
UNDERSTANDING

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AND THE
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PREFACE

P. P. Bliss, the gospel song writer, has captured the theme of Paul's letter to the Galatians in his verse:

Free from the law,
 Oh happy condition;
Jesus has died,
 And there is remission.
Cursed by the law,
 And bruised by the fall;
Christ hath redeemed us,
 Once for all.

In this study I have brought together two separate but closely related subjects: one, a doctrinal and dispensational exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians, and the other a listing and commentary on every occurrence of the word *law* in the New Testament.

For convenience, the complete text of Galatians from the Authorized Version has been reproduced in smaller type. In listing the occurrences of the word *law*, sufficient context has been provided to give the sense of each reference. The references to *law* have been classified under eighteen headings, as shown in the Table of Contents.

The Church needs the corrective truth of Galatians as much today as it did in the days of Martin Luther or Paul. Not only is the justification of the sinner wholly by faith apart from the works of the law, but so also is the sanctification or perfection of the saint by the hearing of faith, apart from the works of the law (Gal. 3:2,3). Any attempt to place the Mosaic Law and the gospel of grace of a continuum is a denial of the truth as found in the Pauline epistles.

It is my prayer that God may use this book to help someone to come to a better understanding of the dispensation of the grace of God which has been committed to our trust.

Charles F. Baker
Escondido, California, 1993

FOREWORD

When I began my formal theological training forty-two years ago, the author of this book was my theology instructor. Several years before, as an MK teenager growing up in Zaire, the Lord had placed a burden on my heart to serve Him. With that burden, He gave me a desire to evangelize the lost and teach His Word. In God's providence He gave me an excellent tutor and model in missionary Chris Egemeier, who not only introduced me to the joy of winning the lost to Christ but also to Charles Baker's little booklet *God's Clock of the Ages*. I was so overjoyed with the truth learned from this booklet (as well as from Pastor J. C. O'Hair's *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ*) that I translated into Swahili its charts and began using them in my Bible classes. As I taught my classes, God confirmed His calling in my life and I was determined to prepare myself to serve Him.

My undergraduate preparation led me to Milwaukee Bible College (now Grace Bible College) where Charles Baker was president and professor of theology. For four years, I had the privilege of sitting under his teaching where the foundation for my own understanding of the Word of God was laid. His balanced and sane interpretation of Scripture, his fairness in dealing with the views of others, his willingness to reserve judgment on the meaning of a particular verse or theological concept - all of this had a profound influence on me. But it was more than his approach to Scripture that influenced me - it was also the way he lived the Scriptures by applying them to his life and thus exemplifying godliness to his students. No wonder his students rise and call him blessed.

Understanding Galatians and the Law is a book written after many years of study, teaching, and reflection. In his characteristic style, the author explains Paul's teaching to the Galatians so that its meaning is clear and to the point. He focuses on the gospel which was preached by the apostle Paul. He does this by showing Paul's vindication of the gospel which the Judaizers attempted to pervert. But he does more than explain how Paul defended the gospel committed to him. He goes on to show why Paul was so adamant in his defense of the gospel: Paul knew that this gospel liberates, works through love, and produces fruit and spirituality in those who have come to Christ by believing the gospel. No wonder its defense was a matter of life and death for the apostle Paul.

In the section on Paul and the Law we have an excellent treatment of a subject often misunderstood. Almost from its inception, the church has been plagued, on one hand, by legalism, and on the other hand, by antinomianism, in spite of Paul's teaching on the subject. We owe a debt of gratitude to Charles Baker's clear and concise way of handling this difficult theme. His chapter on "Paul's Practice of Law," for example, clarifies why Paul could so adamantly speak out against believers placing themselves under the Law while he personally, on several occasions, placed himself under the ritual practices of the Law. The answer according to Mr. Baker is found in a dispensational understanding of Scripture.

My prayer is that through the reading and studying of *Understanding Galatians*

and the Law, we will all come to a better understanding of God's Word and its implications in our daily lives. May the Holy Spirit be pleased to use this book to bring honor and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church and the source and content of the gospel.

Dr. Sam Vinton, Jr.
Executive Director
Grace Ministries International
Grand Rapids, Michigan 1993

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INTRODUCTION

Galatians is Paul's great defense of his divine apostleship and of the gospel which he preached to the Gentile world. His apostleship was questioned because he had never known Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry, as had the Twelve apostles. His gospel was questioned because he taught the salvation of the Gentiles through faith alone apart from circumcision and the keeping of the Law of Moses. Jesus had told the Twelve just before His death to obey those that sat in Moses' seat ([Matt. 23:1-3](#)), and we find them later "continuing daily with one accord in the temple" (Acts 2:46). In the last record we have of them in the book of Acts they are still zealous of the Law of Moses, still practicing circumcision, still going to the temple and offering animal sacrifices ([Acts 21:20-24](#)). Where did Paul get his authority to bypass the whole Jewish religious system and offer salvation to Gentiles simply by grace through faith?

We find the answer to this question in chapter two of this book and also in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, where a conference was held between Paul and the other apostles. This apostolic conference resulted in a tremendously important decision regarding Paul's Gentile ministry. Furthermore, we are told this action was not simply a decision of the apostles, but "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15:28) to approve Paul's gospel message. This decision is reflected again in Acts 21:25, "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such things [as the Jewish believers in Jerusalem were observing]." We say, "in Jerusalem," for at the temple in Jerusalem was the only place where the ritual of the Law of Moses could be carried out ([Deut. 12:10-19; 16:5,6](#)).

Thus during the latter half of the Acts period there was one program for the Jews in their land who believed and another order for the Gentiles who believed. Unless this fact is recognized the Twelve apostles, as well as the apostle Paul, must be judged to be out of the will of God. Those who begin the Body of Christ and the new dispensation of grace on the day of Pentecost say the Twelve were out of the will of God in continuing to frequent the Jewish temple and in preaching to the Jews only. Some even teach that God had to call Paul to go to the Gentiles because of the racial bigotry of the Twelve, and then they condemn Paul for going to the temple and becoming involved in Jewish vows and the offering of sacrifices. The fact is God had never given any command for Jewish believers to forsake the Law or the temple. They were offering the kingdom to the rulers of Israel in which the Law and the temple played an important role. Jesus recognized the temple as "My Father's house" (John 2:16) in spite of the apostasy of the priests. We don't hear anything about the casting away of Israel until we come into Paul's epistles. The Law of Moses was not only Israel's religious law, it was their civil law as well. The Jews in Jerusalem and Judea were bound by that law as long as the temple stood. The first intimation that Jewish believers were to forsake Moses and the temple is found in Hebrews 13:13, "Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him OUTSIDE THE CAMP, bearing His reproach." It was just a short time after this was written that the Jewish war against Rome began in A.D. 65, and in A.D. 70 the Roman army under Titus completely destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Then it was no longer possible to observe the Law of Moses. There was no longer an order for the Jews who believed and another order for the Gentiles who believed.

Thus, as long as the temple stood there was one religious order for Jews in Jerusalem who believed and a different order for Gentiles who believed. It is very important to understand this dispensational difference which was in effect as long as Israel occupied Jerusalem.

The Galatian epistle was written to combat legalism, one of the most insidious of all religious errors. Legalism is insidious because it appeals to man's pride. It deceives man into believing he can justify himself before God by his own works of righteousness. On its face it appears to be very pious, having a front of what Paul calls "a false humility" (Col. 2:18). It covers human pride with a cloak of self-righteousness. Legalism in Paul's day was associated mainly with Judaism, circumcision, and the Law of Moses. Today the term is applied to any system of religion which teaches the possibility of earning salvation or of attaining sanctification through the keeping of laws, whether God-given or man-made.

This is the only letter of Paul written to a group of churches, namely, the churches of Galatia. Galatia derived its name from certain Gallic tribes which invaded and settled in central **Asia Minor** (now Turkey) around B.C. 200. These Gauls were subdued by the Romans in B.C. 189. In B.C. 25 the territory was enlarged to include parts of Phrygia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, and Isauria, and was made into a Roman province. In Paul's day, Galatia could mean either the original small territory, or the enlarged Roman province. The question arises, in which sense did Paul use it, and did Luke in Acts use it in the same sense?

We know Paul went to cities in the southern part of the province on his first missionary journey, but Luke does not mention Paul going into Galatia until his second missionary journey (Acts 16:6), where Phrygia, to which Paul went on his first journey, is distinguished from Galatia. Luke uses Galatia in the same way in Acts 18:23. Thus Luke limits Galatia to the original small territory to which Paul did not go until his second journey. Now, if Paul uses Galatia in this same sense, he must be addressing his letter to churches he established on his second journey. But the problem is that Luke gives no record of Paul establishing even one church in Galatia. But if Paul uses Galatia in this epistle in the sense of the enlarged province, then we know the churches addressed were in Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. This problem has led to two theories, the North Galatian Theory, and the South Galatian Theory. The former supposes the churches addressed were in the chief cities of the north, Ancyra (modern Ankara), Pessinus, and Tavium, even though these cities are not mentioned in the Bible. The maps of Asia minor in many Bibles and Bible atlases follow the North Galatian view.

Since Paul did not visit this northern section of Galatia until his second missionary journey it is evident, according to the northern view, that Galatians must have been written after that journey, and perhaps while he was on his third journey. And since Luke is silent about Paul having established any churches in this northern region there is no way of knowing in what cities they were located or who the people were. On the other hand, if the South Galatian hypothesis is correct, the churches

addressed were located at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, and thus the letter could have been written as early as Paul's return from his first journey.

Luke gives no details of what Paul did on his second and third journeys through Galatia. There is, consequently, no evidence in the epistle which definitely and positively identifies the time of the writing or the exact location of those addressed. Readers who desire to study this problem further will find more details in Bible dictionaries and commentaries. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, for example, contains an article on Galatia, written by archeologist William A. Ramsay, one of the outstanding advocates of the South Galatian theory. Following this article is one on Galatians by George G. Finlay, defending the North Galatian view. Luke never contradicts Paul, but because he passes over so many events which Paul mentions in his epistles, it is next to impossible to accurately fit these events into Luke's narrative.

We sometimes get the impression that missionary Paul went to far countries where the people had never heard about the one true God or about Jesus Christ. While it is true Paul preached to many Gentiles who had never heard of Jesus Christ, it is also true that in most every city he entered there was a Jewish synagogue. And we know from such passages as [Acts 13:42,43](#) that there were Gentile proselytes who were associated with these synagogues, and there were therefore Jews and some Gentiles who knew about the one true God in almost every place where Paul preached. Not only so, but on that notable Pentecost of Acts 2 we read, "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). In verses 9-11 many of the nationalities are mentioned, and while some of these were permanent dwellers in Jerusalem, the same word "dwellers" is used of those of Mesopotamia and the other countries. Throngs of Jews came to Jerusalem for important feast days from all over the Roman world. Hence there were Jews from all over the Roman Empire who witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and heard Peter's preaching. Some of them believed and when they returned to their own countries they took with them the news about Jesus the Messiah, whether they believed it or not. For more than fifteen years after that Pentecost, before Paul began his missionary work, Jews had been coming to Jerusalem for their feast days. Surely with all of this travel back and forth over such a long period of time they must have diffused some knowledge about Jesus among the Jews everywhere. Paul's mission to the Jews was to persuade them that this Jesus is the Messiah ([Acts 17:1-3](#)). Of course, his main ministry was to the Gentiles, but as we have seen, this Gentile ministry often began among proselytes in the Jewish synagogues.

There was a sharp division between the Jewish believers and their Jewish religious leaders, but not near the difference that developed against Paul after he began his Gentile ministry of justification by faith alone, apart from circumcision and the Law of Moses. It is quite natural under these circumstances to find the opposition to Paul and his message from the Jews wherever he went, as in Acts 13:50; 14:2,5,19. Opposition by the unbelieving was one thing, but now, on the occasion of the writing of the letter to the Galatians, the enemy was beginning to convince the churches that Paul was an imposter and that there was no salvation apart from circumcision and the Law of Moses. As quickly as they had believed Paul's gospel at the first, now they were turning against

Paul ([Gal. 1:6](#)). Paul expresses amazement that these Galatians could turn themselves so swiftly from the one who had called them into the grace of Christ unto a heterodox gospel.

GALATIANS

I. The Gospel Salutation - 1:1-5

Note the difference between this salutation and those of other of Paul's epistles.

Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, unto the churches of Galatia, grace be to you, and peace, from God the father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen (1:1-5).

Before wishing the usual "grace and peace" to them, Paul begins by stating the uniqueness of his apostleship – "Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)." His apostleship had been called in question by the false teachers who were troubling the churches he had established, and before greeting his readers he wants them to remember his divine credentials. He then extends his greetings, but he doesn't give thanks for them as he does in most of his epistles, for they have been a disappointment to him.

But he does give glory to Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age. Regardless of circumstances we can always find cause to give thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ for His death for us. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, and not only so, the Son also gave Himself.

II - The Gospel Perverted - 1:6-10

Paul marveled at how quickly the apostasy of the Galatians had occurred.

I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, which is not another; but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed (1:6-9).

"Removed" is in the middle voice, continuous present, you are so quickly removing yourselves from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." God is the One who calls sinners to salvation, but in this case Paul was the one

God used in calling them, and now they were turning away from Paul, denying he was a genuine apostle. They were turning to "another gospel." More accurately, they were turning to a "heterodox gospel." The word *heteros* is used of a generic difference, an entirely different kind of message, but "another which is not another" doesn't make sense. The explanation is that the second "another" is a different word, *allos*, which is another of the same kind. What they were turning to was not a gospel at all. Gospel is good news, and legalism is bad news. They were turning from goodspel to badspel.

Paul calls these false teachers, both here and in 5:10, "the troublers." The Jerusalem apostles also called them troublers:

Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you [Gentiles] with words, subverting your souls, saying, You must be circumcised and keep the Law; to whom we gave no such commandment (Acts 15:24).

The seriousness of mixing Law with the gospel is seen in Paul's pronouncing the anathema of God upon those who do so. "Anathema" occurs in [Acts 23:14](#); [Romans 9:3](#); [1 Corinthians 12:3](#), and [16:22](#). The verb form occurs in [Mark 17:41](#) and [Acts 23:12,14,21](#). In the Septuagint it is the translation of the Hebrew word *cherem*, used of a thing devoted to God without hope of being redeemed, and of an animal to be slain ([Lev. 27:28,29](#)), of a person or thing doomed to destruction ([Josh. 6:17, 7:12](#)), an abominable, detestable and accursed thing ([Deut. 7:26](#)).

Paul asks, "Do I seek the favor of men, or of God? Do I seek to please men?" When it came to the truth of the gospel, Paul was not a man-pleaser. Christian behavior was a different matter. "Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved" (1 Cor. 10:32,33). He did not compromise truth to please man and neither did he needlessly offend people.

III. The Gospel Defended - 1:11 - 2:21

A. By Paul's Own Testimony (1:11-24)

Paul defended the gospel he preached by first showing how he received it:

But I make known unto you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1:11, 12)

Paul made known (not "certified," as in the King James) This word, *gnorizo*, is translated elsewhere some twenty times as make known or declare. Paul's gospel was not after man (*kata anthropon*). It was not according to man, that is, it was not based on man's standards. He did not receive it of man (*para anthropou*), that is, from man. The preposition *para* has in it the idea of transmission. It was not transmitted to him from any man. Neither was the gospel taught to Paul. He didn't go to seminary or to the

other apostles to study and learn about it. Rather, he received it through (*dia*) the revelation of Jesus Christ. The King James, "by the revelation of Jesus Christ," makes Christ the subject of the revelation. Actually, the gospel is the subject of the revelation which came through Christ.

The gospel was not according to (*kata*) man, but it was according to (*kata*) the Scripture (I Cor. 15:1-4), and it came to Paul through special revelation. Paul did not sit down with the Old Testament and figure out for himself the gospel from its types and shadows and predictions. God had the prophets write down facts concerning the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow so these truths could be confirmed after they had happened. The prophets who prophesied of the grace that should come unto us inquired and searched diligently, trying to find what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify when he testified of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow; unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto us by them that have preached the gospel unto us with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven (1 Pet. 1:10-12). We ought to do as the Bereans of old did-search the Scriptures to see if these things are so (Acts 17:11).

It is important to distinguish between the gospel and the Mystery in Paul's preaching. The Mystery was also according to revelation, but it was not according to Scripture. It had been kept secret, hidden in God, until it was revealed to Paul. J. C. O'Hair, one of the founding fathers of the Grace Gospel Fellowship, wrote a book entitled, *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ*, the purpose of which was "to compare the confirmation ministry of Christ, of the Twelve, and of Paul, with the revelation ministry of Paul" (p. 24). By confirmation ministry he meant that ministry which could be confirmed by Old Testament Scripture. By revelation ministry he meant that ministry which was not prophesied or promised in Scripture, but which had been kept secret, hidden in God, from before the ages began. The word "unsearchable" in Ephesians 3:8 is a very interesting compound word, *anexechniaston*. It is made up of the negative particle a + the preposition ex, out of + *ichnos*, meaning a footprint or footprint. The combined word means not to leave footprints, untrackable, or untraceable. *Ichnos* is used in I Peter 2:21, where we it should follow in his steps. "But the Mystery has left no steps in the Old Testament to follow. It is untrackable, it cannot be searched out. The Mystery is stated and briefly defined in [Ephesians 3:3-6](#).

Paul next gives a brief account of his early life up to three years after his conversion.

For you have heard of my conversation [manner of life] in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto

Damascus. (1:13-16)

Paul no doubt had told the Galatians how he was converted and how he had in ignorance persecuted the early believers (1 Tim. 1:13) when he first preached to them. A changed life is one of the best advertisements for the gospel. Paul never forgot the pain he had inflicted on God's people while he was a self-righteous Pharisee. Now, Paul had learned what suffering for Christ really meant. God had told Ananias, "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16). His suffering was not punishment for the suffering he had caused others. Suffering is a part of the discipline for God's people. Paul could say, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

It seems the bigger a sinner before conversion, the more convincing the testimony of a Christian. Paul called himself the chief of sinners - hence, his was the chiefest of testimonies. His testimony should have answered those who were trying to undermine his authority and gospel among the Galatians.

Paul persecuted the church. This church was the church of prophecy, not the church of the Mystery. The word congregation in the Old Testament Greek Septuagint is the word translated church in the New Testament. The church of the present dispensation had its origin in Paul's ministry.

Paul appeals to his education in the Jew's religion as credentials for a well-trained biblical scholar. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Gamaliel's rabbinic seminary (Acts 22:3). As far as his qualifications religiously were concerned, he was blameless (Phil. 3:4-6). He apparently had better knowledge of Scripture than any one of his generation.

God had revealed to Paul that He had separated him from his mother's womb and called him by His grace to reveal His Son in him. God picks out His men before they are born (Jer. 1:5; Isa. 49:1-5; Rom. 9:11-13). But before God actually began to reveal His Son in Paul, He permitted him to become the chief enemy of His Son, in order that He might reveal the exceeding riches of His grace in making Paul an example for those who should hereafter believe on Christ to life everlasting (1 Tim. 1:16).

He was separated that he might preach Christ among the heathen (*ethnesin* - the nations, usually translated Gentiles). However, Saul was not immediately separated to his Gentile ministry. Just as Moses had to spend forty years in the backside of a desert before beginning his work of delivering Israel from Egypt (Acts 7:23,30), so Paul spent a number of years in preparation before being separated to his Gentile ministry (Acts 13:2). It was here that the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27).

Paul next states what he did immediately after his conversion. He did not confer with flesh and blood, neither did he go to Jerusalem to confer with the Twelve, but he went into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. In Luke's account in Acts 9:19-39 of Paul's conversion we are told he immediately preached Christ in the synagogue, that He

is the Son of God. From the Acts account the impression is given that Paul went directly to Jerusalem after his conversion, but Paul states he first went to Arabia and returned to Damascus before going to Jerusalem. Why he went to Arabia and how long he stayed, we are not told. No doubt he went for a time of solitude and communion with the Lord to get adjusted to this great change of direction in his life. We may suppose Christ appeared to him and gave him further revelation of His plan and purpose for the new dispensation.

On returning to Damascus we read:

Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. (1:18-20)

Paul is so emphatic about the fact that he didn't see any of the other apostles in Jerusalem that he goes to the extreme in stating, "Behold, before God, I lie not!" He is intent on proving he did not receive any knowledge or instruction from them. It might seem Luke's account contradicts Paul's statement that he saw none of the other apostles; however, the word "saw" which Paul used is *eidon*, which does not mean to see visually, but to know or have knowledge. Notice how the same verb is used in chapter 2:7 and 14, translated "saw," and in 2:16; 4:8 and 13, translated "know." Paul saw the other apostles with his eyes, but he did not see them in the sense of inquiring and learning from them.

Paul concludes his testimony:

Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ; but they had heard only, He who persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which he once destroyed, And they glorified God in me. (verses 21-24)

Paul was presently preaching the faith he once destroyed, which indicates he was not yet preaching the gospel of the uncircumcision, what he called "my gospel." The faith he destroyed was the faith taught by the Twelve in the early Acts period. There was a progression of revelations given to Paul ([2 Cor. 12:1](#); [Acts 26:16](#)).

There is no record of Paul's activities from the time God warned him to get out of Jerusalem ([Acts 9:29,30](#) cf. [22:17-21](#)) and his trip back to Cilicia, until Barnabas went to Tarsus to bring him back to minister at Antioch, where a large number of Greeks had turned to the Lord, and where the disciples were first called Christians ([Acts 11:19-26](#)). There is no record of any churches he founded in Cilicia, and no indication whether he preached to any Gentiles in that region. It seems God began breaking the ice for Paul's Gentile ministry by having Peter go to the first Gentile convert, Cornelius, which helped the Twelve to understand that God was making a change of dispensation. This change was further seen in the turning of the Greeks to Christ at Antioch.

