

# Galatians

# INTRODUCTION

Galatians is the only letter by Paul addressed to a group of churches, all located in north-central Asia Minor. He wrote it around A.D. 55 or 56 when he was in Macedonia or Corinth on his third missionary journey.

Legalists in the church, called Judaizers, taught that certain Old Testament laws were still binding upon Christians. They reasoned that God's promises extended only to Jews, and that Gentiles must be circumcised before they could fully experience salvation. These Judaizers did recognize that faith in Jesus was necessary, but they also insisted it was inadequate—one must add to faith the observance of the Law!

This teaching was in direct contradiction to Paul's insistence that salvation was by grace through faith—ONLY, so the Judaizers attempted to discredit his teachings by challenging his authority, saying he was not a true apostle and was inferior to Peter and James. They also argued that he was a compromiser who made the gospel more attractive to Gentiles by removing its valid legal demands.

In this letter Paul vehemently reacted to the evil propaganda of the Judaizers by asserting his apostolic authority and explaining the gospel of grace through faith alone.

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## **Galatians 1:1-2**

Paul was called upon again and again to defend himself against his accusers, and to prove his divine authority. Several of his epistles open with a declaration of his authority. Romans opens with "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle." First Corinthians opens with, "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God." Second Corinthians opens with, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." Ephesians opens with the same assertion of his divine apostolic appointment. In Colossians 1: 1 he makes the same claim for authority by the will of God. First Timothy opens with, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God." In Second Timothy he again repeats his apostolic authority, and in Titus he once more asserts his claim to being an apostle. Finally, notice how the Epistle to the Galatians opens: Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead (Gal. 1:1).

(Studies In Galatians, M.R. De Haan)

It is impossible for a man like Paul who possesses a vivid personality and a strong character not to encounter opposition; and equally impossible it is for a man to lead such a revolution in religious thought as he did and not be attacked. **Was their first attack on his apostleship because he was not a disciple of Jesus while Jesus was alive?**

### **What is the basic definition of an apostle?**

Acts 1:21,22

### **Would his past life as a persecutor of the church be a barrier?**

Acts 9:1-22

### **Did his message receive the full approval of those who were the leaders in the Christian Church?**

Gal. 2:6-10

### **Why was it necessary for Paul as an apostle to defend his authority?**

Acts 1:4,8,15-21

## **Galatians 1:3-5**

WHO GAVE HIMSELF for our sins, that he might deliver us.

These words are inexhaustible. Of Jesus it is said He GAVE HIMSELF FOR OUR SINS. We are all familiar with the best-known verse in the Bible, where God gave His Son:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

But here we read that Jesus gave HIMSELF. His sacrifice was voluntary. He offered Himself to die in the place of sinners. This verse does not say, "He gave Himself for sinners," but rather it says, "He gave Himself for our sins." Human words fail completely to convey the depth of the meaning of the expression, "He gave Himself for OUR SINS." It suggests a TRADE, an exchange. He offers us Himself, in exchange for our sins. He wants to save us. He loves the sinner so much that He will pay any price the Father demands. The price is the penalty of the law. God is a holy God and cannot condone sin. It must be put away before He can accept the sinner. But God is also a just God, and for sin to be put away, the penalty must be exacted. But the penalty was eternal death, eternal separation from God. Man could not pay it. It would take him an eternity in Hell to make satisfaction to a broken law.

And here the Savior steps in. The law said the sinner is cursed, damned, and must die the eternal death. But Christ offers to save that sinner. But the law must be satisfied before God can do so. A loving God cannot violate His justice. He cannot ignore His Word, "the soul that sinneth it shall die." How then can it be done? Jesus said, "I will take man's sin and make it my responsibility. I will bear its penalty, I will take the sinner's place." That is the meaning of our verse, He "gave Himself for our sins." When Jesus offered to take our place, God transferred to Him our sin. While we cannot understand this, the Scriptures are plain. Peter says that He,

... bare our sins in his own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24).

The prophet Isaiah, writing hundreds of years before, says that:

... he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ... (and that the)... Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:5, 6).

(Studies In Galatians, M.R. De Haan)

### **How did Christ become sin for us without becoming a sinner?**

Isa. 53:10 Gal. 3:13

## Galatians 1:6-12

Paul had left these Galatian believers happy and rejoicing and serving the Lord in the liberty of grace, not by constraint of the law, not by fear of losing their salvation, but by love, gratitude and devotion for their great salvation by grace. They loved Paul fervently and devotedly for showing them the truth of salvation by grace. But then, as now, there were those who would enslave the believer again, by the bondage of the law, and instead of trying to win sinners to Christ by grace, went about proselyting Christians to their legalistic, false religion by claiming that, while we are saved by grace, we are kept by works, and thus making our salvation dependent in the final analysis, not upon grace, but on works and lawkeeping. These legalistic Judaistic law teachers sought to bring the believers again under bondage and make them—  
....observe days, and months, and times, and years (Gal. 4:10).

They heeded not the warning of Paul in Colossians 2:16:

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ (Col. 2:16, 17).

But these Galatian Christians, still babes in Christ, were carried away by the pious pratings of the false teachers and their quoting of Scriptures out of their connection, deceived and beguiled by their clever preachers of a mixed gospel of grace and law.

