) and “Mystery of the Body of Christ” which is the church. (Eph. 3:3-6; 1 Cor. 12:13)]

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

- Paul changes the narrative from instruction of how Gentiles were saved through faith and continue to operate in faith. This change is now directed to their identity in Christ because of faith and not identity that comes from the Law or covenant of circumcision.
- When the Gentile heard the “gospel of the it salvation” it was 10 years after the resurrection. The Law had been abolished at the cross. The New Covenant was now in place for Israel and Judah according to the promise of God in Jeremiah 31:31-34. This covenant did not and dose not include the Gentile.
- “You are all” means Gentiles are ALSO sons of Abraham “through faith” in Jesus
- The word "for" is better translated "and" or "because"
FOR -a primary particle; properly, assigning a reason (used in argument, explanation or intensification; often with other particles):--and, as, because (that), but, even, for, indeed, no doubt, seeing, then, therefore, verily, what, why, yet.
The same phrase “through faith” applies to the Gentile. It is “through faith” in Jesus and Jesus alone that a person receives righteousness and salvation.

Romans 3:30-31

30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Ephesians 2:8 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.

- "One in Christ" is one the revelations or mysteries revealed exclusively to Paul. This is the "body of Christ"

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

- Jesus abolished the Law of Moses so Gentiles could share in the Promise made to Abraham with regards to salvation; redemption

Ephesians 2

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

Epistle to the Galatians

15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,

16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

- It is important to know that the Law of Moses was ADDED as a covenant with Israel to sin in check until the Promise of the Seed made to Abraham could be fulfilled.

Galatians 3:19 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.

Epistle to the Galatians

Chapter 4

B. Clarification of the Gentile Gospel of Grace message

1 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,

2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements (natural not spiritual) of the world.

- The spiritual realm has always, and will always exist.
- The natural realm was created in order to “make a new creature” that when completed could not be corrupted like Lucifer. This “new creature” or man was “Jesus.” He was the first new creature created from the resurrection that was both spirit and man. He was the first man to enter heaven. Every man who puts faith in God and what He did in Christ is made to be exactly like Jesus; both spirit and man. A person becomes “complete in Christ” Spirit, soul and body.
- The natural realms attributes are:
 1. It is a “created realm of existence.”
 2. It is an “isolated” system; a realm separate from the spiritual heaven where God resides.
 3. It has a finite beginning and finite end. It is a temporary realm of existence for God’s purpose. (time and seasons are created for divine order of events)
 4. It would involve the creation of natural man (Adam) who would fail but was to be redeemed before he was created.
 5. which was to create a “new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17) that could not be corrupted like the Lucifer.

SEE 1 Cor. 15:35-49 – Paul expounds on the differences between the “natural & spiritual” realms. He also shows that Adam was an “incomplete natural man” when he was created. He states that “Jesus became the first completed man” because of the resurrection. He was became the first “living creature” with body, soul, and spirit.

- The creation was subjected to the bondage of futility or uselessness (for eternal purposes; It would eventually be removed leaving only the eternal realm. This existence is also in bondage to the natural decay or corruption.

Romans 8:18-2

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

20 For **the creation was subjected to futility**, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Futility:

Epistle to the Galatians

1. futile, vain, fruitless mean producing no result.
2. futile may connote **completeness of failure** or unwisdom of undertaking.
3. resistance had proved so futile that surrender was the only choice left.
4. vain usually implies simple failure to achieve a desired result.

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

- JESUS both became flesh and He was also born under the Law as a “servant”
- Jesus was born under the Law therefore an observer of the Law

5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

- Israel was the only one under the Law and not the Gentile. Jesus redeemed the Jew who was under the Law. Consequently, this could not be a reference to the Gentile.
- The Gentile acknowledged God because of their receptiveness to the Holy Spirit. This was a TOTAL act of grace!
- One reason the Holy Spirit was given was the convict (convince) the unbelieving WORLD concerning true righteousness. This statement implies the Gentile, and not the Jew, was in the world and hopelessly lost before coming to a “knowledge of God and His existence.”
- The “adoption of sons,” also found in Ephesians 1:5, The Jew is considered “chosen and adopted” as children of Israel. By comparison, Israel and the Gentiles who accept Christ, become “sons of God” by accepting the “call into Christ.”

Ephesians 1:5 “... having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,”

- Predestination (predestined) always has to do with the creation and “adoption of sons” by Jesus Christ.
- To correctly understand the concept of predestination, one has to know who was “predestined.” Was it the Jew, the Gentile, or both?
- Jews were “chosen” by God while “all are called” into Christ, both Jew and Gentile.
- Predestination is a doctrine concerning Israel being a “chosen nation” for God’s purposes in the earth. This teaching has the been grossly misapplied to the church; the Body of Christ. It is a teaching that applies ONLY to Israel and NOT the church.

This doctrine has caused more issues than probably any teaching.

See **Romans 8:29-30** & **Romans 9:4** for more clarity.

Paul was directing his teaching of predestination primarily to the Jewish Believer in the Roman church. The Gentile Believer, while present, was merely being instructed about predestination and it’s importance to Israel.

Predestination is a truth that only the Jewish Believer would have understood. Israel was predestined, or “chosen” to be the people of God in the earth for His name and purpose to bring forth the Seed; Jesus.

Again, both the Jew and the Gentile are “called” into Christ or “sonship.”