B. By the Jerusalem Council (2:1-10)

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

Most commentators think this is the same visit to Jerusalem as described in Acts 15. However, there are a number of differences in the accounts which lead some to believe the visit described here took place in Acts 11 when Paul carried famine relief to Jerusalem. A comparison shows the following differences between Paul's and Luke's accounts:

PAUL Went by special revelation.
LUKE The church sent them.

PAUL Accompanied by Barnabas and Titus.
LUKE Titus not mentioned.

PAUL Opposed by false brethren who slipped in secretly to spy.
LUKE Opposed by believers who were Pharisees.

PAUL Other apostles added nothing to Paul.
LUKE No mention.

PAUL Mention of the gospel of the uncircumcision and of the circumcision.
LUKE No mention.

PAUL Agreement reached for Paul to go to the Gentiles and the other apostles to the Jews.
LUKE No mention.

PAUL No mention.
LUKE Peter's speech about being the first to preach to Gentiles and how God put no difference between Jews and Gentiles.

PAUL No mention.
LUKE Discourse by James on Amos 9.

PAUL No mention.
LUKE Letter written freeing Gentiles from Mosaic law and a disclaimer they had sent these men to Antioch who were insisting on circumcision for Gentiles.

PAUL Mentioned as second visit to Jerusalem.
LUKE Mentioned as Paul's third visit to Jerusalem.

"Fourteen years after" is generally understood to mean fourteen years after his conversion.

30 A.D. Pentecost

35 A.D. Saul's conversion.

38 A.D. Saul's first visit to Jerusalem ([Gal. 1:18](#); [Acts 9:26](#)).

38 - 45 A.D. Saul preaches in Syria and Cilicia ([Gal. 1:21](#); [Acts 9:30](#)).

40 A.D. Cornelius converted ([Acts 10:32-48](#)).

45 A.D. Reception of Gentile converts into Jewish church at Antioch. Barnabas brings Saul from Tarsus to minister at Antioch ([Acts 11:19-26](#)).

46 A.D. Barnabas and Saul sent to Jerusalem with famine relief ([Acts 11:27-30](#); [12:25](#)).

47 - 48 A.D. Saul and Barnabas on first missionary journey ([Acts 13:1-14:25](#)).

49 A.D. Paul goes to Jerusalem to meet with Jewish apostles ([Acts 15:1-29](#); [Gal. 2:1-10](#)). This is his second visit according to Paul and his third according to Luke. This is not a contradiction. Luke tells us of things Paul did which are not mentioned by Paul in his epistles, and vice versa. Paul does not state in Galatians 2:1 that this was his second visit to Jerusalem, He simply dates it as fourteen years later.

Paul had a purpose in taking Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile convert, with him. His purpose was to test the other apostles right in Jerusalem, to see if they would accept Titus without circumcision, or if they would insist he be circumcised.

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

This visit to Jerusalem was not Paul's own idea. God gave him a special revelation prompting him to go. "Lest I had run in vain," means that if the Jerusalem church took a stand against his Gentile ministry, much of his labor would be overcome by their support of those Jews at Antioch who were insisting on putting the yoke of the Law on the Gentiles' neck. When Jews made proselytes of Gentiles they called it, "taking the yoke." Peter called the Mosaic Law an unbearable yoke ([Acts 15:10](#)), and Paul called it a yoke of bondage ([Gal. 5:1](#)).

But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised; and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in secretly to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage; to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour,

that the truth of the gospel might continue with you (2:3,4).

Paul had purposely gone privately "to those of reputation," the reputed leaders of the church, but some false brethren secretly slipped into the meeting and tried to enslave the Gentiles with the Law. They wanted to force circumcision on Titus. But Paul would not submit to these demands for one moment. To do so would have compromised the truth of the gospel. Thank God for Paul and for lesser lights who have refused to compromise the gospel of the grace of God.

But of those who seemed to be somewhat (whatever they were, it maketh no matter to me; God accepts no man's person)-for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me. But, on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter, (for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles) (2:6-8).

There seems to be a little irony in the way Paul spoke of the apostles in charge of the Jerusalem church as "seeming to be somewhat and seeming to be pillars" (v. 9). No doubt the teachers troubling the Galatians pitted the Twelve apostles against Paul as being more important and authoritative than Paul, and Paul wanted them to understand he was not awed by their presence. If he was forced to, he could boast (cf. [1 Cor. 9:1-6](#); [2 Cor. 11:5](#)). He was not one whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

The important thing is that the Jerusalem apostles were not able to add one thing to his message. To the contrary, Paul added to their understanding. They became convinced from his explanation of the gospel and from the evident blessing of God upon his ministry that he was God's man to be the apostle of the Gentiles.

In this context Paul calls his gospel the gospel of, or for, the uncircumcision (the Gentiles), and Peter's gospel the gospel of the circumcision (the Jews). Translators are divided on whether Paul is making a distinction between the gospels preached by himself and Peter, or between the two groups unto which he and Peter preached the gospel. Many dispensationalists believe Paul is contrasting his gospel to the Gentiles with Peter's gospel to the Jews. Whether or not that is Paul's purpose here, it is evident there were differences in the dispensational programs of these two apostles. To understand these differences we must study the life of Abraham who lived 1900 years before Christ.

When this man's name was still Abram there was no such distinction as Jew and Gentile, circumcision and uncircumcision. All men were uncircumcised. By this time all mankind had turned away from God and had become idolaters; wherefore "God also gave them up" ([Rom. 1:21-32](#)). Then the sovereign God appeared to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees and told him to leave that country and go to a place He would show him and He would bless him and make his name great, and in him all families of the earth would be blessed. He was seventy-five years old when he started for the land of Canaan ([Gen. 12:4](#)). He had no children, his wife was barren, and he was getting old. After

several years he inquired of God how His promise could be fulfilled if he had no children. God then promised him a son, and told him his descendants would be as numerous as the stars ([Gen. 15:2-6](#)). Abram believed God was able to give life through his and Sarah's bodies, even though they were dead as far as child bearing was concerned ([Rom. 4:19](#)), and God counted his faith for righteousness. This former idolater from Ur was completely justified from sin simply on the basis of faith. This is one of the most important truths for our understanding of what Paul calls the gospel of the uncircumcision.

Paul is very careful to show that Abram was declared righteous by faith alone a number of years before he entered into the covenant of circumcision ([Gen. 17](#) cf. [Rom. 4:9-12](#)), at which time Abram was ninety-nine years old and his name was changed to Abraham. From this point on, from Genesis 17 to Acts 10, all of God's redemptive dealings were confined to the circumcised seed of Abraham. The seed became a nation when God delivered them out of Egypt under Moses, who gave them the Law 430 years after God's promise to Abraham ([Gal. 3:19](#) cf. [Rom. 4:13-16](#)). Fifteen hundred years later the Son of God became incarnate as Jesus, the Seed of Abraham, made of a woman, made under the Law ([Gal. 4:4](#)). During His earthly ministry He said He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel ([Matt. 15:24](#)), and that Israel must first be saved before the Gentiles could be blessed ([Mk. 7:27](#)). All of the promised blessings to the Gentiles were to come through Israel. Jesus called His message the gospel of the Kingdom ([Matt. 4:23](#)), and He told His apostles not to preach it to the Gentiles (the uncircumcision), but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel ([Matt. 10:5,6](#)).

After His death and resurrection Christ commissioned his apostles to go into all the world and teach all nations ([Matt. 28:19,20](#); [Mk. 16:15](#)).

Just before His ascension His disciples asked, "Lord, will you at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Why did they ask this question? They no doubt understood that the children of Israel had to be filled first before they were to go into all the world preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. During the forty day seminar which Jesus had with His disciples between His resurrection and ascension, He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. He showed them everything in the whole Old Testament concerning Himself ([Lk. 24:44,45](#)). Christ did not answer their question about the commencement of the kingdom but stated, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons" ([Acts 1:7](#)). The kingdom had to first be offered to the rulers of Israel, as was done in Acts 2 and 3, and the further fulfillment of kingdom prophecy was conditional upon the repentance of national Israel. That is why the apostles stayed in Jerusalem and maintained their worship at the temple ([Acts 2:46](#)). That is why, "when the disciples were scattered from Jerusalem by persecution, they went as far as Phenice, and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to none but the Jews only" ([Acts 11:19](#)).

When the Church lost sight of dispensational truth it began to accuse the apostles of bigotry and racism for not going to the Gentiles immediately, and some have even taught that God gave up on the Twelve apostles for their failure and raised up Paul

so He could get the gospel to the Gentiles. How different are the facts of Scripture! The apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit. They stood boldly against persecution and threat of death. Paul in our Galatian text says God "wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision." No, the apostles were not disobedient, they were not wrong in carrying out the command of Christ given just before His crucifixion, to obey those who sat in Moses' seat ([Matt. 23:2,3](#)). It was not until God began to make changes by giving Peter the sheet vision and sending him to the Gentile Cornelius, then started saving Greeks at Antioch, and finally separating Saul to the Gentile ministry for which God had called him, that it became evident the nation of Israel would not repent and accept the kingdom gospel. It was then that Paul went to Jerusalem to straighten out his Gentile ministry with the other apostles at Jerusalem. When they saw the kingdom gospel which they had been preaching to the circumcision had been completely rejected by the nation, they agreed as it were, to acknowledge God's suspension of their commission to go to all the world with the message of the kingdom, to confine their ministry mainly to the circumcision people in Judea, and to recognize Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles in the new dispensation.

From the story of Paul's rebuking of Peter which follows in this chapter, it is evident that Peter, who had the circumcision gospel, was not trusting in circumcision as a means of justification. The Jewish believers were already circumcised when they became believers in Christ. Since Christ had opened their understanding to the truths concerning His death and resurrection in the Old Testament Scriptures, it is evident they understood Christ's death was a sacrifice for their sins, and they preached that there was no salvation in any other than Jesus Christ ([Acts 4:12](#)).

It is important to understand also that the gospel of salvation which Paul preached was according to the prophecies of the Old Testament ([I Cor. 15:1-4](#)), and the gospel of God, to which he had been separated was that which God had promised before by his prophets in the holy Scriptures ([Rom. 1:1,2](#)). Many of these prophecies could not be understood until after the death and resurrection of Christ, even as Peter explained:

Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into ([I Pet. 1:10-12](#)).

All of Paul's preaching as recorded in Acts was according to the Scripture. Read his sermon at Antioch in Pisidia ([Acts 13:16-41](#)). Note his manner of preaching ([Acts 17:1-3](#)). He testified to King Agrippa:

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and

Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the People [of Israel], and to the Gentiles (Acts 26:22-23).

Paul had committed to his trust not only the prophesied gospel of salvation, but also the dispensation of the Mystery which was not prophesied, but was hidden in God before it was revealed to Paul (Eph. 3:1-9). The Mystery has to do with the one New Man, the Body of Christ, and the spiritual relationships of the Body. The Mystery cannot be disassociated from Paul's gospel, but it can be distinguished from it. Although the Mystery is mentioned in two of Paul's epistles written during the Acts period, it is more fully developed in his prison epistles. The completion of the revelation of the Mystery could not come until after the transition period during the latter half of Acts. During that period there was a two-fold order: one for the Jews who believed and one for the Gentiles who believed.

As we have seen, there was a distinction between uncircumcision and circumcision at this Jerusalem conference, and later when Paul made his last visit to Jerusalem, James says to Paul:

You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law; and they are informed of you, that you teach all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it, therefore? the multitude must needs come together; for they will hear that you art come. Do therefore this we say to you. We have four men which have a vow on them. Them take, and purify yourself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads; and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning you, are nothing; but that you yourself walk orderly, and you keep the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication (Acts 21:20-26).

During this period Paul could say, "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews" (1 Cor. 9:20). And during this same period the Gentile believers were to observe no such thing as the Jewish believers observed. This two-fold order ended with the close of the transition period, or shortly thereafter when the Jewish war against Rome began. In 70 A.D. the Roman army completely destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, ending the possibility of observing the Law of Moses. Up to the end of the book of Acts no command can be found ordering the Jewish believers in Jerusalem to forsake the temple or Jerusalem, but shortly before the destruction of the temple the Hebrews epistle was addressed to the Jews with this concluding admonition:

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without [outside] the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him outside the camp, bearing his reproach (Heb. 13:12,13).

Paul clearly states that the gospel of salvation which he preached was promised and prophesied in the Old Testament. He gave various designations to the gospel, such as the gospel of Christ (10 times), the gospel of God (6 times), the gospel of peace (twice), the gospel of the grace of God (once), the gospel of the uncircumcision (once), the gospel of salvation (once), the gospel of His Son (once). In three passages he identifies the gospel with himself - "my gospel" ([Rom. 2:16](#), [2 Tim. 2:8](#); and [Rom. 16:25](#)). Up to the point of Romans 2:16 Paul has not introduced any Mystery truth. He has mentioned the gospel twice, once as having been promised before and once as to the Jew first and also to the Greek. In 2 Timothy 2:8 his "my gospel" is associated with Jesus Christ of the seed of David. But in the third passage, Romans 16:25, "my gospel" is associated with the Mystery:

Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery.

Some dispensationalists teach that "my gospel" is the Mystery, so that wherever Paul speaks of the gospel he preached he is talking about the Mystery. This view makes Paul's gospel different in every respect from that of the Twelve. But such a view is contrary to evidence already presented that the gospel Paul preached was prophesied before-hand in the Scriptures.

George Williams in *The Students' Bible Commentary* states:

So Paul had a double ministry-that of the Gospel, and that of "My Gospel," i.e. the Gospel of the Mystery (p. 376). By "the gospel" he means the gospel of salvation (1 Cor. 15:1-4). He makes the conjunction in Romans 16:25 to mean "even my gospel, even the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery."

J.C. O'Hair, *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ*, which was written to show the difference between the gospel of salvation and the Mystery, after quoting Ephesians 6:19,20, states:

Why did Paul suffer as an evil doer? For the gospel. For what gospel? He said, MY GOSPEL. All of the apostles were preaching I Corinthians 15:1-4. Paul was not referring to that. When Paul wrote to Timothy to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, he was not referring to "the gospel of the kingdom," or merely to the gospel of salvation of Ephesians 1:13. No, Paul was referring to the divine truth designated "the Mystery" (p. 99).

O'Hair held a very comprehensive view of gospel. He states, "Every single spiritual blessing and benefit that is available in Christ for the believer in Christ is a part of the gospel" (p. 99). Thus, while those under the kingdom gospel and those under Paul's gospel both enjoyed the blessing of forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ, there were other blessings which were not shared jointly. The kingdom saints looked forward to the blessings of the millennial kingdom, peace on earth, good will to men. Paul's converts were blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places as

members of the Body of Christ. There is a basic gospel of salvation for all dispensations, but each dispensation has its own specific blessings.

In Romans 16:25 there is a conjunction (*kai*) between "my gospel" and "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery." This conjunction is usually translated "and" in the A.V., but it is also rendered "also, but, even, for if, indeed, likewise, moreover, or, so, that, then, therefore, when, yea, yet." However, almost all English versions translate *kai* in this passage as "and:" "my gospel *and* the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery." Thus the Mystery is something in addition to the gospel. When Paul first began preaching the gospel he was not also preaching the Mystery. When he preached the gospel in the synagogue of Damascus there is no indication that he preached about the Mystery Body of Christ, any more than Peter preached the Mystery to Cornelius.

When attempting to discern all of the differences between Paul's ministry and terminology and that of the Twelve, or in trying to identify all of the similarities, there are bound to be differences of opinion. Dispensationalists seek to find all of the differences possible between the various dispensations, and sometimes differences are manufactured to fit into one's preconceived ideas. Whether the more than 500 believers who saw Christ in His resurrection body ([1 Cor. 15:6](#)) ever became members of the body of Christ is interesting, but the answer is not vital to our ministry today. The important thing for us today is to understand that God committed the dispensation of the Mystery to the apostle Paul, and that all of the truth concerning this dispensation is to be found in Paul's epistles. The Law said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Does Paul teach this? The Law says if a man is found picking up sticks on the Sabbath he shall be stoned to death ([Num. 15:32-36](#)). Does Paul teach this?

We are always on safe ground when we preach what Paul preached, and when we preach the remainder of the Bible in accordance with Paul's doctrine. Paul spoke in tongues, but that does not mean we should preach speaking in tongues, for Paul himself teaches that this gift was to be done away when its purpose was fulfilled.

And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we remember the poor, the same which I also was diligent to do. (2:9,10)

Just what did this agreement mean that Paul was to go to the Gentiles (*ethne*), and they to the circumcision? After this agreement Paul continued to go to the Jews wherever he found a synagogue. Paul's whole dispensational program was based enjoining the uncircumcision and the circumcision people into one joint body ([Eph. 2:11-20](#)). How could he do this if he didn't evangelize the Jews? The explanation has been made that when God set Israel aside ([Rom. 11:12,15](#)), Israel ceased to be the chosen nation and became just another one of the nations so that Paul was abiding by this agreement by going to the nations (*ethne*) since Israel was now just one among the nations. But then to whom were the other apostles to go, if all difference had been

obliterated between Israel and the Gentiles, between circumcision and uncircumcision?
(See [Addendum 1](#))

It is true that "in Christ" there is no difference between Jew and Gentile ([Gal. 3:28](#)), but in the flesh these differences still remained. Paul still called himself a Jew and an Israelite ([Acts 21:39](#); [Rom. 11:10](#)). It is also true God made no difference between Jew and Gentile in that He has put all equally under sin and made all equally dependent upon faith in Christ. The simple explanation of this agreement is that the Jewish apostles would continue their ministry in the land of Judea, while Paul would carry the gospel to the uncircumcised nations, which included Jews of the dispersion. There must have been a great deal of traveling and intermingling, for we find some of Peter's people in the church at Corinth ([1 Cor. 1:12](#)), and Peter had communications with believers in areas which Paul evangelized ([1 Pet. 1:1](#)).

We do not believe the intent of this agreement was that Paul would never preach to a circumcised person again, or that Peter would never witness to an uncircumcised person again. The "right hand of fellowship" meant they recognized that God had called Paul to be the apostle of all nations in the new dispensation.

C. By the Rebuke of Peter at Antioch (2:11-21)

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before certain men came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled in like manner with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their false pretense. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If you, being a Jew, live after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why do you compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but, by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law; for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I, through the Law, am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not make void the grace of God; for if righteousness comes by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain. (2:11-21)

Peter's visit to Antioch must have taken place before Paul started on his second missionary journey, for there is no record that both Paul and Barnabas were ever present at Antioch after that. Paul seems to place this visit after his meeting with the other apostles in Jerusalem. In any event, it is difficult to understand how either Peter or Barnabas could have yielded to this hypocritical action of setting up a wall again

between themselves and the Gentile believers which they had so recently agreed had been broken down.

Before certain men came to Antioch from James, Peter had been enjoying eating and fellowshiping with the Gentile believers. But when these men who belonged to the circumcision party in Jerusalem arrived, Peter feared what kind of report they would carry back to James, so he separated himself from the Gentiles. He did this so the men from Jerusalem could not find any ammunition to use against him.

Peter's default may perhaps be explained by a character trait of his human nature. Although he loved the Lord Jesus dearly, he denied Him three times the night of the betrayal. After the Holy Spirit had been poured out, Peter stood up boldly at Pentecost and thereafter, even suffering imprisonment and threat of death. He and Barnabas stood up boldly at the Jerusalem Council with Paul for Gentile equality. But conversion does not remove the fleshly nature and its flaws. When these Jews came to Antioch from James, Peter apparently thought, "I don't want these fellows to see me doing anything among these Gentiles that would get me in trouble with the church at Jerusalem, so I think I will take appropriate action and keep separate from the Gentiles until these fellows go back home." He may have even discussed it with Barnabas, advising him to do the same thing. He probably didn't understand what a devastating blow his action could have been to the gospel of grace, had not Paul rebuked him openly. Peter was humiliated and the men from Jerusalem got an earful to take back to James. Human weaknesses often surface in times of temptation and stress. Assuredly, we can put no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3).

Paul's public rebuke of Peter was based upon truth which Paul says was well known to Peter. If Peter had not believed what Paul said he believed, he would surely have denied the allegation in order to defend his character. But Peter didn't deny the charge, and this is significant since Peter's motive in separating himself from the Gentiles was to protect his reputation with the Jerusalem church, but by remaining silent he acknowledged Paul's charges as true. Paul's statement of what Peter knew and believed is:

We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law; for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified (vv. 15,16).

It is thus plain that by the time of Peter's visit to Antioch he knew and believed in justification by faith apart from the works of the Law. It is also evident that by this time Peter believed in the equality of Gentiles with the Jews. But as long as the temple stood in Jerusalem, the Law of Moses was the political law of Israel as well, and as Jewish citizens the Jewish believers were obligated to obey the Law. The first command for the Jews to forsake the Mosaic Law is found in Hebrews 13:13, "Let us go forth, therefore, unto him outside the camp, bearing his reproach." It was just a short time after this was written that the Jewish-Roman war began in 65 A.D., and in 70 A.D.

the Roman army sacked Jerusalem, slaughtering thousands of Jews and leveling the temple so that not one stone was left standing upon another. That brought an abrupt end to the observance of the Mosaic Law.

Paul condemns Peter on the principle that if we rebuild that which we once destroyed, we make ourselves transgressors. If Peter broke down the wall between Jews and Gentiles and then began to rebuild **it**, he was proving himself a transgressor for breaking it down in the first place. Paul concludes with an explanation of how he had become dead to the Law through having been crucified with Christ. He now lived by the faith of the Son of God.