(Studies In Galatians, M. R. De Haan)

**From the following Scriptures, state just what this other gospel was they were being taught:**

Matt. 16:6,12    1 Cor. 5:6-8    2 Cor. 11:13-14    Gal. 3:1,5    Gal. 3:10-12    Gal. 3:21-23

## Galatians 1:13-14

In chapter 1:13 Paul describes himself as he was before he met Christ: “ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it.” That is a harsh autobiography! Beyond measure—almost brutally—I persecuted the saints, the best people on earth; I did all I could to stamp them out; I was a murderer, an assaulter, mad in my blind hate and wild fury.

(Galatians, Poul Madsen)

**Why did Paul feel it a necessity to recount all the details regarding his earlier career in Judaism to the church at Galatia?**

**Were these accounts necessary to bring out his strong teaching about *grace* as opposed to the *Law* of Judaism?**

Acts 22:1-16    Acts 26:1-20

**Do you believe that his case was intended by God to serve as a pattern of God's longsuffering, as Paul states in 1 Tim 1:12-16?**

## Galatians 1:15

"God . . . called me by his grace" (1:15). It was the grace of God that brought Paul even to know and receive God's grace. Vainly for him had the gift been offered and the ransom paid, unless grace had also stooped so low as to reach him in his unbelief and win him in his alienation and sin. For Paul had been a bitter enemy of the grace of God; he had rejected the Savior and was doing all in his power to oppose the gospel and destroy its followers, and at the very moment of his conversion was in the high tide of his rebellion and unbelief. But the grace of God struck him down in the blossom of his sin, and compelled him to accept its proffered love. And so Paul became a captive of grace and never tired of celebrating the love that when he was still an enemy, reconciled him to God.

We may think that we have had a very different history and that we were quite as earnest in seeking God as He was in seeking us; but when the whole story is told, it will be found at last that there is not much difference between the best of us and the blunt Scotchman, who, when asked how his conversion came about, said that it took two to do it, one was God and the other was himself. When his good Calvinistic pastor asked him how he could claim any part in it, he answered him, "God drew me, and I resisted all I could." That is about the most we can say for our part. "By the grace of God I am what I am," was the testimony of Paul, and the epitaph on the monument of William Carey may well take us all in:

A worthless, weak, and helpless worm,  
On Thy kind arms I fall,  
Be Thou my perfect righteousness,  
My Savior and my All.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

**Explain the workings of God in pardoning us from eternal condemnation.**

### **Galatians 1:16-24**

What intensity of interest must have gathered for him about Mount Sinai, which doubtless was the objective of his journey into Arabia! Moses and Elijah had been pupils before him in its majestic solitudes. As the apostle dwelt there, with unlimited opportunity for communion with God, his mind was turned in the direction of that massive system of thought which at once distinguishes his epistles and connects the New Testament with the Old. It is a profound discovery when God reveals his Son as resident in the believer's soul. That Christ is in each of us, if we be truly regenerated, is indubitable. See 2 Cor. 13:5. But it seems that in many cases a veil hides that blessed fact from our consciousness. We need a miracle of grace, similar to that which at the crucifixion rent the veil in twain, from the top to the bottom, Matt. 27:51.

(Galatians, Poul Madsen)

Paul's upbringing was impressive and even though he was taught about God under the teaching of the great Gamaliel, he was as yet ignorant of God's ways. **By what means were the secrets and power of God revealed to Paul, and thereby to us?**

John 14:26 2 Cor. 13:5 1 Thess. 4:11 2 Tim. 3:14-17 James 1:2-8 2 Pet. 1:19-21

### **Galatians 2:1-19**

The great controversy in Paul's career was over the initial rite of Judaism. It would have been comparatively calm if he had been willing to admit that Christianity was a sect of Judaism, and that men must become Jews before becoming Christians.

His contention was that the ceremonial aspect of the Law did not apply to converts from heathendom. Gentile sinners had the right to go directly to Jesus Christ for salvation, without traveling around the circuitous route of Judaism. When men insisted on the outward rite, he resisted it with all the fiery vehemence of his nature, vs. 3, 11, 12. But when his opponents were willing to admit that circumcision was not essential, he administered it to one of Jewish blood, as a concession to the weak and unstructured, Acts 16:3.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F.B. Meyer)

Peter had been eating with the Gentiles and approving the principle that there is one way to God for Jew and Gentile alike—yet now Peter was reversing this decision by his wanting the Gentiles to be circumcised and take the Law upon them. **Can you clearly see why Paul had to reprimand Peter, another apostle, for Peter's incorrect instructions to the Gentiles?**

**Was this confusion caused by the Jerusalem decision, which was, in effect, that the Jews would go on living like Jews, observing circumcision and the Law, but that the Gentiles were free from these observances? Can you see that this would result in two grades of Christians, and two quite distinct classes in the Church?**

**(Note: When Jews used the word *sinners* of Gentiles, they were not thinking of moral qualities—they were thinking of the observance of the Law.)**

Paul had indeed tried the way of the Law of Moses in order to put himself right with God by a life that sought to obey every single item of that law. Yet the Law, unable to save him, could only show him his own helplessness. But the Law had driven him to God! The Law, then, had a definite purpose, as we will see in our continuing studies in Galatians—but it only condemned by bringing sin to light; it could not save. **Fill in the blanks below from these Scriptures: Gal. 2:16-21 Rom. 5:1, 2, 6-10, 20-21 Rom. 6:1-13 Eph. 2:1-9 Col. 3:1-4**

**For Paul to go back to the Law would have meant that he was once again entangled in the sense of estrangement from \_\_\_\_\_. He, Paul, had now been \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ, so that the man he used to be was \_\_\_\_\_ and the living power within him now was \_\_\_\_\_ Himself. We (who are Christians) could all say that if we could be**

**righteous by totally obeying the Law, then what is the need of God's \_\_\_\_\_? And, if I could win my own salvation, then why did \_\_\_\_\_ have to die?**

### **Galatians 2:20-21**

Galatians 2:20 is not only one of the most precious verses in the Bible but it is also the theme verse in the book of Galatians. Below, A. B. Simpson describes what an impact this verse had on his life.