Epistle to the Galatians

6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”

- Jesus made us accepted by His grace for all time. You don't have to prove anything to God to be accepted by Him. God is our Father not our godfather. He is not a gangster who offers us protection. He protects us regardless of our performance.
- Verses 1 to 12 are to be understood from a Jew writing to a Gentile about the purpose and predestination of the Jew and Paul's purpose and call and revelation of the mystery to include the Gentiles

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

Paul's Fear for the Church

In verses 7 to 19, Paul expresses his great concern that the Gentile Galatian will return to their former idolatry practices. I tells them that following the Judaizers into the Law would produce guilt, sin consciousness, and legalistic way of thinking. The result would separate and destroy their relationship with God.

8 But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.

- ALL Gentiles were idol worshipers. They had no covenant relationship with God. The gods they created arose out of the darkness of there heart and a vain imagination. The imagination is God-given to every human being for the purpose of spiritual vision when the heart acknowledges the Creator. A “vain imagination” is one that does not produce the “life of God.”

See **Romans 1:18-38** for more clarity with respect to the Gentile nations before Christ was manifested.

- In this verse, Paul redirected his narrative away from his explanation of “sonship” to the Gentile congregates. Again, up to this point in Romans he was speaking primarily ABOUT the Jewish Believer. He was trying to dispel the idea that the Old Testament Law was still valid. He was showing it is “faith in Christ that makes a person righteous.” It is walking “by faith” that produces the Abundant Life of God in a person.
- One of several meanings of the word “know” IS “to recognize” OR “to be aware of.” Paul was telling the gentile Galatians that before they came to God they were “not aware and did not recognize” Him. Even more so from God's perspective, He did not “recognize” them until they accepted Jesus and the cross.
- The point of Paul's question was, “Why are you Gentiles wanting turn to a Law which did not recognize you?”

9 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?

- Paul is stating emphatically that idolatry had held them in bondage under the dominion of darkness. Idolatry provided nothing. Idolatry was the state of all the nations of the

Epistle to the Galatians

world accept Israel.

Ephesians 2:1-3

1 And you (*Gentiles*) He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,
2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

- Knowing God happens when one becomes born again. For the Jew it is the intimate aspect of being a son rather than a servant. This is in keeping with what Jesus taught Israel during his earthly ministry. It is also what He spoke of Himself as “born of the Spirit.” Jesus was begat by the Holy Spirit, therefore He was a “son of God” from the womb.

10 You observe days and months and seasons and years.

- Under the Law of Moses “special days, months, and times” was mandated.
 - The “observance of days” refers to keeping the Sabbath (Joh 5:16).
 - Observing months and times is a reference to the new moons (Nu 10:10, 1Ch 23:31, and Ps 81:3) and feasts (i.e., Passover, First fruits, etc.).
 - Observing years refers to the Sabbath year and the Year of Jubilee of Le 25.
 - Paul is making it very clear that the keeping of these rituals is not necessary for salvation.
 - Those who preach that it is are dangerously close to having their faith in Christ voided (Ga 2:21), as Paul described in the next verse.
- Interestingly, the idolatrous Gentile nations observe their own “special feasts. And days.” They still continue the of practice of astrology and worship the “creation rather than the Creator.”

11 I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

- The “fatherly side of Paul is now beginning to take over the narrative.
- Paul is now appealing to his personal relationship with the Galatians.
- “Have I worked so hard with you for nothing” is another way to say this.

12 Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all.

- Another way to say this is, "Be like me (free from the Law), because that's the way you really are." From a position of being made free from the burden and condemnation of the Law, Paul was pleading with the Galatians to join him in rejecting the Law. He was also showing them that the Law was not the means of being justified with God.
- Paul was a Jew by natural birth, but he had forsaken the Law as a means of being reconciled to God. Therefore, for all intents and purposes he was living like a Gentile who was “initially free from the Law” and under complete grace.
- The Galatians' tendencies toward the Judaizers teaching to come under legalism hadn't

Epistle to the Galatians

affected Paul. He was going to continue in grace.

13 You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.

- Paul was making reference to injuries he had suffered from the stoning he sustained just before he came into contact with the Galatian churches.
- His point was the Galatians hadn't despised him but had received him as they would an angel of God. Why had they changed? Paul hadn't changed. The Gospel hadn't changed. It was the Galatians who were inconsistent. He was putting them in remembrance of their original reception of him to rekindle their love for him and to cause them to submit themselves once again to the Gospel that he preached.

14 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.

- The mindset of that time (and even today) was that a person suffering in their life must be doing something wrong.
- This verse fits well with those who adhere to the doctrine that God puts things on people to teach them or discipline them. It goes completely against the unconditional love God has for people.
- To receive someone who was stoned or beaten would be the same as receiving an ex-convict who had committed and been punished for a horrendous crime against society.
- Paul was considered by both the Jewish and Gentile cultures to be a criminal.

15 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.

Andrew Wommack Commentary-

The Greek word that was translated "blessedness" is "MAKARISMOS." This word comes from the word "MAKARIZO," and MAKARIZO was translated as "count...happy" in Jas 5:11.

Legalism causes people to lose their joy. This is what happened to the Galatians. The NIV translates this phrase as "What happened to all your joy?" Paul was saying, "Where is the joy you used to have through our relationship? At one time, you would have done anything for me, even given me your own eyes if it were necessary. But now you've drawn back. It is you that have changed, not me."

- Paul did not literally mean by these statements that there was something wrong with his eyes. Just as today when someone says, "I'd give my right arm for them," that doesn't necessarily mean there is anything wrong with the other person's right arm.
- Paul may have just been saying that these Galatians were at one time willing to do anything for him and therefore he was asking "What had changed?"
- The Judaizers had obviously spoken evil against Paul in order to discredit his gospel and teaching to the Galatian Gentiles. This has continued to happen in the church even to this day. It is the way of the world when pushing an agenda.