For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 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. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes by the law, Christ died in vain (2:19-21 NKJ).

Paul says he died to the law. How and when did he die? He says in Romans 7:9-11 that he was, alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life, and he died. "Once" refers to the time before he became aware of the full impact of the law. His sin nature was dormant, but when the commandment struck as a bolt of lightning, it condemned him and killed him. He was on death row, as good as dead. Thus the law killed him. But here in Galatians he says he died with Christ on the Cross. Actually it was the law that put Christ to death when He took our sins upon Himself.

We are never told to crucify ourselves. People can kill themselves in many ways, but no man can crucify himself: nail his own hands and feet to a cross and then set up the cross in an erect position. As being in Christ we were crucified with Christ. And Christ was crucified to satisfy the penalty of the broken law. We are to reckon the old self which once lived in our body to have died, and to believe we have been raised from the dead spiritually in Christ, now to live in newness of life.

In contrast to what Peter did, Paul says, "I do not frustrate the grace of God [as Peter did], for if righteousness come by the Law, then Christ died in vain." Paul does not use the usual word for "vain," but *dorean*, which is elsewhere translated, "freely," "without a cause," and "for naught." This is apparently a unique usage of the word, since this meaning is not attached to the word in any other Greek writings. If we get something free we say we got it for nothing, and in this sense, if we could get righteousness in any other way, Christ died for nothing, for no reason at all, unnecessarily.

IV. The Gospel Vindicated - 3:1-29

A. Foolishness of Reverting to the Law (3:1-5)

O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth,

before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been openly set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received you the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish, Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain? - if it be yet in vain. He therefore, that ministers to you the Spirit, and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?

While it is true that God gave Israel a religion of legalism at Sinai - for the purpose of showing that sin is exceedingly sinful, to convict of sin, to prove the whole world guilty before God - it is now foolish to practice that religion since Christ has come and has fulfilled all of its requirements for us. This truth seems so obvious that Paul feels someone must have cast a spell upon the Galatians or hypnotized them to make them believe the works of the Law, which could only condemn them, could now perfect their faith. The word "foolish" is the faculty of moral judgment put in reverse. Their error in going back to the Law indicated a defect in their moral judgment. It might be charged that Paul was violating the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:22 in calling the Galatians fools, but the word Jesus used was *moron*, not the word Paul used. Two other Greek words are translated fool and foolish, one meaning "without understanding," ([Rom. 1:21,31](#)), and the other "without reason, stupid, without reflection or intelligence" ([1 Cor. 15:36](#); [Eph. 5:17](#) - translated "unwise").

In obeying the Law, the Galatians were disobeying the truth of the gospel. Obeying the Law, in this context, does not mean doing that which is right and good, but the putting of one's self under a system of restraints which depend for fulfillment upon human works. The best righteousness which the Law could produce was as "filthy rags" in God's sight ([Isa. 64:6](#)). The Galatians had put on the spotless robe of God's righteousness when they received the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ, and now they were trying to improve that perfect robe by putting their filthy rags over it.

Regarding the expression, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth," the verb was used of placards or posters which were put up to inform the public. It was as though a huge billboard, depicting Jesus Christ crucified, had been set up before their eyes. How could they turn from that magnificent scene to their own tawdry works? The best Greek texts omit the words, "among you." Jesus was not crucified among them - He was openly displayed before their eyes as crucified.

In order to put his point across, Paul fires four self-answering questions at them.

- "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law? or by the hearing of faith?" Elsewhere Paul states, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" ([Rom. 10:17](#)).
- "Are you so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?" Are you so lacking in intelligence and understanding as to suppose that what was begun by the Spirit is going to be brought to consummation by that sinful nature in you which can never please God ([Rom. 8:7,8](#))?

- "Have you suffered so many things in vain? if it yet be in vain." It must be remembered that these early believers suffered a great deal of persecution. It was in Galatia that Paul was stoned and dragged out of the city and left for dead (Acts 14:22). Had all of this suffering been for naught? The word for "vain" here is a different word from that just four verses earlier. The same word is used again in chapter 4:11 and in 1 Corinthians 15:2. There is yet another Greek word, *kenos*, which is "vain," having the sense of emptiness, words devoid of spiritual truth (Eph. 5:6). The statement, "if it yet be in vain," should be translated, "if it be really in vain." There is a doubt expressed, but Paul was unwilling to believe their sufferings had been for naught.
- "He therefore that ministers to you the Spirit, and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?" Paul, having been appointed an apostle after Christ's return to heaven, was given all of the "signs of an apostle" (2 Cor. 12:12, the power of working miracles) to make the Gentiles obedient (Rom. 15:18,19). His miracles in Galatia are recorded in Acts 14:3, 8-11. The word "ministers" is a compound word composed of *epi*, giving the sense of superabundance, plus *choregon*, meaning to procure and supply all things necessary to fit out the chorus. The idea is that God superabundantly supplies or ministers His Spirit.

The answer to all of these questions is obvious. The Law had absolutely nothing to do with the giving of the Spirit, or the sanctification of the believer or the working of miraculous power. How gratifying to find some absolutes, where black is black and white is white, where things are not on a continuum somewhere between the left and the right, or in an uncertain and vague gray area.

If it is by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work (Rom. 11:6).

Law and the gospel are in no sense on a continuum. Those who try to combine Law with the gospel end up with a concoction in which each has lost its identity and power. In such a scheme, the Law has lost its teeth and the gospel has lost its freedom.

B. Abraham Justified by Faith Alone (3:6-9)

Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know you, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed. So, then, they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham (3:5-9).

Paul vindicated his gospel of justification by faith apart from works by appealing

to the salvation of the man whom the Jews revered most highly. He says that this gospel was preached to Abraham. Elsewhere Paul states this gospel was according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4), and that it was promised before by His prophets in the holy Scriptures (Rom. 1:1,2).

The fact Paul could prove from the Scripture that Abraham was justified by faith alone, many years before the Law was given and before God entered into the covenant of circumcision, should have had the effect of stopping the mouths of the Judaizers, since they appealed to Abraham. The question at that time was not whether Jews should be circumcised, for all Jews were already circumcised. The question was, did Gentiles need to be circumcised in order to be saved. Uncircumcised Abram was saved as a Gentile while he was still uncircumcised.

In saying the gospel was preached to Abraham, we must be careful not to make the mistake of supposing Abraham was told to believe that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture, and that He was buried and that He arose the third day. As yet there were no Scriptures to state these facts, and besides such a message could not have been preached until after Christ had died. Paul tells us what the message was that Abraham believed – “In you shall all nations be blessed.” It required a very strong faith for Abraham to believe this. He was an old man and his wife was barren. Based on nature, Abraham believed the impossible. Paul develops this point in Romans 4 showing Abraham believed that God could and would quicken or give life to the dead in order for him to become the father of nations, just as we will be justified if we believe on him who raised up Jesus from the dead (v. 24).

We must also be careful not to make the mistake of confusing the gospel of salvation which was promised in the holy Scriptures and the Mystery concerning the Body of Christ, which truth had been kept hidden in God until it was revealed through Paul. Paul preached both of these great truths. We can go back and search the Old Testament and find many types and shadows which illustrate the gospel, but we don't find anything which illustrates the truth of the Body and its Head. Paul's epistles, especially Romans and Galatians, give the complete unfolding of the gospel, based upon the death and resurrection of Christ. The prison epistles, Ephesians and Colossians, especially expound the truth of the Mystery. The gospel tells sinners how to be saved. The Mystery establishes saints in how to function as members of the Body.

It is possible to preach the gospel without preaching the Mystery. Paul surely preached the gospel as recorded in the book of Acts, but there is no record of his preaching the Mystery or the truth about the Body of Christ in Acts. All of his preaching was out of the Old Testament, which doesn't contain the Mystery. In fact, he states in Acts 26:22:

I continue unto this day, witnessing to both small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

Among the carnal Corinthians, Paul determined to preach only Christ crucified, but to the mature believers he did speak of the hidden Mystery (I Cor. 2:2,6,7).

The difference between the gospel and the Mystery explains how there are many today who preach salvation by grace plus nothing based upon I Corinthians 15:1-4 and Ephesians 2:8,9, and yet they deny the distinctive truth of the Mystery and adopt a religious program for the church based upon the prophetic program of Israel's kingdom. The result is Pentecostalism, healing, tongues, baptismal ordinances, etc. The divisions and confusion within the professing church would be greatly alleviated by the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery (Rom. 16:25).

C. But the Law Is Not of Faith (3:10-12)

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; For it is written; Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the Law, to do them. But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, the just shall live by faith. And the Law is not of faith but, the man that does them shall live in them. (3:10,11).

When it came to personal salvation Paul could quote Scripture to prove his point, as he does thrice in these three verses. But when he spoke of the "Mystery," there were no Scriptures to quote, for the Mystery had been hidden in God from all past ages and generations.

His first quotation is from Deuteronomy 27:26: "Cursed is every man that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the Law to do them." This quotation is taken from the Septuagint. The Hebrew reads as it is in the Authorized Version of Deuteronomy. This is the last of twelve curses which were pronounced with a loud voice from Mt. Ebal upon those who failed to do what the Law commanded. Since no one has ever perfectly kept the Law, it is evident that all who were under the Law were under the curse. It would seem from this that no one could be saved. And that is what Paul says next, as far as the Law is concerned.

"But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith." This quotation is from Habakkuk 2:4. "The just" refers to those who are righteous in God's sight. This verse is also quoted in Romans 1:17 and Hebrews 10:38. We are justified by faith and we live by faith.

There is always the tendency to mix the principles of Law and faith. The thinking is that we have to have faith to save us, but we need the Law to keep us from sinning. "But the Law is not of faith," and again Paul proves his point by quoting Leviticus 18:5, "The man that does them shall live in them." The converse is also due, "If a man does not do them [the judgments and ordinances of the Law] he shall not live, but be under a curse."

D. Christ Redeems from the Curse of the Law (3:13,14)

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (3:13,14)

The curse of the Law means ultimate physical death, and unless a way of salvation be found it results in eternal death, which is separation from God. But a way out has been found: Christ redeems us from the curse. The Law is pictured as a slave-master who holds its subjects in bondage. A sufficient price has to be paid to buy one out of such bondage. That is what Christ did when He was made a curse in our place in His death upon the Cross. The statement, "Cursed is every one that hangs upon a tree," comes from Deuteronomy 21:22,23: "And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and you hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall bury him that day: (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that your land be not defiled." Under the Mosaic Law death was inflicted by stoning, and then the dead body was hanged on a tree. "The One who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ was hanged on a cross made from a tree and it is interesting to note that as Christ was being led to Golgotha He asked this question of the daughters of Jerusalem, "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Lk. 23:31).

Various interpretations have been placed upon this figure of speech. To what do the green and dry trees refer? Green wood is unsuitable for building or the making of furniture. It must be dried and seasoned. What they were doing to Jesus apparently represented the green wood. In the context Jesus had been warning of sufferings of the great Tribulation which were going to come on Israel in the future, and apparently the dry wood has something to do with that. *Williams Student Commentary* thinks the green tree represents the Lord and the dry tree the corrupt hebrew church. The Living Bible presents somewhat the same view, "For if such things as this are done to me, the Living Tree, what will they do to you." 1 Peter 4:17,18 may be a commentary on this expression, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Others have referred this text to John 15, where Christ is the fruitbearing green vine. If they do such things to the true Vine, what will happen to the branches that are broken off and become dry. Men cast them into the fire and they are burned.

E. The Law Cannot Annul the Promise (3:15-18)

Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man annuls or adds to it. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, And to seeds as of many, but, as of one. And to your seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot annul, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the

inheritance be of the Law, it is no more of promise; I but God gave it to Abraham by promise. (3:15-18)

After a contract between two parties is agreed upon and witnessed, neither of the parties has a right to later on add or subtract anything from the contract. Paul uses this accepted principle to show that the Law can in no way change the covenant of promise made with Abraham, especially after God had confirmed it with an oath. The promise covenant was unconditional. Abraham was not required to do anything but accept it by faith. Therefore the covenant of works which came in four hundred and thirty years later cannot change in any way the promise by faith. Since the principles of faith and Law-works are opposites, the inheritance could be only through one or the other. Paul has clearly shown that no one could ever inherit eternal life through trying to observe the Law, and besides, God gave it to Abraham by promise.

The Judaizers might have argued that since the Law was given later than the promise, the principle of progressive revelation would demand that the new dispensation of the Law meant the end of the dispensation of promise. But Paul answers this argument by showing that the promise was made to Abraham and his Seed, singular, and that seed was Christ. Since Christ had not yet come when the Law was given, it could not bring an end to the promise. Many modern dispensational charts are misleading by showing the dispensation of promise as a little block of time that ended with the beginning of the Law dispensation. More about this point in the next section.

F. The Purpose of the Law (3:19-25)

1. Given Because of Transgressions (3:19-23)

Wherefore, then, serves the Law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the Law then against the promises of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before (the) faith came, we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. (3:19-23)

If the Law was not given as a way of salvation, why then was it given? What is the purpose of God giving the Law and then taking it away? First of all, Paul answers this question by showing that it was given because of transgressions, or as the NEB puts it, "It was added to make wrongdoing a legal offense." In Romans 5:20 Paul says, "Moreover the Law entered that the offense might abound." And in 7:7 he states, "I had not known sin, but by the Law: for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, You shall not covet." It is important to point out that the word translated "added" does not mean added to make a mixture of two things. The *verb prostithemi* means "to place alongside." The Law was brought in alongside the promise only until the One should

come to whom the promise was made, that is, until Christ came. The temporary character of the Law dispensation was indicated by the fact that Moses put a veil over his face so the Israelites could not see the radiance of his face fade away (2 Cor. 3:7,13). The ministration of the Law was glorious, but it was temporary and could not compare with the exceeding glory of the ministration of righteousness.

It seems significant that in their epistles neither James, Peter, nor John state that the Law system has been done away. It was apparently a part of the special revelation given to Paul, and while they knew about it, it was reserved to Paul to write about it. This fact is an argument for the Pauline authorship of Hebrews, for that book surely teaches the Law made nothing perfect and that it was to be folded up and set aside like an old garment (Heb. 7:18,19; 8:7-9). The book of Hebrews shows other ways in which the promise was superior to the Law. Moses was only a servant in God's house, but Christ is the Son, who is head over the house (3:5,6). Also, the Melchizedekian priesthood, which God had sworn would last forever (Ps. 110:4), was superior to the Aaronic priesthood, which was not permitted to continue by reason of death (Heb. 7:20-24). Thus, while written to Hebrews and in a style suited to their understanding, the book is in complete accord with Paul's teaching on Law and faith.

Getting back to Galatians 3:19,20, we see that the Law was ordained (arrangement made for giving it) through angels as intermediaries in the hand of a mediator (Moses). Ten thousands of angels assisted in the giving of the Law (Deut. 33:2). But what is the writer getting at when he states, "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one?" He is showing that the Law involved a contract between two parties who were each responsible for carrying out the arrangement through Moses as a mediator. It is something like mediators between labor and management in the business world. But when we come to the Abrahamic promise there was no mediator. There was just one responsible party - God. Since the fulfillment of the promise depends upon God alone, we may be very certain it will be carried out (Heb. 6:17-20).

Since Paul is making such a distinction between Law and the promise, he anticipates a question the Judaizers would ask. "Is the Law then against the promises of God?" Of course not! There was nothing wrong with the Law. It was man that was wrong. The Law was weak through the flesh. It had no power to make man good; it could only condemn him (Rom. 8:3). Surely if God could have designed a Law that could produce righteousness, He would have done so, instead of sacrificing His only Son upon the Cross.

Although the Law was given only to Israel, it concluded all mankind to be under sin (cf. Rom. 3:19), for the Israelites had the same human nature as all of mankind. Jew and Gentile alike were in the same boat, under the condemnation of sin. God placed them in this position so there could be an equality in the giving of the promise by faith of Jesus Christ to all who would believe.

Thus, before this faith in Jesus Christ actually came, Paul says we were shut up in prison, locked up until the time of the faith which should afterward be revealed. It is

important to note that "faith" is used with the definite article in the original. People exercised faith in Old Testament times and before, but they did not exercise faith in Jesus Christ. The Law held sway until the faith in Christ had come. The Person of the crucified and resurrected Christ was not the object of faith until after Christ actually came and performed his work.

2. Given to Be a Pedagogue (3:24,25)

Wherefore, the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after [the] faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. (3:24-25)

The Law is now called a pedagogue. This is a difficult word to translate because there is no comparable position or office in our culture. The pedagogue was not a schoolmaster. He was a slave who was put in charge of the young children of the family, whom he guarded and disciplined. Children in those days were severely disciplined, even as the Law of Moses severely disciplined Israel. This discipline continued only until the boy reached a mature age, determined by his father, when he was given the rights of sonship.

It should be noticed that the words "to bring us" are in italics in the Authorized Version. Actually the Greek says, the Law was our pedagogue unto Christ. There may be a sense in which the Law may convict a person of being a guilty sinner, which fact leads him to faith in Christ, but it is more the convicting work of the Holy Spirit which leads one to Christ (John 16:8,9). It would be nearer to the intended meaning to say that the Law was a disciplinarian until Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after THE FAITH has arrived, the pedagogue is out of a job.

G. All Are Now One in Christ (3:26-29)

For we are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise. (3:26-29)

Under the Law the Israelites were treated as minor children under a disciplinarian, but now by faith in Jesus Christ we have become mature, full-fledged SONS of God. The King James translation does not bring out this important distinction. Paul will say more about sonship in the next chapter.

Not only are we sons of God, but we have "put on Christ." The verb, "put on," means to invest with clothing. We are clothed with Christ. It is said that in ancient Roman times when a boy went through the rites of sonship he was invested with a special toga distinguishing him as a grown-up son. This being distinguishably clothed with Christ takes place through the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. All believers have been thus baptized into Christ. The Holy Spirit performs this work the moment we

believe (see Rom. 6:34; 1 Cor. 12:13). No one could be saved apart from this baptism. This idea of being clothed with Christ seems more appropriate as a reference to sanctification Paul says, "But put you on as a garment the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14).

In this new relationship in Christ we are all one. There are no distinctions between Jew and Gentile, male and female, slave and free. This equality refers to our spiritual standing before God in Christ. It does not refer to our actual state in this world. When a slave became a believer he did not become equal with his master. He was still a slave in the flesh. If a master became a believer, as well as his slave, then they were both equal spiritually, as was the case of Philemon and Onesimus, and Paul told Philemon that he should receive Onesimus back as he would the apostle himself. Every true believer in a local church is equally one with one another, but one is pastor, others elders or deacons, and these have positions of leadership which others do not have. The same goes for male and female relationships in the family and in the church. Nor does this equality refer to gifts and ability. In the human body the eye alone has the gift or ability of sight, the ear of sound, and the nose of smell, but they are all equally members of the body (cf. [1 Cor. 12:13-31](#)).

Lastly in this portion, Paul shows us in what sense Gentiles become the children of Abraham. Christ is the One seed of Abraham, and when Gentile believers are baptized into Christ and made one with Christ, they become what He is, Abraham's seed. We must be careful to distinguish between the Jewish remnant, the natural as well as the spiritual children of Abraham, and the Gentile believers who are only spiritual children. The Abrahamic promise involves more than justification by faith. There is also the promise of a nation ([Gen. 12:2](#)) and of a land ([Gen. 15:18](#)). These national and territorial promises refer only to the saved, natural circumcised seed of Abraham. Great dispensational and doctrinal confusion has resulted from trying to spiritualize these physical and material promises and apply them to the Church of this dispensation. In no sense has God made the Church a nation, nor has He given the Church the land lying between the river of Egypt and the Euphrates. What or where, pray tell, are these rivers when spiritualized? Literal, historical interpretation of the Old Testament is the only system that is consistent and makes sense.

V. The Gospel Illustrated - 4:1-31

A. By Adoption (4:1-20)

1. Slavery Under Law versus Sonship in Christ (4:1-7)

Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying,

Abba, Father. Wherefore, you art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (4:1-7)

In this section Paul continues the subject introduced in chapter 3:24, but from a different angle. According to the custom of that time, a child who some day would inherit his father's fortune and be ruler of his house, was treated no differently than a slave, and subjected to tutors and stewards. The word "child" means one in his minority. The Jews called Gentile proselytes by this name. This is the meaning of Romans 2:20 where the Jews claimed to be "teachers of babes." "Children" (*nepios*) is contrasted with *teleios*, which is translated "men" in I Corinthians 14:10, 11, and 20. It is translated "full age" in Hebrews 5:13, 14. This practice of treating a child as a slave may seem strange to our culture, but a saying of my mother comes to mind, "Surely 'tis through tribulation that we get our education." Parents should subject their children to discipline. And when we think of the Son of God when He came into the world we are reminded how He was subjected to suffering. "Though He were a Son, yet He learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:8). But when the time appointed by the Father came, He was raised from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:4).

What does Paul mean when he says in verse 3, "when we were children?" Does he mean when he and the Galatians were younger in age, or is he referring to the past dispensation of things. It seems that he must be speaking of the latter, as when the Jews were under the Law. But here he does not use the word Law, but "under the elements of the world." Gentiles were never under the Law of Moses, but they had been under elemental principles of laws and government, at least since the beginning of the dispensation of human government after the flood. Paul uses this word *stoicheion* again in verse 9, and in Colossians 2:8 and 20 (rudiments) and Hebrews 5:12 (first principles). The elemental things of which Paul here speaks would also include the religions of the Gentiles to which they were in bondage.