There came a time when there was a little thing between me and Christ. I express it by a little conversation with a friend who said, "You were healed by faith." "Oh, no," I said, "I was healed by Christ."

What is the difference? There is a great difference. There came a time when even faith seemed to come between me and Jesus. I thought I should have to work up the faith, so I labored to get the faith. At last I thought I had it; that if I put my whole weight upon it, it would hold. I said, when I thought I had got the faith, "Heal me." I was trusting in myself, in my own heart, in my own faith. I was asking the Lord to do something for me because of something in me, not because of something in Him. So the Lord allowed the devil to try my faith, and the devil devoured it like a roaring lion, and I found myself so broken down that I did not think I had any faith. God allowed it to be taken away until I felt I had none. And then God seemed to speak to me so sweetly, saying, "never mind, my child, you have nothing. But I am perfect Love, I am Faith, I am your Life, I am the preparation for the blessing, and then I am the Blessing, too. I am all within and all without, and all for ever." It is just having "The Faith of God" (Mark 11:22, margin). "And the life I now live in the flesh, I live," not by faith on the Son of God, but "by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20). That is it. It is not your faith. You have no faith in you, any more than you have life or anything else in you. You have nothing but emptiness and vacuity, and you must be just openness and readiness to take Him to do all. You have to take His faith as well as His life and healing, and have simply to say, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." My faith is not worth anything. If I had to pray for anyone, I would not depend upon my faith at all. I would say, "Here, Lord, am I. If you want me to be the channel of blessing to this one just breathe into me all that I need." It is simply Christ, Christ alone.

(Himself, A. B. Simpson)

**Reread Gal. 2:16-21, and state in your own words the meaning.**

Rom. 6:4-14 Rom. 7:4-6 Rom. 8:2-11 Rom. 10:4

**So then, is it our faith that we live by each day or Christ's faith in us that we daily walk in?**

John 1:12 John 6:44 Rom. 8:14-17 Gal. 2:20(KJV) Gal. 5:22 Heb. 11:1-40 1 John. 5:9-13

### **Galatians 3:1-5**

Most of us have been taught that, while our salvation and justification are given us through the free grace of God and received by simple faith alone, yet our sanctification must be worked out by ourselves, and the struggle between evil and good in our own hearts and lives must be a long and painful one.

This was the error into which the Galatians had been led by false teachers. Having begun in the Spirit, they were seeking to be made perfect in the flesh. Having taught them, as we have already seen, the doctrine of free grace in their salvation, the apostle now proceeds to show them that their sanctification is just as much a gift as their justification, and that the deeper work of the Holy Spirit and the indwelling Christ in their hearts is also a work of grace as free and as complete as the first chapter in their religious experience.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Paul here is stunned by the Galatians' foolishness. **Look up the following Scriptures in answer to his questions, and show how he seeks to fully win them back from their wrong thinking, into the perfect plan of God, which was apart from the Law of Moses.**

Acts 10:47 Acts 11:17 Acts 15:8 Rom. 7:7 - 8:17 Phil. 3:2,3 Gal. 2:16

### **Galatians 3:6-18**

The Mosaic law was not designed to be the final code of the religious life, but to prepare the soil of the human heart to receive Jesus Christ in all the fullness of his salvation. It was the tutor of the Hebrew people, to enable them to become the religious teachers of mankind. It could not, therefore, take the place of the great covenant of grace, which had been initiated with Abraham before he had received the rite of circumcision, and when he thus stood for all who believe,

whether Jew or Gentile. The mistake of those against whom Paul contended was that they treated as permanent a system which was temporary and parenthetical in its significance.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F.B. Meyer)

The Jews regarded Abraham as their father and the source of their spiritual blessings (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3). They believed that simple physical descent from Abraham made them righteous (John 8:39-40). However, Paul shows them that Abraham pleased God by faith (Rom. 4:1-3), and not by doing the works of the Law, since the Law did not exist in Abraham's time. Paul further insists that the true children of Abraham (and thus heirs of the promised blessing) are those who live by the principle of faith (Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:6-9). Paul then goes on to show them that rather than justifying, the Law curses (3:10) because it makes demands that no one can keep. Obedience must not only be absolute in every detail, but it must be continuous (3:12). Through His death on the cross, Christ did for us what we could not do for ourselves. His work, not ours, removed the curse upon us for our disobedience of the Law (3:13). By faith we receive the benefits provided by His death (Rom. 8:3-4), including justification (3:11), and the promise of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9-14). **Read and meditate on the above scripture references until the message can be told from the heart.**

### **Galatians 3:19-29**

Deliverance from the law does not mean that we are free from doing the will of God, but from henceforth another does it in us and through us. God knew we could not keep His law, but the trouble is we do not know it, and we need to have it proved to us beyond dispute that we are hopelessly weak. "The law came in . . . that the trespass might abound" (Romans 5.20).