Epistle to the Galatians

- Paul was not ashamed of the gospel he preached for it was “the power of God leading to salvation” and to becoming righteous in the site of God, a work which the Law could not accomplish.

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

- We are to “speak truth in love” to others but sometimes truth can seem like condemnation because the heart is preconditioned to reject that truth. That is why the Holy Spirit has to be intimately involved when ministering to people.
- The Galatians were not only rejecting the Paul’s message of the Gospel of Grace, but also rejecting him as the messenger.
- A religious mindset will always cause a judgmental attitude toward others but have to reject the messenger as a “false teacher,” a condition we still see in the church today. This produces death. It takes a spirit-minded person who is willing to speak the truth in love to bring life to a situation.
- Truth, when first heard, is almost always rejected unless the Holy Spirit is involved to bear witness to the truth. It is the “anointing that teaches.”
- It is in the challenge to accept or modify our thinking that we tend to reject the one who taught us.
- This was Paul’s constant dilemma. It was also Jesus’ situation. The Jews rejected Jesus based on his message. They “stumbled.” Nothing has changed for all people.
- Instead of rejecting the teaching we marginalize the teacher at best to justify our change of heart.
- The correct approach is to “ponder these things in our heart’ until the Holy Spirit bears witness “with or against” what we hear.

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

- Paul is saying that the Judaizers are "Law elitists" who are in reality are trying maintain the class differences between the circumcised and uncircumcised. It was a means hold control and power over the Gentile in order to justify themselves as THE “chosen people of God”
- Jewish legalists believed they were “teachers of the blind.” The “blind” can only be a reference to “Gentiles” because the Jews saw themselves as have both unique and exclusive relationship with God. They believed they were God’s light in the world to all other nations.
- Jews of that day, even Jewish Believers, thought the Gentile Believer to be beneath themselves.

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

19 My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,

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

Contrasting the promise with the Covenant of Abraham and the Law

Epistle to the Galatians

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear (understand)the law?

- Paul poses the questions to those who wanted to be accepted under the Law: “Do you not understand what the Law requires of you” Do you not know that adherence to the Law will condemn you, not free you from it;s demands?”
- Israel was under two covenants: Circumcision and the Law of Moses. The Galatians who were Gentiles was excluded from these two covenants
- This question posed by Paul is can you “not understand or comprehend the Law?” If they truly understood the Law the demands of the Law required absolute and complete observance.
- The Law demanded obedience to every letter and would condemn them for they could not keep it.

Exodus 24:7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.”

See **Romans 7:7-25** – Paul describes what life is like for a person who tries to live under the Law of Moses. It is a never-ending self-condemning experience.

- Paul is without doubt drawing from his personal experience as a “Hebrew of Hebrews.” See **Philippians 3:2-6** -Paul describes his position as a circumcised person under the Law as the “perfect Jew.”

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a free woman.

- Abraham’s sons and his household were required to be circumcised and become part of the covenants In verses 22 to 27, Paul makes the comparison between the two offspring, Ishmael and Isaac.
- Ishmael although part of the covenant of circumcision and the blessed by God to become a great nation, was born of a slave women therefore in slavery.
- Isaac would be the “son of promise” through whom the “Seed” or Jesus would come. The promise was made to Abraham and in effect to Sarah while she was barren.
- Paul states that Hagar was a bondwoman while Sarah was free woman.
- Paul uses this biblical symbolism showing that Hagar is Mount Sinai where the covenant of the Law of Moses was instituted, a covenant that gave birth to bondage of sin.
- Mount Sinai corresponds to the “earthly Jerusalem,” and Israel which is in bondage.

23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the free woman through promise,

- “Born of the flesh” is a term to mean born of the will of man and not God’s will.
- Born of the “free woman” indicates that the will of man had nothing to do with God’s sovereign choice.

Epistle to the Galatians

24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—

25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children

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

27 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.”

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

Acts 3:24-26 (Stephen, the first martyr, preaching to Israel.)

24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.

25 You (Israel) are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’

26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”

- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are referred to by Israel as the “fathers.” i.e., “fathers of Israel
- In a dozen plus places in the Bible, the Lord God (“Supreme God”) is referred to as the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (i.e., Genesis 50:24; Exodus 3:15; Acts 7:32). This name of God or ’elôhîym in Hebrew, emphasizes the covenant that God made with the fathers of Israel and the Israelites’ special place as God’s Chosen People. He is the “Supreme God” who is exclusive to the Fathers of Israel and to Israel as a nation.
- God repeated the Abrahamic Covenant to three different generations: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all given the promise of land, many descendants, and blessing.

29 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.

- The flesh always persecutes the spiritual. Tradition always rejects the truth.
- The born-again, spiritual man will always endeavor to follow what is in his heart because his desire is to please God. There is, however conflict at times with the fleshly man.

30 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 free woman.”