"The fullness of time" in verse 4 corresponds to "the time appointed by the father." Christ did not come into the world too soon or too late, although many people think if He had waited until our time we would not have crucified Him. However, the world is no friend of grace, and in spite of our boasted civilization, it is still a violent society. What circumstances made that the right time for Christ to come? Commentators have pointed to a number of conditions in the world at the coming of Christ which were favorable for the launching of the gospel into the known world. The world was at peace, the Roman Empire linked the nations together by an extensive system of highways, the Greek language was almost universally understood (as English is in our day), and the Jews had synagogues throughout the empire which became staging platforms for the gospel. Paul always went to the synagogues first and proved from the Old Testament that the promised Messiah must suffer, then rise from the dead, and that Jesus is the Messiah. Many Gentiles had become proselytes to the Jews religion and had been converted at least to monotheism, thus giving Paul an entrance to the Gentiles. When the Jews cast him out of the synagogue, Paul would take with him a mixed group of Jews and Gentiles to form a church. Whatever else may have made the time right, we know God had a plan and that that plan was carried out on time.

Some commentators think the "dispensation of the fullness of the times" (Eph. 1:10), is synonymous with this passage. But in Galatians "time" is in the singular and in Ephesians it is in the plural. In Galatians the time came and is now past when Christ fulfilled the Law. In Ephesians the fullness of the times refers to the gathering together in one all things in heaven and on earth in Christ. Such a gathering together has never taken place yet; hence, it must be future. Some think it refers to the time of the millennial Kingdom; others think it refers to the time at the end of the Millennium when the last enemy is destroyed and every power is put under the foot of Christ ([1 Cor. 15:24-26](#)).

The fact that Paul states the Son of God was "made of a woman" strongly suggests that Paul was speaking of the virgin birth. And He was made "under the Law." Jesus lived His whole life under the Law; He is the only one who ever perfectly kept the Law; and he fulfilled all of the requirements of the Law, and brought it to an end ([Rom. 10:4](#)).

A two-fold purpose in His coming is clearly stated in verse 5: "to redeem them that were under the Law," and "that we might receive the adoption of sons." The redeemed have all of the rights and privileges of full sonship. We can come directly into the presence of the Father and make our requests known with boldness ([Heb. 4:16](#)). The Father has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father." "Abba" means "the Father" in Aramaic, and the name is repeated in Greek. This is the title by which Jesus addressed the Father ([Mk. 14:36](#)). "The Father" in Aramaic is not repeated in the Greek as a translation. This double expression became the common way for Christians to address God in prayer. Paul uses this double expression again in Romans 8:15, "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." In the Galatians passage the Spirit is said to cry, being the indwelling motivating force. In the Romans passage the believer utters the same words as controlled by the Spirit.

When Paul concludes this section by saying we are no longer servants but sons, and heirs of God through Christ, he is speaking of our relationship with God. He is not saying we are to no longer serve God. The fact is, we cannot serve God until we become His sons, and we cannot call Him "Abba Father" until we become sons. Jesus came as the son of God, not to serve Himself, but to serve the Father ([Rom. 15:3](#) cf. [Phil. 2:7](#)). When Paul speaks so many times about our now being servants of God and of Christ ([Rom. 6:22](#); [Phil. 1:1](#)), he uses the same Greek word (*doulos*) as he does in stating that we are no longer servants. We are no longer servants of sin ([Rom. 6:20](#)): we have become servants of righteousness ([Rom. 6:18](#)).

2. Warning against Returning to Bondage (4:8-11)

Nevertheless then, when you knew not God, you did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known by God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, unto which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days, and months, and

times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. (4:8-11)

The Greeks and Romans had many gods, but they apparently knew that they were ignorant of The God, for they had erected an altar in Athens to "the unknown God" (Acts 17:23). These many gods they served were by nature really no gods at all. There was, however, a spiritual power behind their idol gods, that of "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). Religion consists in doing - observing certain days or seasons as more holy than others, having feasts at set times, abstaining from food, practicing forms and ceremonies. Paul calls all of these things "weak and beggarly, miserable elements of the world" (see a similar passage in [Colossians 2:8,18-23](#)). Paul's argument in Colossians is, "Since you died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are you subject to ordinances: touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using?" None of these religious rites has any power over sin.

Such regulations have indeed an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility, and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence (NIV).

What is so difficult to understand is, how can a person have the desire to return to such impotent and miserable observances after coming to know the only true God? The Living Bible translates verse 9a, "And now that you have found God (or I should say, now that God has found you), how can it be that you want to go back again and become slaves once more to another poor, weak, useless religion of trying to get to heaven by obeying God's laws?" Their retreat to religion caused Paul to doubt if they had really come to know God. He was not afraid of them, but for them. He was afraid that all of the labor and suffering he had bestowed on them in bringing them the gospel was for naught.

3. Appeal to Former Relationships (4:12-16)

Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as you are; you have not injured me at all. You know how that through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my trial, which was in my flesh, You despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is, then, the blessedness you spoke of? For I bear you witness that, if it had been possible, You would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I, therefore, become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? (4:12-16).

Paul did not want to believe these Galatians had defected from Christ, or that they had never really been saved. He pleads with them on the basis of their former, happy relationships. When Paul had first brought the gospel to them he was sick with some kind of disease. Some have speculated it was a disease of the eyes, since he mentions the eyes in verse 15, and since he spoke of having written this epistle with large letters in his own hand (ch. 6:11). Whatever the disease was, the Galatians might have been tempted to despise or reject him on account of his physical condition. But

instead, they had received him as though he was an angel of God, even as though he was Christ Jesus Himself. How could they have treated Paul any better than that? But now they seemed to have turned against Paul and his gospel. So Paul pleads with them, "Where is the blessedness you spoke of, for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your eyes, and have given them to me. Have I become your enemy because I have told you the truth?"

Verse 12 should read, "become like me, for I became like you." This statement is generally interpreted, "Become like me, free from the Law; for I became a Gentile like you." Phillips translates, "Put yourself in my place, brothers, as I have put myself in yours." Also in this verse read, "You did not injure me at all." The verb is in the aorist tense, thus referring to a past action. They did not injure him in any way when he first preached the gospel to them, so why injure him now? And they were injuring him now by treating him as an enemy. The AV gives the impression that they had never hurt him. Verse 14 should read, "your temptation," not "my temptation." Because of his illness they may have been tempted to despise him.

4. Desire to Be Present with Them (4:17-20)

They zealously seek you, but not for good; yea, they would exclude you, that you might seek them. But it is good to be zealously sought always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you (4:17-20).

The English of verse 17 is archaic. The verb translated "zealously affect you" means, "to seek to draw over to one's side, to court one's good will and favor." The NIV reads, "Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, and not just when I am with you." Christ had some very harsh words against such proselytizers: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves" (Matt. 23:15). It would be well at this point to skip over to chapter 6:12,13 and read further what Paul has to say about these Judaizers. They wanted to make a fair show in the flesh. They wanted to force circumcision on them so that they might glory in their flesh. They were unwilling to suffer persecution for the sake of the Cross of Christ.

What does Paul mean by having gone through birth-pangs in winning people to Christ, and now travailing again until Christ be formed in them? Is he talking about the physical pain and persecution he suffered in bringing the gospel? Or is he talking about the anguish of soul one feels while dealing with the eternal destiny of a soul; trying to Pluck a brand from the fire (cf. [Zech. 3:1-4](#)). The soul-winner is wrestling, not with just human nature, but with principalities and powers of the darkness of this world (Eph. 6:12). What a relief and what rejoicing when we see a soul born again! Paul is going through these labor-pains all over again until he has evidence that they are truly established in the grace of God. It is interesting to note that Paul calls them "little

children," which may reflect the idea that they were very immature Christians. The usual word for children is *teknon*, which is the word used here. This is the only occurrence of the word in Paul's writings. John is the only other writer of Scripture who uses the word, once in his Gospel and seven times in his First Epistle.

Paul is saying in verse 20, "I wish it were possible for me to be personally present with you right now and change my tone of voice. My severe denunciation of you in writing may make you feel that I have become your enemy, but if I were able to speak personally, you would be convinced from my tone of voice that I love you with the same love a mother has for the child she has just brought to birth." This interpretation of his change of voice agrees with his calling them little children, and his reference to going through birth pangs.

B. Allegory of Bondwoman and Freewoman (4:21-31)

1. The Allegory Stated (4:21-27)

Tell me, you that desire to be under the Law, do you not hear the Law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he that was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise; which things are an allegory for these are the two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, bearing children for bondage, who is Hagar. For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not, for the desolate hath many more children than she who hath an husband (4:21-27).

It seems evident that people who desire to be under the Law do not understand either what the gospel is or what the Law is. If they understood the meaning of both, only a demented mind could choose the Law. In order to illustrate these two systems, Paul constructs an allegory from the story of Hagar and Sarah (Gen. 16 & 21). No doubt many allegories may be drawn from Old Testament historical facts, but we must guard against efforts to allegorize prophecies yet to be fulfilled. This is sometimes called "spiritualizing the Scripture," but there is nothing spiritual about it. The interpreter is free to make any application which comes to mind. All of the blessings are often spiritualized and applied to the Church, and all of the curses are made literal and applied to the Jews. The results are either amillennialism or postmillennialism. There is no future for the Jewish nation. This type of interpretation probably began with Origen, an early church father. It is followed today by Covenant theologians and amillennialists in general. It has shut the door on biblical prophecy, confused Israel and the church, and is blind to the truth of the Mystery revealed through Paul.

Paul has already asked a number of questions of the Galatians-Who has bewitched you? By what means did you receive the Spirit? Are you so foolish? Have you suffered in vain? Why did God bring in the Law dispensation? What has happened to the blessed relationships we once had? Have I become your enemy because I tell

you the truth? Now he asks, "Tell me, you that desire to be under the Law, do you not hear the Law?" That is, do you really understand what the Law says? He answers by first stating the allegory and then applying it.

As we know, God had promised Abraham that his descendants would be more numerous than the stars, but his wife was barren and they were both getting very old. Finally, when Abraham was about eighty-six years old, Sarah persuaded him to have intercourse with her maid, an Egyptian slave, so that they might have a child. As a result, Ishmael was born. This, of course, was not the way God had intended to give Abraham a son. It was purely a fleshly device which he could have used with any woman. It was simply nature taking its course.

After Hagar discovered she was pregnant, she began to despise Sarah. Sarah dealt harshly with her and before the child was born Hagar ran away. The angel of the Lord found her by a spring in the wilderness and told her to return to Sarah. He told her to name her child Ishmael, and promised that He would multiply her seed greatly. Ishmael became the progenitor of the Arabian people. It might seem that since God made the promise to multiply Ishmael's seed, his seed was just as much of promise as that promised to Abraham. But God had made no promise to give Abraham a son in this manner. Neither did God promise righteousness or spiritual blessings on Ishmael. He simply promised to multiply his seed exceedingly, and predicted that Ishmael would be a wild man who could not live peaceably with others. Whatever blessing God promised to Ishmael's seed was due to Abraham's intercession ([Gen. 17:20](#)). This episode is not a part of Paul's allegory.

Thirteen years after Ishmael's birth, when Abraham was ninety-nine years old, God appeared unto Abraham and entered into the covenant of circumcision, at which time He promised that next year Sarah would bear him a son and he should call his name Isaac, and God would establish His covenant with him for an everlasting covenant. Abraham and Ishmael and all of the males in his household were circumcised.

One year later, when Abraham was one hundred and Sarah was ninety, Isaac was born. The day Isaac was weaned, Abraham made a great feast, recorded in Genesis 21:9:

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even Isaac.

Just what was Ishmael doing to upset Sarah so? Our English word "mock" means to ridicule, show contempt, hold up to scorn. The Hebrew word is translated "laugh, mock, play, make sport." The Greek word in the Septuagint translation means "to act like a child," and is used only once in the New Testament ([1 Cor. 10:7](#)) to describe the acts of the Jews when they made a golden calf and worshipped it: "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." The Hebrew word is used in

Genesis 26:8, "And Abimelech ... looked out at a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife." Paul says in Galatians 4:29 that Ishmael "persecuted" Isaac. At the time, Isaac was between three and five years old and Ishmael between seventeen and nineteen years old. Ishmael and his mother had had hopes of being heirs of Abraham, so they must have hated Isaac who had supplanted them. From the various meanings given to this word translated mock, laugh ' persecute, play, and make sport, it is not possible to describe exactly what Ishmael did. Some commentators think he might have even threatened or plotted to kill Isaac. At any rate, Sarah wanted both of them to be cast out, and while it was very grievous for Abraham, for he loved him, God ordered Abraham to obey Sarah.

We have briefly reviewed this story from Genesis 16-19 for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the facts, so that they might better understand Paul's application of the allegory. (See [Addendum 2](#))

2. Application of the Allegory (4:28-31)

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free (4:28-31).

These two women, Hagar and Sarah, represent the two covenants. Hagar represents the covenant of Law which depends upon the fleshly nature to produce righteousness, begets children of slavery, and is the then existing Jerusalem which was in bondage both to Rome and to sin (cf. [John 8:31-36](#)).

Sarah represents the covenant of promise, which depends upon the Spirit for righteousness, begets children who are free, and is the Jerusalem which is above and is the mother of all believers.

Paul mentions the country of Arabia in connection with Hagar, since the Law was given at Mount Sinai in Arabia, and doubtless because Arabia was founded by the descendants of Ishmael. Although Paul does not mention it, Genesis 37:28 reveals the fact that the brothers of Joseph sold him to Ishmaelite slave-traders who took him to Egypt. His brothers thought they had done away with him, just as the Jews thought they had done away with Jesus. But Joseph rose to Power to become the savior from starvation of the world of his generation, just as Jesus arose from the dead to become the Savior from sin of the world, all of which is another allegory we can make from the historical facts.

Paul quotes and applies Isaiah 54:1 to the case at hand, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband." This prophecy will be literally fulfilled in the millennial Kingdom when Israel will be restored as the wife of Jehovah. The fact

that Paul applied this prophecy to the spiritual seed of Abraham does not preclude its literal fulfillment upon the reborn nation of Israel, for this is God's covenant with them ([Rom. 11:26-28](#)).

A further similitude which Paul develops is that just as Ishmael hated and persecuted Isaac who was born after the Spirit, so it was in Paul's day. Paul got practically all of his persecution from the legalistic Jews. Had it not been for the Roman authorities, the Judaizers would have put him to death.

Paul concludes his allegory with the question, "Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." Thus the Galatians were admonished to cast out this legalistic doctrine to which they were becoming enslaved. We are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Those who have read John Bunyan's great Christian classic, *Pilgrim's Progress*, written over 300 years ago in a Bedford, England jail, where he was imprisoned for preaching the gospel, will recall Christian's experience with the Law before he was actually saved. In this similitude of a dream, Bunyan saw a man clothed in rags ([Isa. 64:6](#)), a book in his hand ([Rom. 10:17](#)), and a heavy burden on his back ([John 16:8](#)).

As he read he cried out, "What shall I do?" ([Acts 16:30](#)). He went to his wife and children and told them they were living in the City of Destruction and that his book told him God would judge them. They all thought he had become mentally deranged. Later as he was walking in the fields, reading from his book and greatly distressed by his condition of mind, a man named Evangelist heard him cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" ([Acts 16:30](#)). Evangelist asked why he was crying, and upon Christian's answer, he gave him a scroll on which was written, "Flee from the wrath to come" ([Matt. 3:7](#)). He then pointed him the way to a wicket-gate far across the field where he should knock and be told what to do ([Matt. 7:13,14](#)).

As Christian began to run toward the gate his wife and neighbors tried to restrain him. Mr. Obstinate ridiculed his ideas and the book from which he got them. But Mr. Pliable decided to go along with Christian, since the happiness ahead which the book described was much better than his present state. So the two went forward to the gate, but as they conversed they unexpectedly stepped into a bog where they wallowed in the mud. Then Pliable angrily said:

Is this the happiness you have told me about? You shall possess the brave country alone for me.

And with that he extricated himself from the slough and returned home, where he was laughed to scorn in his muddy clothes. But poor Christian began to sink because of the heavy load on his back. As he cried out, Mr. Help came along and pulled him out ([Ps. 40:2](#)). He told Christian that this was the Slough of Despond, and that it is fed by the scum and filth that accompanies conviction of sin. As the sinner is awakened about

his lost condition, there arises in his soul many fears and doubts and discouraging apprehensions, which all get together and settle in this bog.

Then as Christian went on towards the gate his path crossed that of Mr. Worldly Wiseman, from the town of Carnal Policy, who, seeing his mud-smeared clothing, asked what had happened. When Christian told his story and where he was going, Worldly Wiseman warned him that if he kept on this road he would have nothing but trouble, and advised him to take the road that led by a high mountain to the town of Morality, where he would find a Mr. Legalist and his son Civility, either of whom could relieve him of his burden, and he could then send for his wife and children and settle down there. Since the man seemed to be very wise and was older than Christian, he decided to take his advice.

But he had not gone far until the mountain seemed to hang over the road and was ready to fall upon him. There was lightning and thunder and the earth quaked. He was afraid to go further, so he turned himself about. Then he saw Evangelist in the distance coming toward him. Upon arriving, Evangelist asked what he was doing in this place. Had he not told him how to get to the gate? Then Christian ashamedly told him all that had happened and that he was now afraid they wouldn't let him through the gate in his muddy rags. But Evangelist, after remonstrating with him for a time, assured him the gate would be opened to him.

Before dismissing him, Evangelist read him two Scriptures:

See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not that refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven (Heb. 12:25).

Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him (Heb. 10:38).

He also warned him against Worldly Wiseman.

Now there are three things in this man's counsel that thou must utterly abhor.

1. His turning thee out of the way.
2. His laboring to render the Cross odious to thee.
3. His setting thy feet in that way that leadeth into the administration of death (2 Cor. 3:7).

And he also warned against the man to whom he was going for help:

Him to whom thou wast sent for ease, being by name Legality, is the son of the bond-woman which now is, and is in bondage with her children (Gal. 4:21,27), and is, in a mystery, this Mount Sinai, which thou hast feared would fall on thy

head. Now if she, with her children, are in bondage, how canst thou expect by them to be made free? This Legality therefore, is not able to set thee free from thy burden; ye cannot be justified by the works of the Law. Therefore Mr. Worldly Wiseman is an alien, and Mr. Legality is a cheat; and as for his son Civility, notwithstanding his simpering looks, he is but a hypocrite, and cannot help thee.

When he had finished, Evangelist called for a confirmation of what he had said, after which came words and fire out of the mountain under which they stood that made the hair of Christian's flesh stand up. The words thus pronounced were:

As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; for it is written: Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the Law to do them (Gal. 3:10).

Evangelist then sent Christian on his way to the gate, where he knocked, and Mr. Good Will opened to him and conversed with him about his experience up to that point. Good Will then sent him on his way to the House of the Interpreter. Interpreter welcomed him into the house and showed him many wonderful lessons in the various rooms of the house. We will concern ourselves with just one of the lessons. He was taken into a room where Christian saw the picture of a very grave person, and this was the fashion of it:

... it had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, and the Law of truth was written upon his lips, the world was behind his back. It stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over his head.

[The Interpreter said:]

The man whose picture this is, is one of a thousand; he can beget children (1 Cor. 4:15), travail in birth with children (Gal. 4:19), and nurse them himself when they are born ... I have showed thee this picture first, because the man whose picture this is, is the only man whom the Lord of the place whither thou art going hath authorized to be thy guide in all difficult places thou mayest meet with in the way; wherefore take good heed to what I have showed thee.

After the Interpreter had shown him all the rooms of the house, he instructed him on the way he should go. The highway up which he was to go was fenced on either side by a wall, and that wall was called Salvation. He had gone but a short distance, running the best he could with the heavy burden still on his back, when he came to a sloping place upon which stood a cross, and a little below a sepulchre.

Just as Christian came up to the cross, his burden loosed from off his back and began to tumble until it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in and was never seen again. Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and he stood and looked and wondered, for it was very surprising that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden. He looked and looked, even until the springs which were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks (Zech. 12:10).

Three Shining Ones appeared to him. The first said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee..." The second stripped him of his rags and clothed him with a change of raiment (Zech. 3:4). The third set a mark on his forehead (2 Cor. 3:2,3), and gave him a roll with a seal upon it, which he bade him look on as he ran, and that he should give it in at the Celestial Gate.

It is remarkable that Bunyan, the son of a tinker, should get such a grasp on the distinctiveness of the truth revealed to the apostle Paul of the difference between Law and the gospel. He even says that Paul, whose picture was seen in the house of the Interpreter, "is the only man whom the Lord of the place whither thou art going hath authority to be thy guide in all difficult places thou mayest meet with in the way."

Bunyan served twelve years in prison. His release was signed May 8, 1672, at the age of forty-four. He might have been set free earlier had he promised not to preach in public, and to attend the services of the national church. He refused in the face of the fact that his wife had recently died, leaving him with four young children, one of them blind. He had remarried and his wife was pregnant when he was arrested, and the shock of it caused her to go into pre-mature labor and the child died.

VI. The Gospel Liberates; The Law Subjugates 5:1-5

A. The Challenge to Stand Fast (5:1)

Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (5:1)

A more literal translation of the text is, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast, therefore, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

It was for the sake of freedom that Christ set us free; therefore we should by all means maintain our freedom and not let any one put a yoke of bondage on our necks. A yoke is a harness. We are not to be harnessed together with the Mosaic Law, or any other law, in order to gain either salvation or sanctification. Neither are we to be yoked together with unbelievers (6:14). We are, however, to be yoked to Christ.

Take MY yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matt. 11:29,30).