But at last we see it, and confess, "I am a sinner through and through, and I can do nothing whatever to please God." When we are convinced that we cannot keep God's law, or please Him at all, then the law has served its purpose. It has been our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that He might keep it in us (Galatians 3.24). Praise God! He is law-giver on the Throne, and He is the law-keeper in my heart. He who gave the law Himself keeps it. As long as we try to do anything He can do nothing. It is because of our trying that we fail, and fail, and fail. God wants to demonstrate to us that we can do nothing at all, and until that is fully recognized our disappointments and disillusionments will never cease. We all need to come to the place where we say, "Lord, I am going to do nothing for Thee, either in the matter of my salvation, or of my sanctification; but I trust Thee to do everything in me.

(Twelve Baskets Full Vol.3, Watchman Nee)

Paul here is explaining that the Law was given because man's sinfulness was so great. For where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom 4:15). He was showing that the Law did not make men righteous, but served to condemn them (3:22). "...till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made" strongly says that it (the Law) would serve only until Christ the Seed (3:16) should come. Here in Scripture the Law is depicted as locking up in prison all men under the condemnation of sin. The law does not make anybody alive; rather it puts them all under sentence of death (Deut. 27:26; Ps. 143:2; Ps. 130:3; Jer. 17:9). Only when this is recognized, are men ready to accept the promise which God offers them in Christ. Righteousness comes only by God's gift, and sinners receive it by faith (Rom. 10:8-10; Eph. 4:8-9). **Once again you are asked to study and thoroughly understand (and be able to locate) the Scriptures above that help us comprehend the variance between the Law and Faith. These are essential as you seek to win souls for Christ.**

### **Galatians 4:1-7**

The apostle uses still another figure to explain the place of the law. It is the figure of the minor, the child under age, who is under tutors and governors until he reaches his maturity. "So also," he says, "when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.' So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir" (4:3-7). And so the law leads on to the gospel, and the gospel is liberty, the freedom of the Father's house, the filial spirit, the privileges of a happy child; and if we return to the law, we must set back the hands of the clock of time more than 3,000 years, and go back to Sinai and the infancy and minority of the children of God.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

In these verses Paul is endeavoring to teach these Galatians the true dangers of staying in the "elements of the world." **Can you detect that staying under the Law (which was primarily given to show us that we are sinners) keeps us**

merely under the elementary principles of the Old Testament (Heb 5:12)? As you now strongly consider the necessity of growth as revealed in Christ through the teaching and power of the Holy Spirit, comment regarding the pure truth of Christ as being that which continually propels us on to richer understanding and joy in Him, and which becomes our constant revelation of the great plan of God our Father for His family.

In Galatians 4:6 both the Aramaic and Greek words *for father* are used in the phrase "Abba, Father!" **In your words, tell us the meaning of this phrase, especially in light of v. 7. Also, our Lord Jesus used the expression "Abba Father" in Mark 14:36—what must it have meant to Him?**

Rom. 8:14-17

### **Galatians 4:8-18**

Galatians were the Celts of western Asia. Like the French, the Irish and the Scottish Highlanders of our day, they were a high-spirited, impulsive people, as quick to be perverted as they had been to be converted at the preaching of Paul. They had received him on his first visit with intense enthusiasm, "as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself" (4:14b), and "if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me" (4:15b). But now they have turned back at the bidding of false teachers and just as promptly gone after "those weak and miserable principles. Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! . . . You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?" (4:9b-10; 5:7).

They had already fallen into the hands of the high church or ritualistic party of that day. It is the old and favorite counterfeit of the enemy which again today is sweeping so many by a resistless current on to the inevitable shores of Romanism—a desire for ceremony and outward form instead of spirituality and holiness. This was the delusion which had drawn away the once fervid and evangelical churches of Galatia. These false teachers were trying to draw them back to Judaism, the ceremonial law, the rite of circumcision, and the bondage of the past. And in order to fortify their position, they had persuaded the Galatians that Paul had no authority to preach the gospel to them; that he was inferior to the other apostles, and that James and Peter were the true leaders of the Church, and the supreme authorities on matters of Church law and practice.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Paul calls the religion based on law (the elementary things) *weak and poverty-stricken*. It is weak because it is helpless. It can define sin and convict a man of sin, but it cannot find forgiveness for him nor strength to overcome future sin. It is poverty-stricken in comparison with the splendor of *GRACE!* **Was Paul worried that in their returning to the religion of legalism, they would come to depend only on their sacred days, seasons and years as being "of God," and the other times would be considered merely secular? Was he also concerned that making religion a thing of special times would make it an external thing? And, lastly, is it not true that for Paul and every true Christian every day is God's day?**

Rom. 14:5-7 Col. 2:16-17

### **Galatians 4:19**

The Apostle Paul knew the secret, and voiced his yearning over his converts in the words, "My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Galatians 4:19). But as much as Paul longed for this end, the adversary feared it, for he knew that once the secret of the Cross, and the mystery of the indwelling Christ was apprehended, the believer would know the way of passing out of his power, and being kept by the power of God in the place where the "wicked one toucheth . . . not."

(The Warfare with Satan, Jessie Penn Lewis)

**What does it truly mean when it says that Paul longs for Christ "to be formed in them?" Were they not already Christian believers? Was he indicating that there is a higher, richer and more abundant Life in Christ that a believer could have, where self and flesh no longer dominate—if he is willing to do it God's way?**

1 Cor. 4:15-16 Gal. 5:22-25 Eph. 1:11-12, 15-20 Eph. 2:19-22 Eph. 3:14-21 Eph. 4:1-3, 13-15 Eph. 5:1-2, 15-17 Eph. 6:10-11 Phil. 1:8-11 Phil. 2:1-5, 13-16 Phil. 3:8-10

### **Galatians 4:20-31**

Abraham left the ground of faith and took his bond woman Hagar, in order to get by natural means what God had said He would give him—a son. He got Ishmael, but to do so he stepped back into his old, natural life. Was that faith? No, it was unbelief. But what does the Scripture say about the result of this act of unbelief? Does it say, “Well, we must make the best of things and try to get something out of Abraham’s well-meant efforts”? No, the Scripture says, “Away with the bondwoman and her son; send them away, for the son of the bondwoman shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman.”