Epistle to the Galatians

Romans 8:13-14

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

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

Epistle to the Galatians

Chapter 5

IV. Practical application of the Liberty of the Gentile Gospel of Grace message

(5:1—6:10)

A. Liberty found within the Gentile Gospel of Grace

1 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 Law of Liberty

- The “liberty” that Jesus provided was the fulfillment and therefore the removal of the Law of Moses. Therefore there was no longer a need for a sacrificial system. He created a New Covenant with God for Israel that allowed them to have a “new” way to relate to God, to “know God.” (Jeremiah 31:33)
- They could experience God with the “law of Faith” in the same manner as the Fathers of Israel minus a sin consciousness. (Jeremiah 31:34; 32:40)
- Because of the New Covenant sin was judged at the cross and became a non-issue. Sin was forever removed by the blood sacrifice of Jesus. (Jeremiah 31:34; 32:40)
- The New Covenant made it possible for ALL individuals, Jew or Gentile, to be made righteous if they put faith in this blood covenant Jesus made with the Father, a covenant in which no one had any part except “faith.”
- You Gentiles were saved "through faith" completely separate from any observance of the law.
(See Romans 3:30)
- We Jews were saved "by faith" in the “promises of Abraham” and accepting the prophets and the covenants.
- Don't allow anyone to come to you AGAIN requiring you to be circumcised becoming a Jew and therefore an observer of the Law.

The Yoke of Bondage

- Paul called the Law a “yoke of bondage” meaning the rules of the Law could not make one free from the Law of sin and death and the dominion of darkness.
- Believers are to approach the Law as something that “instructs and corrects one in living righteous” but cannot “make a person righteous.”
Only accepting the finished work of the cross and “make a person righteous.”
- Jesus referred to His yoke being light and easy. Jesus was born under the Law but He lived by faith in God which produced Liberty. (**Matthew 11:30-31**)
- A “yoke” in Jewish understanding is “an instruction or teaching” in the righteousness God expects. This yoke was heavy for the adherent because the Law continually requiring interpretation.

Acts 15:7-11

7 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.

8 So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us,

Epistle to the Galatians

9 and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 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?

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

- Jesus made the Law simply, “Knowing that God loves you enables you to love Him in return. Doing this will cause you to love others.”

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

- This commandment is based on a knowledge that God (Jesus) “loved first.” It is the enabling factor which causes us to love others. No one can love without first knowing they are loved.

2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.

- The Jews, or Judaizers, who also Believers in Jesus, were requiring that Gentiles be circumcised and observe the Law of Moses. This issue was settled some ten or so years before at the Jerusalem Council(see Acts 15).
- To be an observer or better yet, "one who adheres to the Law as the way of being righteous," nullifies faith in Christ for righteousness." i.e., “right-standing with God”
- The believer has been made righteous by accepting the work of the cross and not observing the Law and the Ten Commandments.

Romans 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

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

- Paul is telling the Galatians that becoming circumcised they would also be required to obey the Law of Moses. They would be bound, not free, to the demands and consequences of following the Law to it’s fullest.

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

- “Fallen from grace” does not mean fallen into sin! This is a false teaching perpetrated by legalists to put people under the “yoke of bondage.”
- “Fallen from grace“ means one has “turned away from the grace of God,” a position which continually keeps one in the favor of God.”
- Fallen from grace” means one has turned back to performance and away from the finished work of the cross to maintain status with God,

Titus 2:11-12 (AMP)

“For the [remarkable, undeserved] grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to reject ungodliness and worldly (immoral) desires, and to live sensible, upright, and godly lives [lives with a purpose that

Epistle to the Galatians

reflects spiritual maturity] in this present age”

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

- Every Believer is waiting in expectation of the complete manifestation of the work that God accomplished through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The question is “What is the hope the Christian is currently waiting to experience?” It is the “adoption, the redemption of our (physical) body,” a body that will be transformed into an eternal, unique dwelling place for each individual who is in Christ.
- This hope is for a “body” that will never see corruption; the same body that Jesus received when He was raised from the dead.

See **Romans 8:18-25** for a full explanation of this mystery Paul was given, the “Mystery of the Resurrection.”

Romans 8:24-25

24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

- Many other scriptures support this concept of not only being made righteous through trusting or having faith towards God but ALSO continuing to walk in this righteousness.
- Paul is the only apostle to reveal that to be “in Christ” means that no covenant or Law is required -just faith in God or Christ. Another way to look at it is what we do is meaningless if we do not recognize what we have become through faith in Christ.

1 Corinthians 7:19 “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.”

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

Colossians 3:11 “where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

- “You ran well” is a term in Greek that means “you have put forth an immense amount of effort and overcome many obstacles and resistance”
- To “hinder” means to “impede” or to “stand in the way of forward progress.”
- Paul is asking a rhetorical question challenging the Galatian Gentile church to think for a moment where they started, how far they had come, what they had achieved “in Christ” and NOW someone is telling them they missed it! They had been “bewitched” is the only explanation from Paul’s perspective.
- Paul letters are always instructional, challenging and include components of correction and nurturing so as to move the Believer forward in their faith in Christ. The instructional part is usually in the first chapters, however many, and the nurturing in

Epistle to the Galatians

the remaining chapters. This is Paul's style of teaching through all of his writings.

8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.

- It is not Jesus who is standing in your way to move forward in faith. It is either our unbelief or embracing something that is not in accordance to the Word or the direction of the Holy Spirit.

9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

- Believing the wrong things, especially when it comes to "grace through faith" causes at best "double-mindedness" leading to failure to experience all that God has for those who love Him.

10 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.

- Paul is speaking of the "Judaizers" who were adding to the Gospel of Grace of God given to these Believers.
- Grace plus any requirement other than faith on our part is NOT grace! The caveat is "God supplies the faith!"

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

- Paul never taught obedience to the Law to the Gentile. This was his point! He was persecuted because he did not require Gentiles to become Jewish converts. To Paul it was the cross of Christ that, when accepted, gave a person righteousness, something which Law could not accomplish.
- Paul's ministry was also to Israel to whom he preached the exclusively the Gospel of the Kingdom. Paul never taught he Jews to stop observing the Law. He did teach that Christ was the end of the Law for those who would believe to both Jew and Gentile.