What a paradox. Yoked in order to find rest! This invitation was addressed to those who were weary and heavy laden. The Lord was not talking about being weary physically. He Himself was born and lived under the Law. He came to bring an end to the Law by fulfilling it (Rom. 10:4), but that end did not come legally until His death, and its doctrine was not proclaimed clearly until Paul. Christ not only helps us bear the pains and sorrows of life, He sets us free from the works of the Law. We should also notice that believers are yoked together - "I entreat you also, true yokefellow" (Phil. 4:3).

B. The Results of Entanglement (5:2-5)

Behold, I Paul, say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; you are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (5:2-5)

"Behold, I Paul say unto you." Paul speaks authoritatively. He is not merely giving his opinion. "Behold" is the imperative singular of *aido*, in Latin *video*, to see. It is a sign that says, "Stop, Look, and Listen." And being in the singular number means it is addressed to every individual, not to the church.

"If you be circumcised" does not mean, "if you are circumcised." Paul himself was circumcised (Phil. 3:5), and all of the Jewish believers were. What Paul is saying is, "if you submit to circumcision as a means of being justified," or, "if you have been circumcised and you are trusting in that rite to save you." The Judaizers were teaching, "Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). You could believe in Jesus as the Messiah, but you couldn't be saved just by believing in Him. In other words, a Gentile had to become a Jew in order to be saved. And Paul says, if that is what you believe, then all of your talk about Christ is meaningless. Chrysostom is quoted as saying, "He who is circumcised is circumcised as fearing the Law: but he who fears the Law distrusts the power of grace; and he who distrusts gains nothing from that which he distrusts." It is either Law or grace, not Law plus grace (Rom. 11:6).

The Judaizers were trying to keep part of the Law by being circumcised, but they were not keeping all of it. Paul is showing that taking on circumcision obligates one to keep the whole Law. There were many hundreds of statutes and ordinances which had to be kept, and if there was only one infraction, the transgressor was guilty of all (Jas. 2:10).

Since it is impossible to be justified by the Law, Paul is not admitting that some are so justified when he says, "whosoever of you are justified by the Law." Paul means "whosoever of you would be, or try to be, justified by law, are fallen from grace." Paul has already shown that if righteousness comes by the Law, then the grace of God is frustrated (2:21). Also, if justification by the Law were possible, God would not have gone to the extreme in sacrificing His Son. To turn to the Law is to turn away from Christ and fall completely out of the sphere of grace.

It is strange how people make catch phrases out of Scripture. Arminians are always speaking of falling from grace. They believe a Christian who commits certain sins falls from grace and loses his salvation. But surely a Christian who commits a sin is not thereby seeking to be justified by the Law. When one commits sin he falls into grace, not out of it. Apart from sin there is no need for grace. The song writer sings about "grace that is greater than all our sin." Grace does not mean treating sin lightly. Paul was slanderously reported to have said, "Let us do evil, that good may come"

(Rom. 3:4) "commit more sin that grace may abound" (Rom. 6:1). But such charges against grace are slander.

The verb, Christ "is made of no effect," means "to make or render inoperative, to become useless." It is used in Luke 13:7, where the unfruitful tree was "cumbering" the ground, that is, destroying the usefulness of the ground. The sign gifts are to fail, vanish, pass away, cease to be operative, (1 Cor. 13:8,10,11). Thus Christ is rendered inoperative, His benefits vanish, for those seeking righteousness through the Law.

"The righteousness of faith" may be understood in either a subjective or objective sense. Objectively, the hope of righteousness is to attain to that perfect state of righteousness at the coming of Christ, even as we already have a perfect standing before God in Christ. This is no doubt what Paul means. We often distinguish between our standing and state. Our state at present is imperfect. But in that future day our standing and state will be the same. We are waiting for this hope, not as one who stands at the corner waiting for a bus, but as one who runs in a race waiting for the crown. Waiting can be a waste of time. We are saved in hope, but that does not mean we have a "hope so" salvation. Our hope is just as sure as the fact that Jesus Christ is alive at God's right hand (Heb. 6:19).

VII. The Gospel Works through Love - 5:6-15

A. Neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision Works (5:6)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works by love. (5:6)

Circumcision, a surgical operation, can never remove sin from the soul. Neither can water baptism wash away sin. But in Christ we have both circumcision and baptism "made without hands" (Col. 2:11,12).

Since Paul speaks so much against circumcision, the Gentiles might get the idea there was special value in being uncircumcised. But both of these states belong to the realm of the flesh, and therefore to the Law which was placed over the flesh. Not only so, but no other fleshly distinctions mean anything special in Christ: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free" (Col. 3:11). As we have already seen in Galatians 3:28, "Male nor female" is added to these fleshly distinctions which disappear "in Christ."

The only thing that avails is faith that energizes (*energoumene*) through love. Paul has just linked faith with hope, and now he adds love to this abiding trio (1 Cor. 13:13). It is very important to know whether love produces salvation, or salvation produces love. Roman Catholic theologians interpret this verse in a subjective way. Consider this footnote in their Confraternity Version:

We should distinguish between justification and salvation. We cannot be saved without good works, and accordingly St. Paul repeatedly insists on the necessity

of avoiding sin and doing good. But justification, that is, the infusion of sanctifying grace, cannot be merited by us; it is an entirely gratuitous gift of God (Romans 4:3).

This is the principle Luther and other Reformers fought against. Love and good works do not procure salvation, they result from salvation, for we are justified by faith alone. This point will be further developed by Paul in verses 13 and 14.

B. A Little Leaven Leavens All (5:7-10)

You did run well; who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth? This persuasion comes not of him that calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be not otherwise minded; but he that troubles you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. (5:7-10)

Running and walking are favorite figures of speech with Paul, he uses them often. The Galatians started the race well while Paul was with them, but then some one hindered them. Continuing the figure, Paul sees another runner cutting in front of the Galatians and illegally slowing them down. This obstructing runner had no right to be in the race. The only runners to qualify for this race are true believers in Christ (cf. [1 Cor. 9:24-27](#)). We do not run to obtain salvation. The crown of which Paul speaks is not salvation, but a reward. Salvation cannot be a reward, for it is given by grace apart from works.

In the middle of verse seven Paul breaks off emphasis upon the hindering one, and places the responsibility upon them – “That you should not obey the truth.” Sometimes we may be hindered when the blame is entirely on the other party, as in the cases when Satan hindered Paul ([1 Thes. 2:18](#); [Rom. 15:22](#)). But Paul did not become disobedient by giving up and saying, “What’s the use? I am going to stop preaching because of the opposition and problems.” But the Galatians became disobedient to the truth when they yielded to the ones who were troubling them. And Paul is very sure that the persuasion to which they were yielding did not come from the One who had called them.

Verse nine stands alone. It is a warning of the insidious character of evil. A little evil left alone spreads like a cancer. A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. Paul refers to leaven five times ([1 Cor. 5:6,7,8](#) and here in Galatians). Leaven works like permissiveness. Our society began by permitting minor indecencies and has ended up with laws upholding the rights of homosexuals and Lesbians and everything in between. Some may have accused Paul of nitpicking. Why get excited over one little detail? Why not let the Galatians practice circumcision? But to accept or approve a little error, just by taking the initiatory rite of circumcision, meant that they became debtors to do everything the Law commanded.

Paul had mentioned previously his relationship with them at the beginning, how they had received him even as an angel from heaven, and how they had been obedient

to the gospel. And, although he has been dealing severely with them in this letter, he expresses confidence that they would be likeminded with him. Paul did not know who the false teacher was who was leading them astray, but he assured them that whoever it was would bear the judgment of God. We sometimes underestimate the power granted to the apostles.

The Twelve were to be judges sitting on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Paul had the power of committing the fornicator of 1 Corinthians 5:3 to the Devil for the destruction of his body. Paul makes numerous references to authority and power which had been committed to him as an apostle (cf. [2 Cor. 10:8; 13:2](#)). It is not clear what kind of judgment would be visited upon the troubler in Galatia, but Paul's pronouncement of judgment would no doubt strike fear in the hearts of the people and cause them to realize the seriousness of their error.

C. The Offense of the Cross (5:11,12)

And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off who trouble you. (5:11,12)

Paul before his conversion preached circumcision, but when God sent him out to preach the gospel of the grace of God to the Gentiles he reversed his stand. The Twelve apostles laboring among the Jews were all circumcised to begin with, so the circumcision problem did not affect them as it did Paul. It is interesting to note that when Paul was mobbed on his last visit to Jerusalem (Acts 21), the Jews did not seize the Christian leaders in Jerusalem but only Paul, for he was teaching that Gentiles could be justified before God by faith alone, apart from circumcision. Had Paul agreed that Gentiles must be circumcised, he would have escaped persecution. It seems from the wording of verse 11, that the Judaizers were claiming Paul did endorse circumcision, since he had Timothy circumcised ([Acts 16:3](#)) when he was in Galatia on his second missionary journey. If so, this would strengthen their argument for the necessity of circumcision. But if Paul was still preaching circumcision, he would no longer be persecuted, and then the offense of the Cross would cease.

What does Paul mean by "the offense of the cross?" The word "offense" (*skandalon*) describes the movable triggerstick in a trap or snare. Men make all kinds of traps for catching rodents and other animals. Almost all traps have one thing in common, a trigger which springs to capture the victim. The word is used metaphorically some twenty-five times in the Greek Old Testament and fifteen times in the New. Anything that causes a person to stumble or fall is a *skandalon* or a scandal.

A very crucial passage for understanding the offense of the Cross is Romans 10:30-33, which we quote in full:

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the Law of righteousness, has not

attained to the Law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the Law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; as it is written, Behold I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offense: and whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed (quoted from Isa. 8:14; 28:16).

Peter also refers to Christ as a rock of offense:

Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believes on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed (1 Pet. 2:6-8).

It is clear, then, that Israel stumbled over their Messiah and condemned Him to the death of the Cross. The Cross, then, became the offensive thing to the Judaizer. As someone has said, "The Judaizers would have accepted Christ with circumcision, but not the Cross instead of circumcision." Read [1 Corinthians 1:18-25](#) on "the preaching of the cross," which is a stumbling stone to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. The Cross offends man by stripping him of his own garments of righteousness and makes him stand naked and guilty before God. The self-righteous religionist is greatly incensed and offended when confronted by the preaching of the Cross. He must admit his utter hopelessness in himself and see his need to trust in the righteousness of Another. Some years ago a modernist preacher in a well-known church in the East declared, "I would rather go to hell on my own two feet than to go to heaven on the back of another."

Paul was "fed up" with these Judaizers who caused him so much trouble and persecution. He makes one of the harshest statements against them in verse 12. The Today's English Version translates: "I wish they would go all the way; let them castrate themselves;" the NIV, "and emasculate themselves;" the Jerusalem Bible, "let the knife slip;" the New English Bible, "Make eunuchs of themselves." In Philippians 3:2 he calls them "the concision," cutters, mutilators of the flesh, butchers. The Jews and Judaizers had a circumcision in the flesh made by human hands ([Eph. 2:11](#)); faith produces a circumcision made without human hands ([Col. 2:11,12](#)). Thus it should be evident that no religious rite or ceremony practiced with human hands can have any saving or justifying power.

D. Liberty, Not License (5:13-15)

For, brethren, you have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you be not consumed one of another (5:13-15).

Paul's antagonists argued that being free from the Law is the same as lawlessness. Paul admits that believers have the not have warned possibility of sinning, otherwise he could them against using their liberty as an occasion to the flesh, the flesh being the sinful human nature' If the believer still has a sinful nature, doesn't he need the Law to curb it and keep it under control? "No!" says Paul. That is what the Galatians were doing. The Law cannot save us from sin or keep from sinning. Death is the only thing that can stop the flesh from sinning. And that is where faith in Christ comes in. To have faith in Christ means you believe that you died with Christ when He died in your place on the cross. This is not just imagining you died with Christ, it is a belief that in the sight of God, in His great plan of redemption, He actually saw you dying on the cross, and He sends His Holy Spirit into your heart to give the strength and power to live your new resurrection life unto God. God reckoned Christ among the transgressors (Lk. 22:37), God reckoned His righteousness to You when you believed (Rom. 4:9, 10), and then He asks you to reckon yourself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God (Rom. 6:11). As long as you reckon yourself dead you will be free from sin. Faith operates through love, which is the opposite of selfishness. Thus when your faith is operating as it should, you will not be serving the flesh, but you will be serving God and others. "Loving your neighbor as yourself" fulfills the requirement of the Law (Matt. 22:35-40; Lk. 19:27,28). The problem with the flesh is that it cannot fulfill this command. The law was weak through the flesh (Rom. 8:3), that is, it had no power in itself to make man a new creature able to please God (Rom. 8:5-8).

Instead of loving one another, the Galatians were fighting and striving with one another. Paul warned, "If you bite and devour one another, take heed that you do not destroy your whole Christian community." The flesh never gets better, never gets regenerated. It will be with us until we die. It is just as rotten in a person fifty years after he received Christ as it was before his conversion. Aged Christians sometimes lose the use of their minds, and it is unbelievable what they say and do - cursing, swearing, using foul language. It is just the flesh spewing forth the corruption which has been there all the time, but has been kept under control by the Holy Spirit. Scientists try to explain this erratic and bad behavior by purely naturalistic, physical causes so that man is really not personally responsible if he turns out to be a drunk, a sex deviate, a murderer. There is no question we all inherit a sinful nature and that many grow up in an unfavorable environment, but the fact is some of the world's greatest benefactors have come from a terrible environment (cf. Ezek. 18:14). Since the believer has a renewed or regenerated nature (Tit. 3:5; Col. 3:10), as well as the flesh, the next section of the book is most important.

VIII. The Gospel Produces Fruit - 5:16-26

A. Warfare between Spirit and Flesh (5:16-18)

This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would. But if you be led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. (5:16-18)

"Walk" is Paul's favorite word to describe the manner of the Christian's life. We don't walk to get saved, so this section is not telling what we must do to get saved, but rather how we are to walk after we are saved. In order to understand this walk, we must know something about who and what we are. Christian theologians differ on their understanding of the psychological-spiritual constitution of man. Some are trichotomists, holding that man consists of three distinct parts, namely, body, soul, and spirit. Others are dichotomists, holding that soul and spirit are simply two aspects of one immaterial nature. Others hold a more "wholistic view" - man is a personal unity. He acts as a whole. He cannot say of his acts, "My body committed this act; not my soul or my spirit." It is the whole person who acts.

Further, there is a difference of opinion as to just what happens when a person is regenerated. Some insist man has created within him a completely new and distinct nature when he is regenerated and that when he sins it is the old nature acting; when he does good, it is the new nature. Besides having two natures, he also has the Holy Spirit indwelling his body to empower the new nature. Others see salvation, not as the creation of a second spirit in man alongside his natural spirit, but the renewing or regenerating of his old spirit. Since Christians have been debating these technicalities for centuries, it is likely that unanimity will not be found until the Lord comes.

Regardless of what words we use to describe the spiritual nature of man, Paul makes the simple statement: "This I say then, keep on walking [present imperative] by means of the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust [desire] of the flesh." The flesh is not the body, but the moral nature that lives in the body. The body hungers and thirsts, and there is nothing sinful in supplying these desires. There is nothing sinful about sex either. God created man as a sexual being. We read, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). The flesh, the fallen human nature, misuses the body. One of the ancient heresies the apostles had to fight was that the body is sinful. Therefore, if Jesus was sinless He could not have had a human body (1 John 4:1-3; Heb. 2:14). This heresy also taught that the only way man could escape sin was to punish the body, flagellate his body, become an ascetic. But that is not Paul's doctrine (cf. Col. 2:20-23). We never read of Paul lying on a bed of spikes to make himself more holy, as Hindu priests sometimes do. Paul had been subjected by others to bodily beatings; he had suffered hunger, thirst, nakedness, Cold, and much more, but he had never subjected himself to these things in an effort to make himself more holy (2 Cor. 11:24-29).

The natural man no doubt often struggles with sin in his life. His conscience accuses him, for he has the work of the Law written in his heart (Rom. 2:15). Society has laws and mores to which he submits in order to gain the approval of his peers. He naturally supposes that the good he does will offset or cancel the evil. But when a man gets under conviction of sin and accepts Christ as Savior, he may think his struggle with sin and bad habits is over. It doesn't take long, however, to discover the struggle has just begun.

"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (Rom.

7:21). "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would" (v. 17). As we have seen, the flesh is not the body, but it includes the body, for the body is the vehicle through which the fallen nature works. It is the whole human nature considered apart from God and allied with the earth and earthly things. And the Spirit is not man's spirit, but the Holy Spirit of God, who comes to indwell the believer to empower him against the desires of the flesh.

It may be asked, "Why does God not remove the fleshly nature when He saves us, so that our lives would be perfectly righteous, free from sin and struggle?" In the first place, if God removed the flesh from us, we would of necessity be taken out of this world. Secondly, God wants to test our faith to demonstrate to ourselves and to the world the reality and the power of His Spirit to overcome sin and produce righteousness. To build a space-shuttle at great expense and then house it in a hangar without ever testing it to see if it would fly, would be unthinkable. God did not save us just to store us safely away in a heavenly hangar. Paul says that God's intention is to show now to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places His manifold wisdom through the Church ([Eph. 3:10](#)). Paul plainly teaches that there are at least three different laws or principles at work in the believer.

- There is the moral law of God, which is His standard of righteousness.
- There is "another law in my members, warring against the Law of my mind" (Rom. 7:23), which is called the Law of sin and death.
- There is the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus ([Rom. 8:2](#)). Since the latter two are opposites, Paul goes on to say in Galatians 5:17, "so that you cannot do the things that ye would."

This statement above has been translated and interpreted in quite a number of different ways. It should be pointed out first of all that the clause in the original is introduced by the word *hina*, which means "in order that," "to the intent that." It is important to see that the word expresses intent, not result. The "cannot" does not mean impossible. It is the present subjunctive of the verb "to do," meaning "you may not do." Vincent says, "The intent of each principle in opposing the other is to prevent man's doing what the other principle moves him to do." L.S. Chafer (*He That Is Spiritual*, p.75) says, "Being in the power and control of the Spirit, he cannot do the things which he otherwise would do, because of the transformed desires of a heart which the Spirit has filled." Chafer comes to this view by inserting the word "otherwise." Others interpret Paul to mean that because of the presence of the sin nature the believer cannot do the good he wants to do. What, then, is Paul saying? Paul is apparently saying the same thing he enlarged upon in [Romans 7:15-25](#). This also is a controverted passage, some arguing that it describes an unregenerated man, and others that it gives the experience of a saved man before he learns the secret of victory over sin by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This writer favors the latter I view. This passage describes the evolution of the spiritual life in the believer.

For the good that I wish, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not wish.

But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me" (vv. 19,20 NASB).

Paul separates himself from the indwelling sin nature. Just as the Holy Spirit is not himself but is one that comes from without to dwell in him, so he thinks of an outsider that came to dwell in him at his birth. Even as an unsaved man, by his conscience he knew the difference between good and evil. But this intruder that had come into his life, that comes into the life of every human being, was in control of his life, and in spite of what his conscience told him, he did the opposite. Even the heathen philosophers struggled with this problem. Vincent quotes Ovid, "Desire counsels me in one direction, reason in another." "I see and approve the better, but I follow the worse." Epictetus, "He who sins does not what he would, and does what he would not." Seneca, "What, then, is it that, when we would go in one direction, drags us in the other?" They did not know what made man act in this irrational way, but Paul discovered it was an intruder that had moved in and was dictating his actions. Nevertheless, he had consented to these sinful actions and was fully responsible before God for them.

When a man is regenerated and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, there is an infusion of new life and new desires for holiness. But the believer does not automatically become a spiritual giant. He must be instructed by the Word of God. He must learn about indwelling sin and how the Holy Spirit can empower him to get the victory over it. It is the writer's personal opinion that Paul went through this experience when he went into Arabia right after his conversion. What a revolution must have come into the life of this man, who before boasted in his own self-righteousness through the Law, when he discovered he had a sinful nature that had been dominating his life, and all of his Law-works were but dung in the sight of God ([Phil. 3:7,8](#)). I do not think Paul was saying at the time he was writing the letter to the Romans that he was spiritually defeated, and all of a sudden as he penned the last verse of chapter seven he discovered the power of the Spirit to deliver him from sin. The evolution to spiritual maturity can take place in a brief period of time under proper instruction of the Word, but some Christians never learn the secret.

The NASB translates the last clause of Galatians 5:17, "So that you may not do the things that you please." The subjunctive mood used here denotes a doubt or contingency. Paul is not saying you cannot do the things you desire to do, but that there is the possibility of your not doing them because of adversarial circumstances.

But, says Paul, "If you be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the Law." We would have expected him to say, "you are not under the flesh," since he has been contrasting Spirit with flesh. However, the Law operated through the flesh, so that both things are true; we are under neither the Law nor the flesh. Thus God has made it possible for us not to sin, but He has not made it impossible for us to sin.