We are all in danger of falling back to our old world if we do not keep very near to the Lord and allow Gal. 2:20 to be the foundation of our daily life. Scripture uses sharp words against such relapses. It is as if God exhorts people of faith to show heavy-handedness—not of course against others, but against themselves. And that is just it! Let us be heavyhanded against ourselves, for it is our self-life which hinders us from being faithful to Jesus.

Away with the old life, so that it may not disturb our faith in Him! Without Jesus there is no faith, for He is the Author and Finisher of faith. That is why Gal. 2:20 is so foundational: “It is no longer I, who cannot believe, but Christ, the Author and Finisher of faith.” How wonderful it is, and how rich! May the Lord save us all from that dead, mental faith, which preserves the old Adam in his darkness and self-deception, yet at the same time makes him believe that he has light and that all is well!

Let God lead you out of your “tent”, whatever it is, into the open under His infinite, unfathomable sky. Let Him direct your gaze upward to the countless nebulae, while He speaks His word to your heart—and then come and tell me whether it is difficult to believe Him!

“Abraham believed God.” May no less a thing be said of you!

(Galatians, Poul Madsen)

**Paul here indicates great differences in his very descriptive allegories listed below:**

**Two Sons**

**Two Women**

**Two Mountains**

**Two Jerusalems**

**Two Covenants**

**As you describe what these differences are, use the following phrases where they properly belong:**

**“the old covenant of the Law”**

**“slave, and her children were born into slavery”**

**"stands for new covenant in Jesus Christ"**

**"Legalism was the best that man can do"**

**"That covenant whose basis is the law turns men into slaves of the law"**

**"God's new way of dealing with men - not by Law but by Grace"**

**"This covenant made on Mt. Sinai, which is in Arabia"**

**"Her child was born free"**

**"Her child was born from merely human impulses"**

**"According to God's promise, all his descendants must be free" "Legalists will be cast out from God and have no share in the inheritance of grace"**

**"The man who makes the principle of law his life is in the position of a slave"**

**"The man who makes grace the principle of his life is free"**

Ex. 19:9-13 John 1:17 Col. 2:16-17 Heb. 12:18-24

**When we know that we have been made free from the bondwoman (law), and are no longer entangled in the yoke of bondage, to what can we look forward to?**

Rom. 6:4-10 Rom. 7:4-6 Rom. 12:1, 2 Gal. 5:1, 5, 6

### **Galatians 5:1-6**

In chapter 2:20 we have seen the key to the whole Galatian letter. We will use this key yet once again as we read the last chapters, and seek to see their message as it is illumined in the light of this verse: “It is no longer I that live but Christ that lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God”. Notice that little word “now”—“I now live”. Paul does not say: “the life I pray I may live one day”; nor does he say: “the life I strive to live”. No, his words are concerned with something practical—something that may be realized in experience to-day: “the life which I now—at this moment—live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me.”

I have drawn a thick line in my Bible under the word “now” in this verse, and from this little word I have drawn an arrow to all the other words in verses 19 and 20 which emphasize that it is not a future life Paul is speaking about, not a far-off wishful dream, but a present life, which now “I live by the faith of the Son of God”. In verse 19 Paul says, “for by

the law I am dead to the law"—in other words, now! "And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God,"—so it is now right now!

"Now" and "faith" belong inseparably together, while the future and works often go hand in hand. Faith says, "Now I am saved, for Christ has completed the whole work of salvation and has borne my sin"; but works say, "When I have such-and-such done, I hope to be sanctified." Faith says, "Now I am crucified with Christ, for He took my old man with Him to the cross", while works say, "I must first crucify myself". And so it goes on. The proof that a man can be saved by faith, sanctified by faith, crucified with Christ by faith, is just this, that it can happen now! If it cannot happen now, but we must wait for something or other to be done, it is not faith but works which is the foundation of our salvation and sanctification and deliverance.

(Galatians, Poul Madsen)

**Answer the following statements by placing true (T) or false (F) in the space provided:**

\_\_\_ Though salvation was the liberty given to Christians by Christ, some Jewish leaders required that, in addition, they still keep some of the demands of the Law.

\_\_\_ If a person tries to keep any part of the Law, he *must* keep all of the Law.

\_\_\_ Adding circumcision as necessary for salvation does not deny the sufficiency of Christ's death for salvation.

\_\_\_ The sure hope of righteousness by faith is in contrast to the vain hope of righteousness by vain works.

\_\_\_ Those who attempted to follow the Law did not fall from grace. \_\_\_ The one who believes in Jesus Christ, and demonstrates the reality of his belief through a sanctified life, is saved. This is known as faith working by love (the love of the indwelling Christ).

### **Galatians 5:7-15**

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Gal. 5:13, 14) Christ has set us free from sin, the flesh and the law, and because this has happened and freedom has become ours in its entirety, we work confidently and without unrest by love to show the world this freedom of Christ in our life—freedom from sin, from the flesh and from the law.