Romans 10:4 "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."

12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

- In the harshest of terms, Paul was speaking of "castration" which is definitely biting sarcasm. His manner of speech is emphatically telling the Judaizers to go to the extreme if they truly believed circumcision accomplished righteousness.

13 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.

- We are to operate with complete freedom of standards with the exception of "love". Love fulfills the whole law and love never fails.
- "Being at Liberty is not the same as being irresponsible"
- Relating to sin, God's grace, love, and Liberty is NOT freedom to sin but freedom from sin. Paul's defense of grace is not a promotion of sin.

Epistle to the Galatians

- In context Paul is saying that we are at total freedom to make choices concerning how we live our lives as long as it does not bring a stumbling block to someone else.
- It should be noted that unavoidable offenses will occur no matter what we choose. The issue may be the fault of the other person. We are to keep ourselves in the love of God that no bitter root arises in our hearts.

See **Romans 14** for Paul's practical teaching on "How to walk in the Liberty of the Spirit."

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

- Jesus said we were to "love our enemies, those who persecute us, and those who speak vile things against us."

2 Corinthians 5:16-19 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

- We are called in the Body of Christ to maintain the "unity of the Spirit." One can only maintain what one something that they already possess. It is the "unity OF THE Spirit" we are to maintain. One's efforts in this front keeps them from strife.

Ephesians 4:1-3

1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love,

3 **endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace.

- STRIFE is a product of trying to control someone else's behavior and is rooted in pride.
- In both the Old and New Testaments, God directs Believers to walk strife-free so as to enhance liberty and more so the liberty of God to "freely bless."

Psalms 133

1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 It is like the precious oil upon the head,
Running down on the beard,
The beard of Aaron,

Running down on the edge of his garments.

3 It is like the dew of Hermon,

Epistle to the Galatians

Descending upon the mountains of Zion;
For there the LORD commanded the blessing—
Life forevermore.

- Liberty does not mean one is free to do as they please.

Andrew Wommack Commentary:

“Every time anyone advocates Christian liberty, the critics always bring up the same question: "Why then live holy? If God accepts us by grace, then what motivation is there to have godly actions?" Paul addressed this very issue in much detail in Ro 6 (see note 1 at Ro 6:1, note 2 at Ro 6:2, note 7 at Ro 6:15, and note 8 at Ro 6:16).

Here, once again, Paul was giving reasons for living a holy life.

Even though we do not have to fear God's wrath or rejection, if we walk in strife with others, we will reap the negative results that those actions produce.

In other words, there are still consequences to our actions outside of God's direct punishment.

Mankind and the devil will make us pay dearly for ungodliness (see note 8 at Ro 6:16).

So, the liberty that Paul was promoting is freedom from the guilt and condemnation of sin, not freedom to sin.

Those who choose to use this liberty in Christ to indulge their flesh will suffer for it. However, it's not God punishing them; it's simply those people reaping what they have sown (Lu 6:38 and Ga 6:7).”

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

- Walking in the Spirit and following the dictates of the flesh, or natural man to be independent of God, are mutually exclusive. This is where the conflicts in the Christian walk lies.
- Every religion system, both Christian and non-Christian, requiring self-effort to overcome the weakness of the flesh to achieve spiritual freedom. is a false religion. It is only faith and dependency on God and Christ which achieves God's results in daily living.
- Walking in the Spirit (by faith) will produce an increased sensitivity and influence of the presence and power of God in our lives. This is what diminishes the influence of the flesh.

Andrew Wommack Commentary-

“It is important to notice what this verse **does not say!**”

Denying the flesh will not produce walking in the Spirit, but walking in the Spirit will produce denying of the flesh (See **Rom. 7:18**). This is a subtle difference to some, but the difference is truly profound.

WE DEFEAT THE FLESH BY WALKING IN THE SPIRIT.

As a whole, false religions teach that as we overcome our flesh, there is a noticeable increase in the presence and power of God in our lives. That was what

Epistle to the Galatians

the Pharisees of Jesus' day and the legalistic Jews of Paul's day taught. Just the opposite is true. As we experience more of the presence and power of the Spirit of God, the influence of the flesh is diminished. Victory must come in this order. We don't get the Spirit as a result of overcoming the flesh; having the Spirit results in overcoming the flesh.

It's similar to how a dark room is filled with light. The darkness isn't shoveled out and then light comes. No! The light is simply turned on and darkness flees. Much of religion preaches to us to stop sinning (get rid of the darkness) and then the Holy Spirit will come and empower us (the light will come). That's not the way it works. We can no more get rid of the power of the flesh on our own than we can get rid of the power of darkness without light. We have to receive the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives by grace, and then that union with the Holy Spirit breaks the power of the flesh.

The key to breaking the dominion of the flesh is to appropriate the power of the Spirit through faith while the flesh is still giving us problems. Those of us who are waiting on the Spirit to come after we have subdued the flesh will be waiting as long as the one who is trying to get rid of all the darkness so the light can come.”

17 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.