B. The Works of the Flesh (5:19-21)

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, wrath,

factions, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and the like; of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (5:19-21)

In order that we might clearly understand what the deeds of the flesh are, Paul lists some sixteen manifestations of the old nature. This does not mean every unsaved person has actually committed all of these sinful acts, but every unsaved person does have the potential for doing all of them, and at some time has desired to do most of them. Paul as a believer had to say, "I am what I am by the grace of God" (I Cor. 15:10), and we have to say, "But for the grace of God I would have committed all of these acts of sin." The sins of murder and adultery are not found in the earliest manuscripts, but no one would have any question about such acts being works of the flesh. However, the word describing all kinds of sexual immorality is in the list, and heads the list. The Greek word is *porneia* or pornography. "Uncleanness" is impurity, filthiness of mind. "Sensuality" is unbridled lust, shamelessness. "Idolatry" is elsewhere defined by Paul as covetousness. "Witchcraft" is sorcery. The Greek word *pharmakia* means drugs, the word we get our "pharmacy" from. Here it means the use of drugs in order to get into a trance, or as they say today, "to get high..... "Hatred, variance and emulations" mean enmity, strife, and jealousy. "Wrath" refers to passionate outbreaks; "strife," to wrangling; seditions and "heresies," to dissensions and factions. "Envyings, drunkenness, and revelings" or carousings need no explanation. Paul says all of these works of the flesh are self-evident. And, of course, there are more, for Paul says, "and such like." And he forewarns, as he had warned the Galatians in the past, "that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." People who claim to be Christians, and whose lives are characterized by these works of the flesh, would do well to examine themselves to make sure they have actually trusted Christ personally as their Savior. The present tense, "practice," does not mean one act but characteristic behavior.

C. The Fruit of the Spirit (5:22-26)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another (5:22-26).

The first thing to notice here is the contrast between "works" and "fruit." Works are things we do. Fruit is home. The tree doesn't work, it is alive and bears fruit as a process of life. The works of the flesh are described as "dead works" ([Heb. 6:1; 9:14](#)), the activities of one who is dead toward God in his trespasses and sins. The believer has been made alive in Christ, and through that new life the Holy Spirit bears fruit.

The other distinction is between the plural "works" and the singular "fruit." Works are isolated, disjointed activities, separate and distinct, having no unity. Fruit is a unity, a whole. If we section an apple longitudinally, we discover it is comprised of parts which are all vitally joined together. At one end is the peduncle, the little stem that joins it to

the limb; the outer skin which protects it and gives it beauty; the cortex between the skin and the core, the part that we eat; the core containing the five carpels containing the seeds; and at the bottom end are the remains of the blossom, the calyx, stamens, and styles. This product of life is entirely different from a junk box containing old rusty bolts and nuts and worn out parts. We can make artificial apples and wire them on to a tree, and at a distance they may look like the real thing, but upon closer inspection and after taking a bite we discover they are counterfeits. Or, to change the figure of speech a little, there are good trees that bear good fruit, and bad, diseased, or wild trees which produce bitter, poisonous, diseased, or aborted fruit ([Matt. 7:17-19](#)).

In considering the fruit of the Spirit, it will be seen that there are three triads of graces, the first of which describes the life of the Spirit toward God. The second is the same life as manifested toward man. And the third is that life as related to the difficulties of our lives in the world. Thus, love, joy, and peace are especially related to our communion with God. Longsuffering, gentleness, and goodness are related to our relationship with our fellow-man, and faith, meekness, and temperance show how we relate to the trials and problems of life. Let us look briefly at each of these aspects of the fruit of the Spirit, remembering that the fruit described is of a life completely yielded to the Spirit of God. Since we are not always completely yielded, our fruit may have defects - the skin may be damaged or bruised, a moth may have laid eggs in the flower and we discover a worm has hatched and eaten a hole in it, or perhaps the blossom was not properly pollinated and the fruit is misshapen. Many such blemishes may happen to the fruit produced by our lives.

FIRST TRIAD - TOWARD GOD

LOVE. Two different Bible words for love are used; *agapan* and *philein*. Thayer's Greek Lexicon states:

As to the distinction between *agapan* and *philein*: the former by virtue of its connection with *agamo*, Properly denotes a love founded on admiration, veneration, esteem, like the Latin *diligere*, to be kindly disposed to one, wish one well; but *philein* denotes an inclination Prompted by sense and emotion. Hence men are said to *agapan* God, not *philein*; and God is said to *agapesai ton kosmon* (John 3:16), and *philein* the disciples of Christ (John 16:27). Christ bids us *agapan*, not *philein tous echthrous* (Matt. 5:14) because love as an emotion cannot be commanded, but only love as a choice ... From what has been said, it is evident that *agapan* is not, and cannot be used of sexual love.

The verb *phileo* is always translated "love," except in the case of Judas, where it is "kissed" ([Lk. 22:47](#)), and occurs almost forty times in the New Testament. The noun form *philos* is always translated "friend." *Agapao* occurs almost one hundred and thirty times, and the noun form *agape* occurs almost one hundred and twenty times, and in the AV is sometimes translated "charity."

Maclaren states:

Love, of course, heads the list, as the foundation and moving principle of all the rest. It is the instinctive act of the higher life and is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is the life sap which rises through the tree and gives form to all the clusters (Exposition of Holy Scripture).

JOY. This is no doubt "the joy of the Holy Spirit" ([1 Thes. 1:6](#)). Rejoice is joy multiplied, and "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" ([Rom. 5:2](#)). But note, Paul uses a different Greek word here which means to boast of your joy. Peter in writing about the Lord says, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" ([1 Pet. 1:8](#)). John wrote his first epistle "that your joy may be full" ([1:4](#)). Joy occurs twenty-six times in Paul's epistles. The Thessalonians "received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit" ([1:6](#)).

PEACE. Our peace rests upon the knowledge that we have been justified by faith ([Rom. 5:1](#)). We cannot have the peace of God in our souls until we have peace with Him. Peace is a state of tranquility and assurance from God which garrisons our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus amidst all of the trials and sorrows of life ([Phil. 4:7](#)).

SECOND TRIAD - TOWARD MAN

LONG-SUFFERING. This word means that we put up with exasperating people and conditions for a long time. We do not react quickly to adverse situations. We don't say, "I can't take it any longer." We don't faint under the burden ([Gal. 6:9](#)). Peter speaks of the long-suffering of God, which we are to account as salvation "even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him has written unto you" ([2 Pet. 3:9,15](#)). When Christians try to excuse their hot temper by remarking, "Oh, that's just my nature," they are admitting that they are not manifesting the fruit of the Spirit. This word is sometimes translated "patience."

GENTLENESS. This word has more the meaning of useful kindness. It is translated "kindness" in [2 Corinthians 6:6](#); [Ephesians 2:7](#); [Colossians 3:12](#); and [Titus 3:4](#). Paul speaks of approving ourselves as ministers of God in [2 Corinthians 6:1-10](#), and in verse 6 it is to be "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned."

GOODNESS. This word also appears in [Romans 15:14](#); [Ephesians 5:9](#); and [2 Thessalonians 1:11](#). It is closely akin to the previous word. Both are translated "goodness," but this latter word has in it sterner virtue, showing itself in zeal for the truth.

THIRD TRIAD - TOWARD DIFFICULTIES OF LIFE

FAITH. This word should be rendered "faithfulness," or "fidelity." Some give it the meaning of "trustfulness," as in [1 Corinthians 13:7](#), "love believes all things."

MEEKNESS. Meekness is not weakness. It means patient and mild, not

inclined to anger or resentment. Paul speaks of the meekness and gentleness of Christ (2 Cor. 10:1). He refers to the spirit of meekness nine times in his epistles. We will see this word again in the first verse of the next chapter.

TEMPERANCE. This word is a compound of *en* (in) and *kratos* (power or strength), and means to have power over one's appetites. It is better translated "self-control." The word also occurs in Acts 24:25 and in 2 Peter 1:6. Paul also uses a different form of the word in 1 Corinthians 7:9, where it refers to sexual continency, and 9:25 where it refers to the self control of the athlete.

It will thus be seen that the nine attributes of the fruit of the Spirit are also the attributes of God. It is the Spirit of God conforming us to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). God always sets forth His ideal for His people. He may know that we will never perfectly measure up to His ideal for us in this life, but He never lowers His standards to accommodate our weaknesses. God never gives the impression that He winks at our sins, or that it is all right with Him if we miss the mark once in a while, or manifest the works of the flesh occasionally. We know we are going to be changed completely into His image when He comes for us (Phil. 3:21), but He wants as much as possible of that change to take place before He comes.

"The law is not made for a righteous man, but for ... sinners" (1 Tim. 1:9). Who ever heard about laws against being good, kind, or peaceful? There is therefore no law against the fruit of the Spirit. However, Paul is quick to remind us that in order to bear this fruit of the Spirit we must be living on resurrection ground, which means we must necessarily have died. We were once and for all crucified with Christ as a past finished action. We are never told that we must crucify the flesh, but we are told to reckon ourselves to have been crucified. The Law and the flesh were before the Cross. Resurrection life through the Spirit comes after the Cross. It is an anomaly of faith to put ourselves before the Cross in the flesh under the Law.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." These two things that belong to the flesh, "affections" (*pathemasin*, better translated "passions") and "lusts" (*epithumiais*), are close synonyms. Trench states:

Epithumia ... in Scripture is the larger word, including the whole world of active lusts and desires, all to which the *sarx* (flesh), as the seat of desire and of the natural appetites, impels; while the *pathos* is rather the "*morosa delectatio*" not so much the soul's disease in its more active operations as the diseased condition out of which these spring, the "*morbus libidinis*," as Bengal has put it well, rather than the "*libido*," the "lustfulness," as distinguished from the "lust" (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, p. 324).

The "if" in verse 25 does not cast doubt upon whether we live in the Spirit. Paul's thought is, "Since we live in the Spirit, "which every saved person does, "then let us also walk in the Spirit." Living is our unchanging position; walking is our daily manner of living. "Walk" in verse 16 means to walk around. In this verse it means "keep in step with."

The closing exhortation of the section is, "Let us not be desirous of vainglory (conceited or proud), for that leads to making each other jealous." The word translated "provoking" is used only this one time in the New Testament, and means "calling forth to one's self," or "challenging," and thus stirring up trouble. The apostle John tells about such a leader, "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not" (3 John 9).

IX. The Gospel Produces Spirituality - 6:1-10

A. Fulfilling the Law of Christ (6:1-2)

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ. (6:1-2)

The introduction of the subject of a sinning saint may seem to be a sharp break from the subject of the fruit of the Spirit, but actually it is an example of how the fruit of the Spirit works. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault." "Overtaken" means to take before, as in 1 Corinthians 11:21. The verb here is in the aorist subjunctive passive voice and refers to one who is taken before by a fault, that is, the fault or sin overtakes him before he is aware. Christians sometimes play around with sin, exposing themselves to its enticement, and sin traps or catches them. Paul never talks about a Christian who willfully engages in or continues in sin. The Bible takes the attitude that such a person is not a true child of God. There is surely a great difference between the case where a gun goes off and kills another while one is playing around with it, and that of a gun firing after it is aimed and when the trigger is pulled on purpose. And it makes a difference whether the act was premeditated or whether it happened suddenly in the midst of high emotions. The Bible takes it for granted that a child of God does not make plans for committing sins. It is not within our power to judge finally who is saved and who is not. Paul tells Timothy:

Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are his. And, Let every one that names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19).

If a person is thus trapped in a sin, what is to be done with him? Those who are mature spiritually are to endeavor to restore him. The word, "restore," is used of setting broken bones, of mending of nets. (Mk. 1:19), of saints being perfectly joined together (1 Cor. 1:10). A different form of the same word is used of pastors perfecting the saints (Eph. 4:12). To restore the guilty one is a very delicate operation, and will no doubt involve some pain, just as in the setting of a broken bone. He is to be set back into his place in the fellowship of the saints. This work must be done by those who are bearing the fruit of the Spirit, for it must be done in meekness (cf. 5:23). Before acting as a judge of others, one must be able to put himself in the shoes of the one he is judging, asking himself, "What would I have done under similar circumstances?" Too often judging is done in a self-righteous attitude, which embitters the guilty and ends in a

contest of comparing one against the other (cf. [2 Cor. 10:12](#)).

People often have very heavy burdens or problems and troubles which are too heavy to bear alone. Some times they have brought the trouble upon themselves, and sometimes it is no fault of their own. No doubt the case of restoring one overtaken in a fault comes under this heading. Bearing burdens of others means fulfilling the law of Christ, for the law of Christ is "loving one another" ([John 15:12](#); cf. [1 Cor. 9:21](#)).

The word "fulfill" used here is a compound with the meaning "to fill up to full that which is lacking in a partly filled vessel," not the filling of an empty one. The same use of this word is seen in [1 Corinthians 16:17](#); [Philippians 2:30](#); and [1 Thessalonians 2:16](#).

Since the Mosaic Law commanded, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," it may seem strange that Jesus called His commandment to love one another a new commandment ([John 13:34](#)). The Greek language has two words for new; *neon*, new in time, and *kainon*, new in quality. For example, in the parable of [Luke 6:36](#), "No man puts a piece of a *kainon* garment upon an old." The new garment could have been manufactured before the old one was in time and still be new in quality. The question here is not when the garments were made, but the condition or quality of the garments. The old was worn and threadbare, the new fresh, full, and beautiful. So also with the "new" commandment which Jesus gave. It was a *kainon* commandment. Both Moses and Jesus gave the same commandment to love one another, but that of Jesus was new in that it was to be produced by the power of the Holy Spirit, whereas Moses' commandment depended upon the flesh for fulfillment.

B. Proper Self-Estimation (6:3-5)

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

Humility is a great Christian virtue. The problem is, many Christians don't know the meaning of humility. On the one hand, some become proud of their humility, and on the other, some take such a low estimate of themselves that they never feel they have the ability to do anything. The same Paul that said "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing" ([Rom. 7:18](#)), could also say, "I am sufficient for all things through Christ which strengthens me" ([Phil. 4:13](#)). When we succeed or are put in a place of prominence, we may take the credit to ourselves and think we are "something," as Paul says, when in fact we are "nothing." This, of course, is pride and self-deception.

The fact that God works in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure" ([Phil. 2:13](#)) does not mean God does not recognize and honor those who are obedient to his Word. We are to give honor where honor is due ([Rom. 13:7](#)). Paul's advice is for every man to "prove" his own work. The word, prove" (*dokimazo*) means to test, examine, scrutinize, prove in order to see if a thing is genuine or not. It was used of the assaying of metals and for testing money. At the judgment seat of Christ our works will be tested

by fire (1 Cor. 3:13) to see how much is genuine. We don't, or we should not, test our works by comparing them with the works of another man. We must stand back and look at ourselves in the light of God's Word. If, after that burning light has consumed all of the dross, we find there is some gold, or silver, or precious stones which have stood the test, then we can take pride or glory with regard to ourselves and not in regard to others. The context in which this word *kauchema* (rejoice, boast, glory) is used is very important. In regard to salvation Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:20), but in regard to his ministry he wrote, "for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void" (1 Cor. 9:15). There are both good and bad kinds of boasting and pride.

"Every man shall bear his own burden." How does Paul draw this conclusion from verse four? Vincent says:

Paul means, no one will have occasion to claim moral superiority to his neighbor, for (gar) each man's self-examination will reveal infirmities enough of his own, even though they may not be the same as those of his neighbor. His own burdens will absorb his whole attention, and will leave him no time to compare himself with others (Ibid. Vol IV, p. 173).

Verses two and five contain a paradox: "bear one another's burdens ... every man shall bear his own burden." The burden "borne" in verse two means a very heavy, depressing, troublesome burden, and in this context refers primarily to the moral faults of another. The burden in verse five (*phortion*) is used of the lading of a ship (Acts 27:10), and of the pack a soldier had to carry. That burden could be heavy or light, but it was an individual burden which no one else could bear. Christ used this word in describing the burden He placed upon His followers: *to phortion mou elaphron estin*, "my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). The word "light in weight" is also used of "our light affliction, which is but for a moment" (2 Cor. 4:17).

C. Sowing and Reaping (6:6-10)

Let him that is taught in the word share with him that teaches in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (6:6-10)

God has ordained that His ministers who preach and teach the Word be financially supported by those who are ministered unto. The KJV uses the word "communicate" to express this financial sharing, both here and in [Philippians 4:14,15](#); [1 Timothy 6:18](#); and [Hebrews 13:16](#).

Paul says,

Do you not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers of the altar? Even so has the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel (I Cor. 9:13,14).

But Paul chose to preach without charge, so that none could charge him with enriching himself, lest the gospel be hindered.

The Mosaic law required giving the tithe, one-tenth of one's increase in worth. The people could, if they wanted to, give free-will offerings over and above the tithe. (Deut. 14:22; Lev. 22:18-22). The word "tithe" is never mentioned in Paul's epistles. It is mentioned in Hebrews 6, if Paul wrote Hebrews, but there it is a reference to Abraham. While the ministry is to be financially supported by the congregation, no set amount is specified. Paul's instruction is, "Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). And both in that chapter and in our present text, is the maxim: "Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." In both places he is referring to financial support of God's work, although there are surely other ways of investing in the ministry of the Word. If we spend our money on worldly pleasures to the satisfaction of the flesh, we shall reap corruption. We brought nothing when we came into the world, and it is certain we can take no worldly thing with us when we depart. Every material thing in this world will wear out, decay, and change. And it is just as certain that God cannot be mocked. The word "mocked" (*mukterizetai*) is from the word *mukter*, the nose. It means to turn up the nose, sneer. One who turns up his nose at God has surely been deceived. No one can do that and get away with it.

What does Paul mean when he says, "He that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life?" Don't we already have everlasting life as the free gift of God (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 5:13)? Paul's charge to Pastor Timothy is appropriate at this point:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they may be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

Paul does not say here or in Timothy that eternal life is attained by what we sow, but that when we sow to the Spirit we will reap that which will endure eternally. Then there is the idea of "laying hold" on eternal life.

Verse nine gives a word of encouragement to those who sow and get weary, waiting for results. There is a season for sowing and a season for reaping. Some reaping may come in this life, but surely most of it will come in the life to come. We are assured that the harvest will come in God's appointed time "if we faint not." To faint is to fail to carry through with the work we started. If the farmer gets weary and discouraged and leaves his seed in the bag after he has plowed the field, and never plants it, or if he fails to water and cultivate, he cannot expect to reap much but weeds.

“As we have opportunity [as opportunity presents itself] let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” God causes the rain to fall upon both the just and the unjust. Christians tend to avoid responsibility to the needs of society in general. Let us recognize we can go overboard either way.

X. The Gospel Benediction - 6:11-18

A. Glorifying in the Flesh (6:11-13)

You see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the Law, but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. (6:11-13)

In coming to the close of his letter, Paul emphasizes the importance and significance of this letter, for he is writing it with his own hand. He usually dictated his letters and then signed them. Apparently he wrote this whole epistle in his own handwriting. The AV misses the point here. He is not saying he had written them a large letter, but that he had written with such large letters. Some think Paul had eye trouble, which made it difficult to write. Others think he wrote with large letters to place emphasis upon the importance of his warnings about Judaizers, for he goes on to talk further about them in the next two verses.

Those who wanted to have the Galatians circumcised "desire to make a fair showing in the flesh." This is the seventeenth time Paul has mentioned the flesh. The verb, "fair show" means literally, "a good face." They were interested only in the externals; things they could do and see and show off to others. The reason they practice this rite is to avoid persecution for the Cross of Christ (refer back to notes of 5:11.) The Judaizers who are circumcised don't keep the Law themselves, but they want to have the Gentiles circumcised so they might boast in their flesh. The boasting character of the legalist can be seen from the Pharisee who went to the temple to pray: "I thank thee that I am not like other men, or like that sinful Publican over there. I do this and that to show how much better I am than others. Just look at me, God, and see if you can find any flaws" (Lk. 18:10,11).

B. Glorifying in the Cross (6:14,15)

But God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. (6:14-15)

The AV quotes Paul some fourteen times, saying, "God forbid." But Paul never once used the name of God in this way. What he said was, *me egenoito*, literally, "may it not have come to pass." It is an expression of strong aversion, like "away with such a

thought!" They boasted in the flesh, but Paul says, "May it not come to pass that I should boast, except in the cross of Christ." They avoided the Cross. They stumbled over it. They were ashamed of it. Paul gloried in it.

There is a double action in the Cross. "The world (*kosmos*) has been crucified unto me [the world of fleshly things has been cut off], and I have been crucified unto the world." Paul often identified the flesh as having been crucified with Christ, but this is a new view of the Cross - the world hanging on a cross. But really, that is what we ought to see when we judge ourselves to have died to sin.

If we are cut off from the world of flesh, then it doesn't matter whether we are circumcised or not. In Christ there is a circumcision, made without human hands ([Col. 2:11](#)), through the circumcision (death) of Christ. There is only one thing that matters or is of value, and that is the new creation (*kaine ktisis*). (Refer back to comments on verses 1 and 2 for the meaning of "*kainon*.") On the new creation, see also [2 Corinthians 5:17](#); [Ephesians 2:15](#). The new creation is the world of the regenerated life and could apply to the saints in the Kingdom age. The "one new man" is definitely the Church, the Body of Christ. The "putting on of the new man" ([Eph. 4:24](#); [Co. 3:10](#)) refers to the new spiritual life received in salvation.

C. The Final Benediction (6:16-18)

And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen (6:16-18)

"And as many as walk according to this rule." The word used for "rule" is *kanon*, which means "a definitely bounded space within the limits of which one's power or influence is confined." It is the word from which we get "canon," as when we speak of the "canon of Scripture," meaning all of the writings which are within the bounds of inspiration. The word also means a measuring stick. The rule Paul is here talking about is the walk in the Holy Spirit. To all such Paul calls for God's peace and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. The Israel of God has been variously interpreted. Most translations make the "and" before the Israel of God to be an expletive, which makes the Israel of God to be the same as those in the preceding phrase. Thus: "upon all who thus walk, even upon the Israel of God." This interpretation makes good argument for covenant theology. However, nowhere else does Paul refer to members of the Body of Christ as the Israel of God. Paul in Romans speaks of the believing remnant of Israel, of which there are some today, and there will be some in the future who will go through the Tribulation and will need a great deal of peace and mercy. Paul was an Israelite and identified himself as a part of the remnant ([Rom. 9:27](#); [11:5](#); [2 Cor. 11:22](#)). I believe the Israel of God here consists of the remnant of believing Jews. The unbelieving Jews (Judaizers) were trying to make legalistic Jews out of the believers. Paul speaks of the natural Israelites who were not spiritual Israelites ([Rom. 9:6](#)).