Jesus has set us free, and the only thing he expects now is that by love we allow this freedom to function in our life. That was what Isaac did. Gerar's herdmen strove with him again and again over the new wells he had cleared and dug out (Gen. 26:19-24), but each time Isaac demonstrated quietly and peacefully that he was "the son of the freewoman". Made free from sin and the flesh, he would not strive. He let them keep those wells. He gave way to others, even though he was in the right, letting them have the outward advantages.

What does this mean? It means quite simply this, that Isaac did not let his freedom become an "opportunity for the flesh". He did not let the flesh flare up in self-assertion, paying them back in their own coin. Rather did he make use of the injustice with which he was treated to show that he was free, absolutely free. He made use of his freedom to serve by love. In Gal. 5:15 Paul says that Christians should take heed that they do not bite and devour one another lest they be consumed one of another.

The Philistines came and picked a quarrel with Isaac upon something which they doubtless called their "rights". Isaac in reply could have stood up for his rights—and then what would have happened? You know from your own experience! Every time we meet blow for blow we suffer loss, for then we give the flesh its opportunity. We make ourselves again its slaves, instead of using our freedom lovingly to show we are set free from that which binds others—the flesh and sin.

(Galatians, Poul Madsen)

**Did Isaac lose anything by the way he dealt with the Philistines? Can this technique be used in all cases considering today's horrendous conflicts in that land of Israel, between the Israelites and the Palestinians? Who only can bring about peace in that land today?**

Ps. 34:14 Ps. 85:8 Ps. 122:6 Isa. 26:3 Isa. 59:8 Mic. 5:5 Gal. 5:19-21

### **Galatians 5:16-18**

Sanctification is through the supernatural power of the Spirit and not through our struggles and our strength.

"For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do [or better, may not do] what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law" (Galatians 5:17-18).

Many of us have been taught that the normal Christian life is a ceaseless struggle between two natures in the human soul, the evil and the good within us, and that a Christian is a sort of menagerie of wild beasts, with the keeper and the savage brutes continually at war. We find such a struggle in the seventh chapter of Romans. This is not the normal

condition of the Christian, but the preparatory stage to a true experience of peace, rest and victory described in the following chapter, the life of the Spirit. This misunderstanding is partly due to the verse quoted above, which in our old Bibles used to be printed with a small "s" in the word Spirit, giving the impression that the conflict was between the man's flesh and the man's spirit, and that the issue was interminable war and a hopeless struggle in which it became true that "you do not do [cannot do, KJV] what you want" (5:17). This would be very sad indeed and would quench all the springs of hope in the Christian heart. Thank God our Bibles are now better printed, and the capital "S" leaves no doubt who the second Party in the conflict is—the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that lusts against the flesh, and not our human spirit, and the word "cannot" should be "may not." Because the Holy Spirit is fighting the battle with the flesh, we must take sides with Him by refusing to do the bidding of the flesh and walking in obedience to the Spirit. If we do this, He will fight the battle of the flesh, and it will be true as of old, "The battle is not yours, but God's" (2 Chronicles 20:15b).

The writer will be pardoned for recalling a moment in his own experience which tells the whole story, at least of his Christian life. It was the moment after he had yielded himself to Christ and received Him as the all-sufficiency of his future life, handing over in one supreme transaction all his sin, self-life, strength and weakness, all his conflicts, cares, temptations, needs, to the keeping of the indwelling Christ who henceforth became the Sponsor for all his future. He rose from that prayer with a quiet sense of rest. There was no special emotional feeling, no marvelous experience, but a deep sense of a great transaction done and a question settled.

Then came the first test. It was a deep, subtle suggestion of the adversary, almost as if he had said, "You fool. You think you have been sanctified. But you are just the same as you were 10 minutes ago. You have simply humbugged yourself and imagined that something has come to you, but you feel nothing, you have nothing. You have just fooled yourself."

For an instant the effect was utterly bewildering, and the first impulse was to fly into the old battle and begin to fight the tempter with my own reasonings against his suggestion. But instantly there came, as though from a heavenly suggestion, the quiet thought, "This is not your battle, but Christ's. Don't answer him. Hand it over to your great Deliverer. Roll the burden on the Lord. Tell the devil that you have nothing to do with him now, that you have just taken Christ to manage all your temptations, answer all your questions, and meet all your enemies."

It was such a strange and new conception, so easy and yet so effectual. In a moment the silent prayer had been offered, the question referred to Christ, the burden dropped, and lo, the cloud had gone, I knew not where! But this I knew, something real was there. Something actual had come to pass. A victory was won and with it the secret of victory for all time to come. This, beloved, is the secret of the new life. It is the power of the Holy Spirit, not of your wrestlings and strivings.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

### **What blessings and privileges belong to those who choose to walk in the Spirit?**

Neh. 8:10 John 15:2,7,8 Rom. 15:14 1 Cor. 13:4-8 Col. 3:12-15 2 Tim. 2:15

### **Galatians 5:19-21**

Sin has an indwelling and captivating power, whereby it continually assaults the principle of spiritual life, beating down the Christian's defenses, battering his armor, routing his graces, wasting his conscience, destroying his peace, and at last bringing him into a woeful captivity unless it be mortified. Corruption does not lie dormant in the Christian: though it reigns not supreme (because of a principle of grace to oppose it) yet it molests and often prevails to a very considerable extent. Because of this the Christian is called upon to wage a constant warfare against it: to "mortify" it, to struggle against its inclinations and deny its solicitations, to make no provision for it, to walk in the Spirit so that he fulfill not the lusts of the flesh.