- Paul states there is this internal conflict in the life of every person between the desires of the natural man and the spiritual man. It is a conflict where one chooses to be “led by the promptings of the Holy Spirit” or to use the “carnal reasoning” to pursue the things of God. The latter produces death not life.
- Jesus said, “The words that I speak, they are Spirit and life.” (within the person is implied)

John 6:63 “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”

18 But if you are led by the (Holy) Spirit, you are not under the law.

- This is a mutually exclusive declaration of truth! It is impossible to be “led by the Spirit” be under the confines and yoke of the Law. This is what the Judaizers were
- Paul is saying that anyone who is “in the Spirit” (in Christ) has the capacity to be “led by the Spirit” therefore there is no need to adhere to the Law of Moses. That person is simply to allow the Holy Spirit lead them versus the Law instructing them how to follow God.
Again, the Gentile was never under the Law!
- Being “led by the Spirit” is something that supernaturally occurs because the Believer is now “in Christ.”
- This is a **statement of fact** that the true sons of God are led by the Spirit of God because they are now IN CHRIST; because they have received the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:1-10

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who

Epistle to the Galatians

do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

- "Flesh" is a term Paul used when referring to those who practice the Law to receive and maintain right standing with God.
- "Flesh" is a word that describes those who insist that adherence to the obedience to the Law with its commandments, rules, regulations, and standards was necessary for salvation and acceptance by God. These were trying to satisfy the longing of the flesh to be justified.
- Jesus abolished adherence to the Law with His sacrifice and replaced it with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to provide guidance in daily life.
- Paul continues to show, by comparison to the Spirit, the Law (of sin and death) actually gives power to sin with the works (deeds) listed below.
- Obedience to the Law as a requirement for the Galatian Gentiles who are "in Christ" or in the Spirit" is not a requirement for righteousness. Paul's point is that this was applicable to both Jew and Gentile IF they are "in Christ." or for those,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 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.

- "Continue to practice" or "habitually practice" these things will not inherit the kingdom of God

Romans 14:17 "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but

Epistle to the Galatians

righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

- “will not inherit the kingdom of God” is a misunderstood part of this verse. It means a saved person who continues to practice these things are choosing to operate out of the carnal man and not function as a “new spiritual man” created in the likeness of Christ.
“Eternal Life is guaranteed but the Abundant Life is conditional!”
- Notice this listing of sins original from “the flesh” (not in the Spirit)
See **Romans 1:20-32** where there is a fuller insight into those who are in “the flesh.” This type of person does not acknowledge God nor are they thankful. Their hearts become “darkened and insensitive to God.” They are then given over to a vain imagination and become idolators, sensual persons who satisfy their fleshly desires through illicit and profane sex. They proceed from this position into the depths of depravity.
Given this situation, God is still able to reach them with His love. All that is needed is for them to turn to Him.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

- Notice Paul is saying that the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life produces “fruit.” It is one way to discern the Spirit from the flesh.
- Paul uses verses 22 and 23 with the previous verses about the flesh as teaching using contrasting results in a person's life.
- Again, walking after the leading of the Holy Spirit is mutually exclusive to walking after the lust of the flesh.

24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

- This is a “past tense” statement of fact
Romans 8:10 “And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness”
- It is possible to live in the spirit yet not walk in the spirit. It would be like living in heaven and not experiencing all the joys and benefits of living IN HEAVEN

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

- The life of God is in the Spirit
- In Him we live, move, and have our being

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Epistle to the Galatians

Chapter 6

B. Responsibilities of the Gentile Believer under the Gospel of Grace

1 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.

- “overtaken in any trespass” can mean several things. It is usually an offense against God or others, or self. A trespass can be spiritual, carnal, sensual or ignorance in nature.
- Being overtaken can cause one to lose the “fight of faith.”

What is a trespass?

g3900. παράπτωμα *paraptōma*; from 3895; a side-slip (lapse or deviation), i.e. (unintentional) error or (willful) transgression: — fall, fault, offense, sin, trespass.

AV (23) - trespass 9, offense 7, sin 3, fall 2, fault 2;

1. to fall beside or near something
2. a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness
3. a sin, misdeed

Who are those who are Spiritual?

- The simple answer is “a person who is **mature and able to discern** good from evil.” They can distinguish between the “flesh and the spirit”, between “light and darkness.”
- They are a person who, due to the experience and seasoning of “many trials,” have learned how to function in the Spirit and bear the fruit of the Spirit. They exhibit the life of Christ in their relationships with God, with others, and with themselves

Hebrews 5:12-14

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled (*inexperienced*) in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who **by reason of use** have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

- Solid food is for those whose “faith, hope, and love” have been tested through the trials and challenges of life. They have been strengthened in the Lord so as to help others. They exhibit the fruit of the Spirit and are walking in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.
- A mature person is able to handle difficulty easier because of “practice and experience.”
- A mature person’s main virtues are the manifestation of “love and patience” with others.
- A mature person has a “listening heart.”

James 1:19-20

19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; (*gentleness with those who are missing the mark*)

20 for the wrath (*flesh or mind*) of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Epistle to the Galatians

“Wrath is an expression of indignation and outrage towards another.”

What does a Mature Christian look like?

Ephesians 4:12-16

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head -Christ-

16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

- The “five-fold ministry” is to equip, or “train,” the church how to be effective in meeting the natural and spiritual needs of others. This is accomplished through the teaching of the word, through example, and teaching how the Holy Spirit works with the Believer.
- Children are “immature” individuals who have not been trained in the ways of the Lord or the ways of righteousness.
- Mature individuals are able to recognize by means of the Holy Spirit, correct doctrine, deception, and manipulation, none of which come from God.

Trickery:

“dice playing” or gambling.

It is a metaphor for the “deception of men,” because dice players sometimes cheated and defrauded or victimized others.