Finally, Paul says, "From now on don't let any one trouble me," cause him trouble

in defending his apostleship. His proof was the brands (stigmata) which he bore in his body. It was the custom in ancient times for slaves to be branded, even as ranchers today brand their cattle to show ownership. Read of the stigmata which he bore in his physical body as the slave of Christ as recorded in 2 Corinthians 11:17-28 – “Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned.”

Paul's last word is very brief. It is simply, "Brethren, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

ADDENDUM 1

GALATIANS 2:7-9

The gospel (variously translated) of, for, to the circumcision had been committed to Peter, as the gospel of, for, to the uncircumcision had been given to Paul. The former concerned Israel's kingdom dispensation; the latter concerned the dispensation of grace for the Church. Since there were differences in these two programs, it was decided in conference that Peter and his fellow apostles should go to the circumcision, and not to all nations as they had been commissioned originally. Paul was recognized as the apostle to the Gentiles in this new dispensation. The question arises, who are the circumcision to whom Peter was to go, and who are the Gentiles to whom Paul was to go?

It is universally agreed that the *circumcision* is the nation of Israel, and the *uncircumcision* refers to all other nationalities, so that the term is synonymous with the Gentiles. On the surface this says that Peter was to go to the Jews and Paul was to go to the non-Jews. But if this is the meaning, Paul violated this agreement, for he always went to the Jews first ([Acts 17:2](#); [Rom 1:16](#)).

We believe that in this context, *the circumcision* does not mean all Jews everywhere, but those Jews who were living in the nation of Israel and were therefore governed by the law of Israel, that is, the law of Moses. That is why the Jerusalem church is obedient to the law. One of the last commands of Jesus was to obey those who sat in Moses's seat ([Matt. 23:2,3](#)). Whenever Paul went to Jerusalem he submitted to the law. Undispensational commentators criticize Paul and the other apostles for keeping the law of the land, when, in fact, they should be commended.

There were many circumcised Jews scattered among the other nations, but these are not the ones to whom Peter was to specifically minister. These scattered Jews had been assimilated into other nations and were a part of the Gentile world. Spiritually speaking, it should be remembered Israel, through breaking the law, had become uncircumcision ([Rom. 2:25](#)), and that in this dispensation "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek" ([Rom. 10:12](#); [Gal. 3:28](#)).

It is significant that when Paul says Peter is to go to the circumcision, he does not say that he is to go to the uncircumcision, but to "the *ethne*," to the nations. The

A.V. translates this as "Gentiles" in verse 8 and "heathen" in verse 9. Paul was the apostle of the nations. After the destruction of Jerusalem and temple in A.D. 70, there was no circumcision group as there was during the Acts period. There was no place for preaching anything but Paul's message of the gospel of the grace of God and the dispensation of the mystery.

ADDENDUM 2

GALATIANS 4:26,27

As dispensationalists, we believe that the Church, the body of Christ, is a completely separate and distinct entity from Israel and her earthly Messianic kingdom. However, it may be argued that Paul in his allegory of Hagar and Sarah reads the body of Christ back into Isaiah 54:1 and identifies the Church with the New Jerusalem which has the names of the Twelve Apostles on its foundations ([Rev. 21:12-14](#)).

As for the quotation from Isaiah, Paul does not say that this prophecy is being fulfilled in this dispensation. He is simply making an application from this passage to illustrate his allegory. It is evident that Isaiah 54:1 has not yet been fulfilled, and that it cannot be fulfilled until the return of Christ to establish the Kingdom to Israel. Paul, in his application, makes the barren woman to be Sarah, whereas Isaiah's desolate and barren woman is Jerusalem and the nation which has been devastated by the Babylonian captivity. Even though the captivity hadn't taken place, Isaiah foresees it ([ch. 39:6,7](#)). Israel was the wife of Jehovah, but she had played the harlot and God had divorced her ([Isa. 50:1](#); [Jer. 3:8](#); [Hos. 2:2](#)). [Isaiah 54:1-17](#) foresees the restoration of Israel as the wife of Jehovah, and the ensuing prosperity and fruitfulness of Israel. Thus, Paul's use of Isaiah as an illustration has no relation to the historical fulfillment of this prophecy.

Now as for Paul's "Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all" being identical with holy Jerusalem, the Lamb's wife ([Rev. 21:9,10](#)), well, we seriously doubt that Paul ever read the Book of Revelation, since he apparently died some twenty years before the book was written. Paul in his allegory had to have a city to contrast with the earthly Jerusalem, and the opposite of earthly is heavenly, or that which is above. All spiritual blessings come from above. Christ said that He was from above (John 8:23). Paul said, "Seek those things which are above," and "Set your affections on things above" (Col. 3:1,2). In his last letter he was looking forward to being preserved to the Lord's heavenly kingdom ([2 Tim. 4:18](#)).

The entire third chapter of Galatians is devoted to Abraham being our father; his name is mentioned eight times. And in Paul's allegory, Abraham's wife, Sarah, as representing the Jerusalem above, is said to be our mother. This all has to do with the gospel of salvation promised in the Old Testament. This is a separate and distinct truth from the Mystery. Abraham is the father of both the circumcision and the uncircumcision ([Rom. 4:11,12](#)), as far as justification by faith is concerned.

**UNDERSTANDING
PAUL AND THE LAW**

Charles F. Baker

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1 John 1:9, 2:16; 3:16; 5:13

INTRODUCTION

If there was one thing that made Paul such a controversial figure, it was his teaching that both Jews and Gentiles could be saved entirely apart from circumcision and the keeping Of the Law of Moses. How could Paul, who had been trained as a rabbi, teach such things, when Moses, the man who had spoken face to face with God, had given Israel the Law direct from the hand of God, who said: "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord" (Lev. 18:5)? How could Paul say circumcision was not only not necessary, but "if you become circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing" (Gal. 5:2), when God had commanded: "Every man child among you shall be circumcised ... and the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant" (Gen. 17:10,14)? If Jesus had to be circumcised according to the requirements of the Law (Lk. 2:21-24), how could Paul claim Jesus would be of no profit to one who was circumcised? Was not Paul diametrically opposing the teaching of Jesus, who told His disciples just two days before His crucifixion: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23:2,3)? Paul seemed to be sweeping aside that which had been most sacred and holy to the Jews for fifteen centuries. No wonder Paul's view of the Law stirred up such great controversy.

The answer to the above questions is found in the fact that Paul received his message and ministry by direct revelation from Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11,12). God was introducing a new dispensation which he had kept hidden from all his former prophets before he revealed it to Paul. The new dispensation of the Grace of God suspended his prophesied Messianic earthly kingdom program, which will be completed after he finishes this present heavenly outcalling of the Body of Christ. (Rom. 16:25,26; Eph. 3:1-9; Col. 1:24-27).

The Law of Moses governed every aspect of the life of Israel: civil, religious, moral. In this new dispensation members of the Body are scattered throughout all nations which have their own laws and institutions, making it impossible for believers to live under the Mosaic Covenant. Besides, the Law Covenant was not made with any Gentile nation.

The problem with the Law originated through the fact that the first preaching concerning Jesus Christ began within the Jewish nation, when God promised that nation He would send Jesus back to establish the Kingdom on earth if the nation would repent (Acts 3:19-21). All of the first believers in Jesus had already been circumcised and were all under the Law of Moses. There is no record in the earthly teachings of Jesus or in the early chapters of the Acts that these Jewish believers were to cease circumcising or observing the Law. They continued with the temple worship (Acts 2:46), and as late as Acts 21:20 the thousands of Jewish believers in Jerusalem were all zealous of the Law. Even Paul, when he went back to Jerusalem at that time submitted to the Mosaic laws of Israel. He went so far as to enter the temple and to pay for the animal sacrifices needed in the purification ceremony of four Jewish believers who had

bound themselves with a Nazarite vow ([Acts 21:24](#)). But Paul forbade his Gentile converts to be circumcised or observe Moses' Law ([Gal. 5:1-4](#)). To be circumcised meant they were seeking to be justified by works of the Law. The Jewish apostles who were circumcised before they became believers were apparently not trusting in circumcision for justification, but in the name of Jesus ([Acts 4:12](#)). But there was a circumcision party among the Jewish believers who caused Paul a great deal of trouble and persecution.

Soon after Paul began establishing churches among the Gentiles, these Judaizers visited the churches, attacking Paul's preaching of justification by faith apart from the Law, saying: "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" ([Acts 15:1](#)). Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians to correct this error of mixing the Law and the gospel. Also the church at Jerusalem sent a letter to Paul's churches endorsing Paul's message and ministry and denying having sent out these "mixers" ([Acts 15:22-27](#)).

In time, circumcision ceased to be a problem among the Gentiles, but not so the Law covenant itself. In modern times Covenant theologians made the Mosaic covenant a part of their covenant of grace and taught that water baptism had taken the place of circumcision, thus making water baptism necessary for salvation. Today there are millions who are classified as Christians who believe baptism is essential for salvation, and millions more who believe baptism is a means of grace or a necessary act of obedience to Christ.

Most Fundamentalists reject the idea that baptism has taken the place of circumcision and therefore reject infant baptism. They believe only saved people are candidates for baptism, which they say is a testimony to the world of the burial of their old sinful nature. They usually require baptism for church membership and fellowship with other Christians.

Paul wrote his letter to the Galatian churches to correct the error of imposing any kind of humanly performed ceremony upon believers as a means either of salvation or sanctification. In Paul's day the problem concerned mainly the Law of Moses and circumcision. Today there are large denominations and many splinter groups which need to understand Paul's teaching about Law and grace.

I was personally challenged to make this study on all of the references to law in the New Testament after reading a recent book written by a seminary professor at one of our large evangelical institutions. His premise was that evangelicals have been mistaken in making Law and the gospel antithetical. Instead, he places the gospel on a continuum with the Law, thus denying that the Bible contains any unconditional promises. With such teachings abroad I felt there was still a need for a study of this type. I trust the briefly quoted listing of all references to law in the New Testament, along with my commentary, will help the reader to better understand the purpose of the Law and enable the reader to enjoy more deeply the riches of God's grace.

THE LAW AS A COVENANT

The Law of Moses, the subject matter of this study, is a covenant. It is a contract into which God entered with the nation of Israel. It was a binding agreement in which the Israelites agreed to perform certain works or else suffer a curse. The Israelites ratified the contract by saying, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Ex. 19:8). The consequences of not doing all that God commanded are enumerated in Deuteronomy 11 and 27, ending with verse 26: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." Since Paul had proven that no one, with the exception of Jesus Christ, had fulfilled all of this legal agreement, he states: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law [the complete covenant] to do them" (Gal. 3:10).

The Law Covenant consisted of three divisions:

- The Ten Commandments
- The Judgments
- The Ordinances

The Ten Commandments contain the moral law, which is a reflection of the holiness and righteousness of God.

These moral principles hold true for all dispensations and ages. Paul takes nine of these gold coins and, as it were, reminds them in his gospel of grace. But why only nine of them? Paul never told his believers to keep the Sabbath day. In fact, he warns against observing holy days and Sabbath days, which were only a shadow of the reality now found in Christ ([Col. 2:16,17](#)). The Sabbath command was not a moral law, as were the other nine. The Sabbath was a sign of the Law covenant - "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever" (Ex. 31:16,17).

The Commandments are given in [Exodus 20:1-26](#). The judgments or civil laws are related in the following three chapters of Exodus. Israel was a nation, and like any other nation needed civil laws. The Church of the present dispensation is not a nation, and God has never commissioned it to enforce civil laws, although at different times and by various denominations Christians have tried to take charge of the civil law. 'Me Puritans came to America to establish a Theocratic government with the expectation it would become the kingdom of God on earth. Roman Catholicism dictated the civil law in many colonies of the New World founded by its missionaries. Numerous offshoot Christian groups have tried establishing communes in which all property is held in common and over which a religious hierarchy controls the enforcement of civil law. On the other hand, Paul instructed his converts to be in subjection to the higher powers in whatever nation they live or visit.

The ordinances or religious laws are set forth in Exodus 24-31. The religious life

of Israel was centered around the Tabernacle. All of the sacrifices, ceremonies, priesthood, furniture, altars, table of shewbread, candlestick, veils, mercy seat - all "was a figure [type] for the time then present" (Heb. 9:9) of the salvation which was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into the heavenly sanctuary.

The Book of Hebrews makes a number of contrasts between the Promise by faith and the Law by works. Note the contrasts between the priesthood of the Law and that of the Promise in speaking of Melchizedek:

Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people that is, their brothers – even though their brothers are descended from Abraham. This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. And without doubt the lesser is blessed by the greater. In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on that basis the Law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come - one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the Law. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared:

You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the Law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God" (Heb. 7:4-18 - NIV).

Many people and religious groups, such as Seventh Day Adventists, make the mistake of supposing that only the animal sacrifices of the Law have been done away in the gospel, so that we are still under the remainder of the Law of Moses. But the Bible declares that the entire old Mosaic Covenant was to be replaced by an entirely New Covenant for Israel, based upon an entirely different principle ([Jer. 31:31, 34](#); [Heb. 8:7-13](#)). And Paul states that the Law which was engraved on tables of stone was "done away" and "abolished" ([2 Cor. 3:7,11,13](#)) along with its ordinances ([Eph. 2:15](#); [Col. 2:14](#)). The Law was a covenant. The Old Covenant has been annulled through the death of Christ. The New Covenant, made in Christ's blood, was made with the house

of Israel and the house of Judah ([Heb. 8:8](#)), not with the Gentiles in the Body of Christ.

BEFORE THE LAW

There was a time before the Law was given. Paul speaks of that time in Romans 5:13,14:

For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no Law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Paul also says, "For where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). If there was no transgression before the Law was given, why does Paul call Adam's sin a transgression? Adam's sin was a transgression because God had positively commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But that command or law applied only to Adam and could not have applied to any of his posterity. Nevertheless, the penalty of the Law, which is death, reigned over all of his posterity, even though they had not sinned by breaking a commandment as Adam did.

How do we explain this fact that even infants who had never committed any personal sins died along with those who had done wrong but had not transgressed a law given by God? The only satisfactory answer to this question is found in the fact that by one man, Adam, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and death spread to the whole human race because all sinned. The rendering, "all have sinned," as in the A.V., is incorrect, both factually and grammatically. Millions who died in infancy never committed acts of sin, and grammatically the verb sinned is in the aorist tense, which speaks of a finished past act. The whole human race was potentially in Adam. Every human being who has ever lived could trace his genealogy directly back to Adam if he possessed the historical records. The Scripture teaches that Adam committed a racial sin-all sinned in Adam's sin. That is the reason for universal death.

But what does Paul mean by saying "sin is not imputed where there is no law?" Since there was no law between Adam and Moses, a period of at least 2500 years, does he mean sin was not put to the account of any who lived during those centuries? Surely he could not mean that, for during that time God sent a flood which destroyed all mankind, save one family, as a punishment for their sins. Some expositors think Paul was speaking in a relative manner: sin was not imputed to them as much as it was to those who sinned after the Law was given. Jesus did recognize such a principle in the justice of God when He said:

But that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more (Lk. 12:47, 48).

But Paul does not indicate he is making a comparative or qualified statement about their sin not being imputed or reckoned to their account. It seems rather that Paul is saying this to prove men died from Adam to Moses because they had transgressed a law, otherwise they would not have died. Some expositors suppose Paul meant they had transgressed the unwritten law, which Paul mentioned previously ([Rom. 2:14](#)), but this idea must be ruled out, for Paul is showing that the death of all of those before the Law was due to the one act of transgression on the part of only one man. Had he been talking about the unwritten law, he would have been dealing with millions of sins of millions of people. God in His justice would not have imputed sin to these people had they not transgressed a law. Therefore they must have transgressed the Edenic statute in Adam. Their sin was not similar to Adam's sin - it was identical. They did not sin like Adam, but in him.

Adam is said to be a figure (type) of Christ, in that he was head of the natural human race, even as Christ has become the Head of the supernatural redeemed human race. All men are either in Adam or in Christ ([1 Cor. 15:22](#)). There are just two representative men, namely, the first Adam and the last Adam; the first man of the earth and the second Man, the Lord from heaven ([1 Cor. 15: 45,47](#)).

If salvation depends in any degree upon keeping the Law, could any one have been saved during the centuries before the Law was given? This is the question Paul addressed in the fourth chapter of Romans. He singled out the case of the one man the Jews looked up to as their father, Abraham. Paul asked:

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (vv. 1-3).

Paul had concluded, just before asking this question, "that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law." What did Abraham find out in his experience? Did he find anything that justified him according to the flesh? If he did he couldn't boast about it before God. But what did he find? He found, according to Genesis 15:6, that God counted his faith for righteousness. To be accredited with righteousness is the meaning of justification.

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (vv. 4,5).

A worker would never regard his paycheck as a free gift. If anything, he would say he had been underpaid. So if we approach God on the basis of our works we are making God our debtor. If it is by works it cannot be of grace, and if it is by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace ([Rom. 11:6](#)).

Abraham was justified four hundred and thirty years before the Law was given, so it is evident that the Law had nothing to do with his salvation. But what about

circumcision? The Judaizers of Paul's day said, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). Was not Abraham circumcised? Yes, but Abraham was justified by faith in Genesis 15 while his name was Abram, at least fifteen years before circumcision was introduced in chapter 17. He was therefore justified wholly apart from both circumcision and the Law.

How were people justified all during the Law Dispensation from Moses to Christ? Paul uses David's experience to answer this question ([Rom. 4:6,7](#)). He was justified in the same way Abraham was. God imputed righteousness to him apart from works. No one was ever justified before God by his works with the exception of Jesus Christ. Paul says "the doers of the Law shall be justified ([Rom. 2:13](#)), but only Jesus has "done" the Law perfectly.

But what about the statement of James, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (Jas. 2:21). Does James contradict Paul or is he wrong in making such a statement? James and Paul are talking about two different events. James says Abraham was justified by works when he offered up Isaac. Paul says Abraham was justified by faith when he did nothing but believe the promise God made to him some twenty years or more before Isaac was born. Did Abraham have a righteous standing before God during all those years before he offered Isaac? If he did have, then his works had nothing to do with his salvation. James also quotes Genesis 15:6 and says his faith was perfected by his works. James is saying that genuine faith produces works, but that does not mean every believer will offer up his son as a sacrifice. Paul likewise speaks of the work of faith ([1 Thess. 1:3](#); [2 Thess. 1:11](#)).

THE LAW ADDED

The Law was added ([Gal. 3:19](#)). To what was it added? It was added to the Promise made to Abraham 430 years earlier. The Promise had no human conditions attached for its fulfillment. God did not tell Abraham that He wanted to make a deal with him in which God would bless him if he fulfilled his half of the bargain. God simply announced to Abraham what He was going to do with Abraham and his seed, and Abraham believed God. Notice what a contrast Paul makes between the Promise and the Law: "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise (v. 18). The Law here must be the Law of Moses, for he has just referred to the Law given 430 years after the Promise and that has to be the Law of Moses, not some false concept of law which the Jews developed 1,500 years later. The time element is always important when dealing with promises and contracts.

How was the Law added to the Promise? The answer to this question is of utmost importance. It was not added as a codicil may be added to a will. In the context Paul uses two different Greek words which are translated "add." No man can add (*epidiatassetai*) to a confirmed covenant. The word used in verse 19 for adding (*prosetethe*) has the idea of placing something alongside of another thing. To illustrate, I may give you a large, sweet, juicy orange, but before you peel it I add a very sour lemon, and tell you to suck the juice of the lemon before eating the orange. In this

example the lemon, representing the Law, is in no way mixed with or changes the nature of the orange, representing the Promise. The purpose in this illustration is to have you find out from experience what sourness really is so that you will appreciate to the fullest the sweetness of the orange. The Judaizers of Paul's day were squeezing and mixing the juices of the lemon and the orange thus taking the bite out of the Law and adding works to the promise.

Galatians 3:19 also shows the contrast between Law and Promise in the fact that there was a mediator in the Law covenant, but there was no mediator in the giving of the Promise.

What was the purpose of the law, then? It was added in order to show what wrongdoing is, and was meant to last until the coming of Abraham's descendant, to whom the promise was made. The Law was handed down by angels, with a man acting as a go-between. But a go-between is not needed when there is only one person, and God is one (3:19,20 - TEB).

Mediators always stand between two parties who have their own interests to protect, such as between labor and management. Moses was the mediator of the Law covenant. But if a man gives his fortune as a gift to society there is no need for a mediator, for there is nothing to negotiate. The Promise was God's free gift and therefore no mediator was required which shows how different Promise is from Law.

A further contrast of Law and Promise is found in verse 21: "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." The fact that the Law demanded righteousness but could not produce it is evidence that Law and gospel (Promise) are not of the same nature on a continuum.

Verses 22 and 23 tell us something very important about faith. Abraham had faith 430 years before the Law was given. Enoch and Noah are listed as men of faith before Abraham ([Heb. 11:5-7](#)). The Jews under the Law were also supposed to have faith in God. But this general faith is contrasted with C, the faith of Jesus Christ." "But the Scripture as a jailer has Shut up all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that (simply) believe." The Faith did not exist in Old Testament times. It came with the gospel. "But before the faith came we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed." It is not said that Abraham believed in Jesus Christ. He believed the promise that God would give him a son and that in his seed all nations would be blessed. Abraham's seed is Christ ([Gal. 3:16](#)), but it is evident from Hebrews 11:13 that the heroes of faith "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." The faith of Jesus Christ was not present with them. It was far off in the future.