(The Holy Spirit, A. W. Pink)

### **What traits are manifested in a person's life who continues to walk in the flesh?**

Mark 7:21-23 Rom. 1:28-31 1 Cor. 3:12-15 Eph. 5:3-7 Col. 3:8-10 2 Pet. 2:14

### **Galatians 5:22-26**

We are no longer of this world, and, seen in the light of the cross, this world does not exist for us any more. We ourselves are of another world. We have become new, and have obtained a new world, a heavenly world, even "the Jerusalem that is above", which, "is free", and is our "mother." Everything down here is past—I myself, my life, and the world to which that life was in bondage. God has rejected it all, and by His grace everything has become wholly new. The full working of the cross in a man's life is as thorough as that! We have received life from above; we have received

heavenly life; we are heaven's citizens. Heavenly love, heavenly joy, heavenly peace, are our portion. Our only business is by walking faithfully in the Spirit, to let that heavenly life find expression in this rejected world.

(Galatians, Poul Madsen)

After the following statements, mark either yes or no:

The term "flesh" in chapter 5 of Galatians is Paul's term to describe what man is apart from God. \_\_\_

Since the Fall in the garden of Eden, all men are sinners. Man's "flesh" is sinful, always tending toward sin and unable to achieve the righteousness God requires. \_\_\_

Even Christians are still "in the flesh" (2:20), but they are not to live "after the flesh," nor "war like those in the flesh." (2 Cor. 10:3) \_\_\_

The weapons of the Christian's warfare are not carnal, but are mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds. \_\_\_

These weapons cast down arguments and everything that is against God. \_\_\_

These weapons also bring every thought into obedience of Christ. \_\_\_

### Galatians 6:1-6

"Paul is a wise spiritual counselor. He gives us not only spiritual principles but also common, practical advice. We need both. The former is the basis, and the latter the development. The Letter to the Galatians closes in chapter 6 with some practical hints for Christians who have made chapter 2:20 the basis for their life.

1. *Help your fellow believers who have fallen into sin (v. 1).* Help them with meekness and humility. Jesus showed a spirit of loving kindness to you when you fell into sin, and it is He, who now lives in you, who would show *through you* that same spirit to your brethren. There is nobody in the world who has such a bad time as a true Christian who has fallen into sin. His inner sufferings are dreadful. Satan accuses him day and night, and he also condemns himself. His darkness can be so unutterably dark. "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one". *Help him back to the love of God.* Help him answer to the Accuser. Help him to stop both condemning and defending himself, for neither will put the Accuser to silence. Help him to fly to the blood of Jesus as the only—but also the all sufficient—answer to all the accusations of Satan.

2. *Bear ye one another's burdens (v. 2).* The connection with verse 1 shows that Paul is thinking first and foremost about the burdens of conscience as a consequence of sin; but it also applies to all other burdens—sorrows, cares, problems, needs, and so on. Let Gal. 2:20 be active in your relationship with your brothers and sisters in the Lord. Show that it is Christ who lives in you, and do not let coldness and indifference fill your heart when you see brothers in need. Do not say, "Well it was his own fault! He could have avoided that!" To speak in that way is only to reveal how little Gal. 2:20 is a practical reality in your life as yet. Dig those wells of love free of sand!

3. *Be humble (vv. 3 & 4).* The Savior was humble and lowly of heart, and it is He who lives in you. Remember how insignificant you are. If God has used you in His grace, it is only an added reminder that you are one of the least, for it is only such whom God chooses! If you have helped erring or falling brothers and sisters, be careful that you do not begin to have too high an opinion of yourself. If you do, the Lord may be obliged to let you fall, so that you in turn need to be helped by those whom you previously helped."

(Galatians, Poul Madsen)

John Newton used to say when he saw a reeling drunkard, "There goes John Newton, but for the grace of God." If you remember that, it will make you humble and helpful; you might have fallen too, but for the grace of God. You never know what you owe to restraining grace.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

When earnest Christians have the fruit of the Spirit in their lives, it not only brings them into an intimate knowledge of God, but it also causes them to have true loving concern for fellow believers. **Through use of the following verses, please name ways in which Christians can restore and build up other brothers and sisters in Christ:**

Matt. 21:21, 22 Luke 6:27-38 Rom. 8:4, 5 Rom. 8:26, 27 Rom. 15:1-6 1 Cor. 15:58 Jas. 3:13-18 1 John 2:28, 29 1 John 3:14-17

### Galatians 6:7-9

Not only is it true that a man can only get back what he sows, he must get it from the same field in which he sows. Yet many Christians believe they can sow to the flesh, i.e., live to suit themselves in this life and still reap a joyous harvest for heaven. It just won't work. God's Law will not bend to the whims of men. Those investing their lives in earthly things such as fame, families and fortune, will reap a harvest that is useless in eternity. Even worse, they will watch it go up in smoke at the Judgment (1 Cor. 3:15). The man who sows to the Spirit, (his new nature), investing himself in others in Jesus' Name, will reap a crop in heaven which he may enjoy forever, a man's two natures are like two fields. The crops are being sown in this life, to be reaped at death.

(Lovett's Lights on Galatians, C.S. Lovett)

**Using the Scriptures listed below, state as to what believers will be judged upon when they will meet their Lord.**

Matt. 7:7,24,25    1 Cor. 3:11-15    1 Cor. 5:7-10    Jas. 2:12    1 Thes. 3:12,13    1 Thes. 4:9-12    1 Thes. 5:15-18

### **Galatians 6:10**

Meeting a wretched, hideous beggar, a devoted Christian tells us that every natural instinct recoiled from his touch and presence. His face was covered with ulcers and his body and dress were unclean. Everything about him froze his natural sympathy, but the poor man stretched out his helpless hands for aid. Instinctively the Christian put his hand in his pocket to give him help, but he had nothing. He looked at him, reached out his hand, and pressed the hand of the poor diseased mass of humanity, saying, "My dear brother, I am sorry I have left my purse at home, and I have nothing to give you but my love."