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

- Paul is speaking to the church NOT to the unbeliever. It is not the PRIMARY role of the church to bear the burden’s of the “unbeliever.” The Welfare systems of the world are Godless institutions that do not consider God, or Jesus, as part of the solution to the plight of humanity.
- “To bear” is the same as “to endure” in the hope that the scruples and unbelief of other Believers will eventually be rectified through the love of Christ found in you.
- Paul is saying that it is not the Believers purpose to bring correction to others but to “accept others in the same manner that Jesus accepted them.”
- To show love is to accept others and to gently persuade them to see things in a different light when their faith is counter to that of the the Spirit of Christ and the teaching of Paul’s gospel.

Acts 20:35 “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak.” The context and implication is the “weak in the church.”

Epistle to the Galatians

Rom. 15:1-2

1 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.

1 Thess. 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.

James 2:8-9

8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you do well;

9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

- Paul is saying that deception enters the heart of a person when they begin to think God or others cannot do without them. They are operating in their own strength and agenda. This is called “self-centeredness” and not “God-centeredness.”
- This is the sin of Satan, self-centeredness and pride.
- The definition of “humility” is an accurate truthful assessment of self.”
- Pride and false humility are different sides of the same coin! One exalts self while the other is self-deprecating in an effort to hide their pride.

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

- The examination of motive and motivation is the most important attribute a follower of Jesus can practice.
- A person who is continually examining the motives and motivation of their own heart is discerning and spiritually mature.
- The main question concerns its self-centered motivations.

There are TWO ungodly heart attitudes in a person which inhibit them from bearing the burdens of another. (Both are rooted in pride.)

1. Conceitedness; the belief that one person is more important or better than others. It can also manifest itself in “showing favor.”
2. Comparing oneself to others based on personal works.

Introspection or Self-examination?

- There is a great difference between introspection and self-examination.
 1. Introspection is based in self-awareness or self-centeredness. It is a “self betterment” program. It leads to a narcissistic, spiritual navel-gazing common to Eastern mystic religions. This is different to the Christians devotional life which is Christ centered.
You are dead and YOUR life is hid with Christ in God”
 2. True self-examination is a process by which the Believer submits their thoughts, attitudes, and actions to the will of God and the mind of Christ revealed in Holy

Epistle to the Galatians

Scripture.both good and evil,

- Self-examination is not merely taking one's spiritual pulse beat on a regular basis but rather an act of “continual submitting one's self to God in their thought life.”

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- Let no one pass a condemning judgment against you including yourself.
Let Jesus judge your motivation.

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

5 For each one shall bear his own load.

- This verse seems to be a contradiction with Gal.6:2 above.

In this preceding verse Paul is saying the church is “Bear the another's burdens” yet in verse 5 he is saying “each shall bear his own load.”

Both are correct!

- Verse 2 deals with those who are “weak in their faith towards God.” They are still in the beginning process of “growing in (His) love” for them.
- Verse 2 deals with restoration of a person who is struggling with personal faults, tensions, or griefs. These are burdens typically cause by outside conditions such as relational (social), economical, spiritual. They are usually centered around the emotional wounds, lack of trust in God, loss of a loved one, healing, etc.
- Verse 5 is about taking responsibility for one's choices and actions, both good or bad. Sowing seed, good or bad, will has consequences.
- Prayerful self-examination for the Believer is important. It helps one to stay in balance and walk upright before God. The Holy Spirit is with us to counsel us in every area of conflict resolving it to continue in peace, joy, and righteousness.

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

- Verses 6-10 is speaking of financial support to those called by God to teach and minister to the church.

Epistle to the Galatians

- It also means to share the blessings of God with others in the church so as to enrich their lives. There is not mention in scripture where the church is to be a welfare system to the world. A welfare system is one that has a godless gospel. It is humanism. This does not preclude that God may have Believers help others financially on occasion but there is no Biblical expectation of sustaining the unbeliever.
- Gentiles, like the Galatians, did not have a taxing system like the Jews who were under the Law. The tithe was an ordinance under the Law. The Gentile was not under the Law. The church is under a system of free-will sowing into others.
- Paul is teaching the Gentile to support the ministry through “free-will” offerings. He is also saying to esteem those who teach among them is an opportunity to do good towards them so as to help further the Gospel.

SEE **1 Cor. 9:6-15** for Paul’s explanation of “Sowing as a New Testament Concept” for those who follow the Holy Spirit.

Excerpt from “Andrew Wommack Commentary”:

“The Phillips New Testament translated this verse in the following manner: “The man under Christian instruction should be willing to contribute towards the livelihood of his teacher.” In other words, you should share your financial resources with those who are ministering God’s Word to you. This is a continuation of Paul’s teaching on bearing others’ burdens that he had mentioned in the previous verses.

“This concept of voluntary giving to provide for the Lord’s servants was revolutionary since Jews were taxed for the support of their priests and Gentiles paid fees, made vows, etc., to sustain their religions” (The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition, p. 610).

However, the New Testament established voluntary giving for the support of the poor (Galatians 2:10) and widows (1 Timothy 5:3-16), as well as those who instructed others in the Word of God (1 Corinthians 9:7-14 and this verse). Those who don’t take care of the ones who minister the Word of God to them are hindering their own financial blessings.”

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

- Paul is simply stating that it is God who rewards the works of a person who is following the Holy Spirit not men.

8 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.

- Once again Paul is making the comparison between life under the Law for those requiring the Gentiles to come under the Law with those who are in the Spirit because of their acceptance of the work of the cross and resurrection that produced life in the Spirit.

9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if

Epistle to the Galatians

we do not lose heart.