The poor man burst out weeping and replied, "My friend, that is the richest gift you could bestow. I have had money from many, but love from none but you."

Nothing but the touch of grace that had started from the throne and found its fountain at the cross could have done this. That is the richest gift. How it lifts our burdens! How the testimony comes back in later years of some forgotten service, and how sweet it is to have them tell you of the help and sympathy you have given them.

(The Christ in the Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

**Comment on that part of the verse that says, "especially unto them who are of the household of faith."**

### **Galatians 6:11-16**

Putting physical safety ahead of spiritual safety, the Judaizers refused to acknowledge salvation was in Christ alone. They feared the wrath of the great masses of Jews who shunned the Lord. Thus they developed a corrupted "Christianity" which merely added Christ to Judaism. They recognized Jesus as Messiah, but were not willing to pay the price involved in trading Judaism for Christ. Salvation, to them, was a matter of Christ plus circumcision (the Law). To make their program appear as "official" Christianity, they had to do away with Paul's program which presented Christ INSTEAD of Judaism. They sought to do this by winning over all of his converts to circumcision and the Law. Were they successful, "Christianity" would be reduced to a Jewish sect, and those involved would escape all persecution from the other Jews. But Paul puts the lie to their scheme by observing how these Judaizers themselves do not keep the Law. Consequently they have neither salvation nor any standing under the Law.

(Lovett's Lights on Galatians, C.S. Lovett)

In order that the Galatians might be prevented from seriously breaking from the truth of Christ, Paul presents the following points concerning circumcision:

(a) It would save them from persecution. The Romans recognized the Jewish religion and officially allowed Jews to practice it. Circumcision was the unanswerable mark of a Jew; therefore, circumcision would keep them safe from the hatred of the Jews and the law of Rome alike.

(b) They hoped that by circumcision and by keeping the rules and regulations of the law they would win the approval of God. Before Paul's coming they had not understood the doctrine of salvation by grace and grace alone.

(c) Those who wanted the Galatians to be circumcised *did not themselves keep all the law!* No man could. But they wanted to glory in their power over people whom they had reduced to their own legalistic slavery.

Therefore, Paul had to preach with all the power of the Spirit to convince them that circumcision and uncircumcision do not matter—what does matter is that act of faith in Christ which opens a *new life* to a man! **Can you think of other "extra" requirements that have been laid on Christians by would-be teachers and interpreters of the Bible? Are we able to know pure truth? (Note: Pure means not only sinless, but unmixed.)**

### Galatians 6:17

Paul suffered fiercely to bring Christ to the Gentiles. The Judaizers were usually not far behind him stirring up trouble and seeking to nullify his ministry. Consequently he had been "thrice beaten," and lines showed in his body where he had 200 stripes laid on him per the custom in Jewish synagogues, plus his scars from stonings. He says those marks in his body prove he is a true slave of the Lord Jesus. The word brand-marks (Greek: stigmata) has reference to masters branding their slaves, a custom of the time. Paul begs his readers not to add to his afflictions by continuing to listen to the persecution-shunning false teachers. How those marks in Paul's body condemn the luxury and ease of fashionable Christianity. It is still true today, "if a man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he will suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).

(Lovett's Lights on Galatians, C.S. Lovett)

Vance Havner once said, "Contending for the faith is not easy. It is not pleasant business. It is a thankless job, and it is highly unpopular in an age of moral fogs and spiritual twilights. It is nicer to be an appeaser than an opposer." Paul was no appeaser; neither did he try to win any popularity contests. His scars resulted from stoning, scourging, self-denial and other struggles he faced defending the truth of the Gospel. **Are we willing to be hated, despised, and definite targets for all kinds of cruelty? Are we willing to stand alone for the faith of our Lord in the face of cruel opposition, and do we trust our Lord to take us through?**

### Galatians 6:18

God's grace is meant to operate upon the human spirit. Paul's words, "with your spirit," mean, may God's grace be with your minds as you weigh my words." He has beautifully defended his apostleship and his ministry. Even though his trained mind has presented the matter of justification by faith with unshakable logic, it still takes the grace of God for them to see it. Satan easily blinds Christians to the truth, particularly when emotions are involved. The Galatians were an emotional people. He prayed that their minds would be able to grasp the truth as it really is, and not as the corrupting Judaizers presented it. It is most urgent that they SEE how Christianity is a matter of trusting in Jesus alone.

(Lovett's Lights on Galatians, C.S. Lovett)

In writing to the Ephesians Paul revealed for the first time the mystery of the church, which would be composed of true believers from all nations with Christ as their Head and Lord. **Do you recognize a connection in Ephesians with the greetings and instructions to the Galatians?**

Eph. 1:2-3 Eph. 1:9 Eph. 1:15-23 Eph. 3:14-21

**And, finally, if the study of Galatians has helped you see more clearly the truths that the law was merely given as our schoolmaster and mirror to bring us to a clearer understanding of the loving, all-gracious and kind wooing of Jesus Christ in calling us to Himself as the only Sacrifice, and to God's presence in reconciliation — please express it here in your own words.**