“Weariness is something everyone will experience when they recognize they have a destiny in Christ”

weary:

g1573. ἐκκακέω ekkakeō; from 1537 and 2556; to be (bad or) weak, i.e. (by implication) to fail (in heart): — faint, be weary.

AV (6) - faint 4, be weary 2;

1. to be utterly spiritless
2. to be wearied out
3. exhausted

- Weariness causes a person to “lose heart”; to become discouraged.
- Weariness is at the level of the SOUL but not the SPIRIT. The spirit of a man is always willing but the flesh or the soul grows weary and without strength.

Matthew 26:41 “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

- The devil never attacks our faith! He could care less what we believe! His attack is to gain through weariness of doing the right thing and not seeing immediate results. It causes us to lose HOPE. To make us quit, to “give up!”

Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
But when the (thing we) desire comes, it is a tree of life.

- Without hope we will never reach our destiny.
- The Scripture encourages the Believer to “persevere” to gain all that God has promised.

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

- God presents us all with opportunity to provide assistance and comfort to others. Paul is saying that this should be especially when meeting the needs of the church.
- Notice how “opportunity proceeds doing good.” This is an element of walking in the Spirit. He presents the right timing.
- To not wait for the spiritual direction and opportunity to present itself leans towards “religious exercise” which is dead works; fleshly; trying to “prove one’s spirituality.” Being led by the Spirit glorifies God and not the person.
- Paul is referring to Believers, both Jews and Gentiles, who make up the Body of Christ.

Epistle to the Galatians

V. Conclusion

A. Summary and Justification of writing letter

11 See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!

Dr. Constable's Commentary-

“The "large letters" were probably all capital letters, which Paul used for the sake of emphasis and to distinguish his handwriting from his secretary's. Perhaps Paul also intended the boldness of his handwriting to emphasize the force of his convictions.”

(<https://www.planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/html/nt/galatians/galatians.htm>)

- Some interpreters have seen in this reference evidence that Paul's eyesight was limited, as his "thorn in the flesh."
This seems to be unlikely because of the context of this verse. Paul was just speaking of persecution from the Judaizers which is what his “thorn in the flesh.”
SEE **2 Cor. 12:7** Paul states that his weakness is because of the persecution
- It can be observed that what Paul wrote directly, boldly, and unashamedly can be construed as “large letters” used to emphasize his authority and apostleship calling as directly for the Lord.

12 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.

- Verses 11 through 15 give us an insight of Paul's understanding of the following:
 1. Those who follow Jesus will be persecuted.
 2. Those who are **caught up** in the mandate to “observe rituals and rules” do not have an understanding of grace and they are in “spiritual scalp hunters” who brag about their not-so-spiritual conquests.
- Paul is offering the explanation that those who would bring the Galatians under the Law and circumcision are trying to escape persecution of the non-believing Jews.

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

- This is a profound statement.
Paul is saying that the circumcised people do not keep the Law. If they did then Jesus died in vain. That is the whole reason He went to the cross was for the sins of both the circumcised and the un-circumcised.
- Those who were pushing the Galatians to be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses with its rituals, sacrifices, and acceptance by God were doing it out a sense of “self-satisfaction.” They did not understand the purpose of the sacrifice of Jesus.

14 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.

- Paul's conversion and revelation of Jesus and the work of the cross would not allow him

Epistle to the Galatians

to boast about any works that he personally had accomplished. It was all “God in Christ!”

- Paul’s understanding was so complete that he lived a life in the world but not by the standards of the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

- Paul in several other writings stated that circumcision and obedience to the Law is of no effect if a person is born-again or in Christ.

Romans 2:26-28

26 Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?

27 And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;

1 Corinthians 7:19 “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.”

“Commandments of God”

g1785. ἐντολή entolē; from 1781; injunction, i.e. an authoritative prescription: — commandment, precept.

This the same a “hearing God for one’s self.”

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

B. Blessing for those who embrace the Gentile Gospel of Grace

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

- The “Israel of God” is not the same as the “God of Israel.”
- Paul recognized that “not all of Israel is Israel.” Only those who accepted Jesus, the Promised Seed of Abraham, the Messiah who was foretold are the true Israel.

Romans 9:3-7

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,

4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises;

5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

6 But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. **For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,**

7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.”

Epistle to the Galatians

- Paul is using a play on words in this verse.

The “God of Israel” is mentioned 504 times in the Bible and always refers to God as being EXCLUSIVELY the God of the Jews.

The “Israel of God” is the church, the Body of Christ, a spiritual people comprised of both circumcised and uncircumcised people. These are the true people of God.

The “Israel of God” is mentioned only ONCE in the Bible. It is this verse.

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

- Paul final remark in this epistle could be said in our modern vernacular, “Get out of my face! Leave me alone and quit bothering me with this nonsense!” This is quite a strong admonishment (or rebuke) to anyone who would go along with this falsehood.
- The “marks” Paul is referring to is the “persecution” from his own people, the Jews.

marks:

a mark pricked in or branded upon the body.

To ancient oriental usage, slaves and soldiers bore the name or the stamp of their master or commander branded or pricked (cut) into their bodies to indicate what master or general they belonged to, and there were even some devotee's who stamped themselves in this way with the token of their gods

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

- We find the phrase “peace and grace” in the opening Salutation of every one of Paul’s epistles.
- We also find “grace to you in every last sentence of the “Benediction.”
- This phrase is not found in the Epistles of Peter, James, John, and Jude.
- Paul was the apostle sent to preach the “Gospel of Grace” to the Gentile! Grace was the message exclusively preached to the non-Jew, un-circumcised people during Paul’s ministry.