PURPOSE OF THE LAW

One purpose of the Law was to act as a pedagogue.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24,25).

It is evident that the law here is the Law of Moses. The word translated schoolmaster (*paidagos*) means an overseer or guardian of children. Israel under the Law is represented as a child who has been placed under tutors and guardians for the purpose of enforcing discipline. In 4:1,2 we learn that an heir of the Promise, "as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a slave, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father."

To turn over the entire estate to a six year old child would be ridiculous and dangerous. The child needs to be educated and disciplined, and apparently in ancient times children were severely disciplined. And when we read of the many judgments, punishments, captivities, and sufferings which came upon Israel in the Old Testament Law Dispensation we can appreciate how severe was God's discipline and how much Israel needed it. God could not have turned over His spiritual kingdom to that fleshly, immature people at Mt. Sinai.

Paul goes on in verse 3 to show that every one, whether Jew or Gentile, was formerly in bondage to the elements of the world, whether to the Law of Moses or to heathen religions. Paul refers again to these elementary principles in verse 9 as "weak and beggarly elements" and in Colossians 2:20 as "the rudiments of the world."

Childhood is a temporary stage of life. When we become mature we put away childish things (1 Cor. 13:11). So likewise the Law was a temporary dispensation which God has done away with. The childhood stage was terminated by a ceremony of adoption, when the child was given the full rights of sonship. Likewise, "when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4,5). To prove we are sons, God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, crying "Abba! Father!"

It should be noticed that the words "to bring us" in Galatians 3:24 are in italics (KJV) and therefore not in the Greek, which literally reads: "The law was our guardian unto, or until, Christ." The Law is not represented here as a teacher leading us to Christ, but as a guardian to enforce discipline.

Another purpose was to make sin a transgression. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20); "Because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15); "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound" (Rom. 5:20); "For I had not known sin [as a transgression], but by the law" (Rom. 7:7); "It [the Law] was added because of transgressions" (Gal. 3:19).

A further purpose of the Law was to render the world guilty before God. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). Since the law was given exclusively to Israel, how can it make the whole world guilty? When a doctor makes a blood test it is not necessary to test every drop of blood in the body; just a few drops will reveal the condition of the remainder of the blood. God performed His test with humanity by examining just one nation. And He placed that nation under the most favorable circumstances imaginable. He performed miracles in delivering them from their enemies. He clearly revealed His Word unto them. If such a nation ended up completely condemned before God, how could we expect to find an acceptable people among the other nations of the world which God had given up to practice all kinds of unrighteousness (Rom. 1:24-32)?

Still another purpose of the Law was to protect the innocent and punish the guilty. The spirit of the commandments, along with the civil laws, provided the basis for a righteous and just government. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12). Laws and regulations are essential to any organization, society, or nation.

THE CEREMONIAL LAW

It is most important to understand the typology of the Levitical sacrificial system in order to understand the purpose of the whole Law system. The book of Hebrews is the inspired commentary on the subject. There we read:

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year (Heb. 10:1-3).

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law ... Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by which we draw nigh unto God ... For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore (Heb. 7:11,12,16-19,28).

These quotations make it abundantly clear that the Levitical priesthood and

sacrifices typified the office and work of Christ and that the former was temporary and has now been done away with. Sir Robert Anderson points out a most important fact concerning the standing of the people to whom these words were addressed.

And yet we must not overlook the special setting in which this wonderful truth is here revealed. The apostle Paul was divinely commissioned to unfold the great characteristic truths of Christianity – “grace, salvation – bringing to all men,” and Christ “a ransom for all.” But they must have a strange conception of what inspiration means, who can cavil because these truths have no place in Hebrews. For here we have to do, not with the children of Adam, but with “the children of Abraham,” who is the father of all believers. Nor are we told how lost sinners can be saved, but how saved sinners on their way to rest can be “made perfect in every good work to do His will” (*Types in Hebrews*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, reprint, 1981, pp. 23,24).

Israel had been in bondage in Egypt and under the doom of death. But God redeemed them in Egypt by the blood of the Passover, and delivered them with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm. He then brought them to Mt. Sinai where He entered into the Law covenant with them. (Ex. 19-23). Although Israel as a people had been redeemed, God warned the people not to come near or touch the mount when He came down and there displayed His glory, “And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off” (Ex. 20:18). Only Moses was permitted to go up into the presence of God. Up to this point no priesthood had been established. Even Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, along with the seventy elders of Israel, had to worship afar off (Ex. 24:1).

This is the point at which the Hebrews letter begins. There is not a word about the Passover in Hebrews. The redemptive history in Hebrews begins with the covenant sacrifices and the sprinkling of the blood on the book of the covenant and upon the people (Heb. 9:19-22 cf. Ex. 24:4-8). Immediately after this those who formerly had to worship afar off now went up with Moses. “And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.” Up to this point Israel as a nation had been redeemed by the blood of the Passover, and had been sanctified by the sprinkling of the blood of the Covenant. The people were sinful and still “in the flesh.” God wanted to dwell in their midst, but He could not dwell in the midst of sin. Therefore He tells Moses, “And let them make me a sanctuary: that I may dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8). This is where the Tabernacle, the Levitical sacrifices and the book of Hebrews begin.

The one sacrifice of Christ fulfilled all of the types of the Passover (1 Cor. 5:7), the covenant sacrifice, and all of the Levitical sacrifices. Christ was not a priest while He was on earth as a man under the Law (Heb. 7:13,14). He became a great High Priest when He ascended into heaven and entered the heavenly sanctuary, of which the earthly tabernacle was but a shadow (Heb. 4:4,5; 9:24).

With the change of priesthood there was also a change of law (Heb. 7:1-12).

Christ's High Priestly ministry has nothing to do with the unsaved of the world. He makes intercession for the saints, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). As priest He prays not for the world ([John 17:9](#)).

A misunderstanding of the ministry of priesthood has led many people to suppose they will be saved if they confess their sins. Doesn't John tell us "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?" (1 John 1:9). Yes, but to whom is John speaking? "These things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life..." (1 John 5:13). We get saved by believing the gospel that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day ([1 Cor. 15:1-4](#)). After we are saved, we need to keep our lives pure and clean by confessing our sins and availing ourselves of the high priestly work of Christ ([Rom. 8:34](#)). Even Israel was to do this through the Levitical service, so that God could dwell in their midst. Positionally, in Christ, we have been forgiven and cleansed from all of our sins, past, present, and future. But in our present state, to maintain our fellowship we need to recognize sin in our lives and deal with it by calling it what God calls it.

THE WORKS OF THE LAW

"Works of the Law" appears in the following verses:

But Israel, which followed after the Law of righteousness, hath not attained unto the Law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the Law. For they stumbled at their stumblingstone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offense: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed ([Rom. 9:31-33](#)).

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law: for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified ([Gal. 2:16](#)).

This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, doeth he it by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith ([Gal. 3:2-5](#))?

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them ([Gal. 3:10](#)).

There are two other references where the A.V. translates "deeds of the Law," but the same Greek word is used as in the above references.

Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20).

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the Law (Rom. 3:28).

Once the expression occurs in the singular:

Which show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another (Rom. 2:15).

Alford says this about the subject:

"The works of the law," just as "the faith of Christ," the genitives in both cases being objectives - the works which have the law (ceremonial and moral) for their object - which are wrought to fulfill the law. (*The Greek Testament*, London, Deighton, Bell and Co., 1871, Vol. 111, p. 20).

Shedd remarks on this expression:

The "works of the law" are those which are commanded by the law of God. This law is "spiritual," vii. 14. It requires a "work," or obedience, that is actuated by the Holy Spirit, issues from the inmost depths of the human spirit, is completely conformed to the law which is spiritual, and is performed without intermission from first to last. The "works of the law," then, are sinless obedience, and not human morality. It must furthermore be noticed, that, according to this explanation, the spiritual but imperfect obedience of the regenerate man would not come up to the meaning of *ta erga nomou*. The obedience of faith is very different from human morality, and far nearer to what the law requires. But it is not an absolutely perfect obedience of the law, and, therefore, upon the principle that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point is guilty of all" (James ii. 10), the believer can no more be justified by his "works," or obedience, than the moralist can by his. Both are failures when tested by the ideal of the law. The law calls nothing obedience but perfect obedience. (Wm. G.T. Shedd, *A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1967, p. 73).

We understand the deeds or works of the Law to mean doing what the Law commanded. In fact, Paul uses this expression, "doers of the Law," in Romans 2:12,13. "For as many as have sinned without Law shall also perish without Law; and as many as have sinned in the Law shall be judged by the Law: (for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified)." Doing the Law means doing the works required by the Law. The statement that doers of the Law shall be justified, on the surface, sounds like a contradiction of Romans 3:20: "by the deeds or doing of the Law shall no flesh be justified." But between these two statements Paul has proved all flesh has sinned, and that there is none that doeth good, no, not one. The

Law was ordained to life. The man who did the Law would live by it. But no one did the Law, therefore no one got life through the Law. Instead, Paul found that the commandment which was ordained to life resulted in his death. No flesh can be justified by the Law because the flesh is enmity against God and it is impossible for it to be subject to the Law of God (Rom. 8:7).

It is clear from Hebrews 11:6 that the first requirement of any Israelite who lived under the Mosaic Law was to believe God. But the great majority of Jews in that day were just like the majority of Gentiles today, they did not believe God. God remonstrated with them:

How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? ... Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it (Num. 14:11,22,23).

There were many professors in Israel, but few possessors, just as there are in the Church today.

Paul quotes David as an example of a man who lived under the Law and who was righteous before God:

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (Rom. 4:6-8).

David had broken the Law by taking another man's wife and committing adultery with her. He had committed murder by having the woman's husband killed in battle. But David was a man after God's own heart, not because of these sins, but because of his great trust in and love for God, which was evident from his repentance, as seen in Psalm 51. Who can read that psalm with dry eyes, without seeing a man prostrated before God, having no goodness in himself, confessing his sin and folly, crying out for mercy and cleansing? Yes, David kept all of the ceremonies of the Law, nevertheless he was not trusting in the Law to save him but in the Promise which God had made unto him. There were many Jews in David's day who also carefully observed the Law, but their hearts were far from God and they rendered only lip service to God. These knew nothing of the blessedness which David described.

THE LAW A TEMPORARY DISPENSATION

The Jews made the mistake of supposing the Law system was an end in itself. Since the Law was given long after Abraham and with such great displays of power and glory at the blazing Mt. Sinai, they took it to be a permanent institution which superseded everything that went before. But God had plainly told them He would make

a new covenant with them in the future, different from the Law Covenant ([Jer. 31:31-34](#)). Also according to Psalm 110:4 their Messiah was to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek and not after the Mosaic order of Aaron. This change of priesthood necessitated likewise a change of the Law ([Heb. 7:12](#)).

Moses apparently knew that the Law dispensation was a temporary order which was to pass away. Many Christians fail to see the significance of the veil on Moses' face. When Moses went in to talk with God face to face and then came out to speak to the people, his face gleamed with divine radiance, so much so that the people were afraid to come near him. Most people think Moses put the veil on his face to hide the glory so that the people would lose their fear and come near and listen to him. But just the opposite is the truth. Paul makes this very plain in [2 Corinthians 3:6-15](#), where he compares and contrasts the old Mosaic covenant of the Law with the New Covenant of the Spirit. Just look at the contrasts: The letter (Law) kills; the Spirit gives life; the Law, a ministration of condemnation and death was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, but the ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness so exceeds in glory that the Law had no glory at all compared with the glory that excelleth; if that which is done away is glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. What Paul is leading up to is to explain why Moses put the veil on his face. Paul says, "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech; and not as Moses did, for he put a veil over his face in order that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." It is plain from [Exodus 34:30-35](#) (ASV) that Moses took off the veil when he went in to speak with the Lord and came out with his shining, unveiled face and spoke the commandments to the people, and then put the veil on his face and Paul says he did so to the end that the people would not see the glory fade from his face. The fading glory represented the transitory character of the Law dispensation. Because of the unbelief of the people, God blinded them to this truth so they could not see the glory depart. And Paul said that that same veil remains untaken away in the Jew's reading of the Old Testament. The veil on Moses face became a veil on their own hearts, which blinded them to the truth. Nevertheless, Paul says, when their heart turns to the Lord the veil of blindness shall be taken away.

The Jews had great zeal but it was not according to knowledge. They were ignorant of God's way of righteousness and, in an effort to establish their own righteousness, had failed to submit themselves to the righteousness of God ([Rom. 10:1-3](#)).

Paul shows, in Romans 2:17-29, how the Jews boasted in the Law:

Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the Law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law; which are confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light to them that walk in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth of the Law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man

should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makes thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the Law: but if thou be a breaker of the Law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the Law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the Law? For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and the circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

The Jews were resting upon the Law, as though they had reached the apex of religious perfection. They taught that they had God shut up in a box where He had to confine His blessings solely to Israel. They prided themselves in their knowledge of the Bible and could argue all of the fine points of doctrine. They had great self-confidence in their superiority as teachers and instructors of others. But Paul charges the Jews with committing every vice they preached against. They even caused the name of Jehovah to be blasphemed among the Gentiles. Jesus had made the same charge against the Jews. He said, "Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you keepeth the Law" (John 7:19)? One should read [Matthew 23:12-36](#) to see how the Lord Himself accused the scribes and Pharisees in much more detail of the same boasting pride in the Law which they preached to others but did not themselves keep (cf. Gal. 6:13).

THE CURSE OF THE LAW

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them (Gal. 3:10).

This is a quotation from Deuteronomy 27:26. It was the last of twelve curses pronounced from Mt. Ebal upon those who failed to keep the Law. This last curse was a summary of the other eleven, for it pronounced a curse of EVERY ONE who did not continue in ALL THINGS that are written in the book of the Law to DO them. James says the same thing but in different words, "For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in ONE point, he is guilty of ALL" (Jas. 2:10). Every one who is circumcised is "a debtor to do the whole Law" (Gal. 5:3). Paul and James above were not those who flagrantly renounced the Law. Paul said, "Cursed is every one that continues not in ALL things that are written in the book of the Law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). James said that if you keep nine of the commandments and break just one you are guilty of all. But the Law system provided forgiveness and cleansing through the animal sacrifices: otherwise all Israelites would have died under the curse. However, God has always looked upon the heart and not merely upon the outward act. We do not believe a person was cleansed or forgiven merely because he went through the perfunctory act of offering a sacrifice. David, in his psalm of penitence, cries:

For thou desirest not sacrifice: else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. (Ps. 51:16, 17; see also Isa. 1:11-18; Mk. 12:32-34).

We are in danger of two extremes. One is to say that the sacrifices were efficacious in themselves, and the other is to say the sacrifices were unnecessary if the heart attitude to God was right. God commanded the sacrifices and true faith would bring them. But apart from faith the sacrifice became a dead work, even an abomination to the Lord.

The curse of the Law brings death. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:56,57). The Law is the ministration of condemnation and death (2 Cor. 3:7,9), in contrast to the ministration of the Spirit. The reason Christ was put to death on a wooden cross is that He was being made a curse in our stead, "for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree" (Gal. 3:13 cf. Deut. 21:22,23).

It should be pointed out that the Mosaic Law was both religious and civil, and that its civil consequences were not necessarily spiritual in nature. A manslayer, for example, who was not guilty of premeditated murder, could be put to death by the avenger if he was caught before he could escape to a city of refuge, but this does not mean he was spiritually put to death. The same is true today where capital punishment is practiced. A person may be saved spiritually, either before or after committing a crime, but all the Law can do is to put him to death physically. The ultimate curse of the Law was physical death. Paul says the Law has dominion over a man as long as he lives (Rom. 7:1). Death brings an end to the dominion of the Law. But physical death is not the end. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

THE LAW IS NOT OF FAITH

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

This is one of the clearest statements showing that the Law does not operate on the faith principle. Law operates entirely upon the basis of human works. Faith is just the opposite of works. Notice how often Paul contrasts faith and works.

Salvation is not of works; it is the gift of God which is received through faith (Eph. 2:8,9). Israel did not attain to the Law of righteousness. Why? "Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the Law" (Rom. 9:32). "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16). "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:2). "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the

curse ... But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith" (Gal. 3:10,11).

Works and faith are always opposites. It is interesting to see that the Jewish people under the Law were saturated with the idea of works, works, works. They asked Jesus, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" They were no doubt expecting a reply such as, keep the sabbath, or fulfill all of your vows. But Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28,29). Believing, or faith, is not a work, but in this case Jesus used their terminology to show that what they called the work of God was not doing but believing.

Many people have the idea that if one is sincere and does the best he can to keep God's Law, God will accept his imperfect works and receive him into heaven. They argue, how can God expect us to do more than the best we can? We might ask in reply, how many people have done the best they could one hundred percent of the time since they started trying, and what about what they did all of the time before they began their attempt to be good? Not only that, but the Scripture states, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). To disbelieve God and to try to approach Him on the basis of works is to make God a liar.

God's standard is perfection. He doesn't say, cursed is every one that does not do any good. He says, cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL things that are written in the book of the law to do them (Gal. 3:10). And James reminds us, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of ALL" (Jas. 2:10). What God demands He gives through faith in Christ without the law.

But now the righteousness of God is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:21-23).

THE LAW AND PROMISE

There are many promises in the Bible, but in Paul's epistles the emphasis is upon the promise made to Abraham. The word is mentioned in Romans 1:2; 4:13,14,16,20; 9:8; Galatians 3:14,16,17,18,19,21,22,29; 4:21,23,28; Ephesians 1:13; 2:12; 3:6; 6:2; 1 Timothy 4:8; 2 Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:2. Some think Paul wrote Hebrews and it is found there in 4:1; 6:13,15,17; 9:15; 10:36; 11:9,39.

After showing that Abraham was accounted righteous by faith before he received the covenant of circumcision, so that he might become the father not only of the circumcision (Jews) but also of the uncircumcision (Gentiles), Paul goes on to say:

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no

transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all: (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be (Rom. 4:13-18).

The promise which Abraham believed and received by faith apart from circumcision and the Law was that he would become the father of many nations: that he should be the heir of the world. That in itself would be a hard thing for one to believe, but in Abraham's case it presented a compound difficulty, for his wife was barren and he was an old man. Nonetheless, he simply overlooked these physical facts and became fully persuaded God was able to do what He had promised, and therefore his faith was imputed to him for righteousness. Paul goes on to say this was written down, not simply for Abraham's sake, but for ours also. There is here a similarity and a difference. God says we will be justified by faith alone, just as Abraham was. But the difference is that Abraham was asked to believe he would become the Father of many nations, whereas we are asked to believe on God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. There is no record in the Bible where God asked Abraham to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Paul is very emphatic that the Law has nothing to do with our becoming heirs. When he says if they which are of the Law be heirs, faith is made void and the promise of none effect, he is not saying that none of those who were of the Law would be heirs, for he goes on to say that the promise is made sure to all the seed - not only to that which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham. If only those who were of the Law were heirs, then faith would be made void. Here, as in so many places, Paul makes a sharp contrast between Law and faith.

Another contrast is seen in the statement that the Law works wrath. Does faith work wrath? How then could they be the same? There can be no sin where there is no Law, but there must be a Law for there to be transgression.

The Law also had promises, but these were all conditional, in contrast to the Abrahamic promise which was unconditional. The only condition of the promise was that Abraham had to believe God. Actually, the promise was a statement of God's sovereign purpose and plan which in no way depended upon man for its completion. Paul reminds us of one of the promises of the Law: "Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise" (Eph. 6:2). There were also many promised blessings for obedience, and many promised curses for disobedience under the Law (cf. [Deut. 28](#)).

Since dispensationalists make a sharp distinction between Israel and the Church which is the Body of Christ, and since they believe the Body of Christ was an unrevealed secret before the revelation of this truth to the apostle Paul, some may

question how members of the Body of Christ could be partakers of the promise made to Abraham. Since the Body began some two thousand years after the time of Abraham, Abraham could not be a member of the Body. But how could "the father of us all" be excluded from the Body? And how could Paul call members of this secret body "Abraham's seed?" (Gal. 3:29).

There are several answers to this question. In Galatians 3:16 Christ is called the singular Seed of Abraham, and in 3:29 Paul states, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The fact of our being apart of the Body of Christ (Abraham's Seed), of which Christ is Head, makes us also Abraham's seed. Also, Paul states in Romans 15:27 that the Gentiles have been made partakers of Israel's spiritual things. Although God promised these spiritual blessings to Israel, He has the sovereign right to share these blessings with the Gentiles, especially since Israel nationally had refused to partake of these blessings. Christ, who is Abraham's Seed, is the one and only source of salvation in any and every dispensation of God. Therefore every saved individual in every dispensation is ultimately related to Abraham's Seed.

The fact that Abraham is not a member of the Body of Christ should pose no problem. Paul himself speaks of the two-fold fatherhood of Abraham in [Romans 4:11,12](#). He is also called the father of many nations, but that doesn't mean he is a member of each of those nations. There are many nations in the world today which sprang from Abraham's physical seed who also call Abraham their religious father, even though they reject the claims of Jesus Christ. There are no nations which are spiritually Abraham's seed, although there may be many individuals in many nations who are his seed. Remarkably, Abraham has the exalted position of being "heir of the world" (Rom. 4:13).

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW

The righteousness of the Law is contrasted with the righteousness of faith in Romans 10:5,6:

For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.

In verse 5 above Paul quotes from Leviticus 18:5 to describe the righteousness of the Law, and in verse 6 he seems to quote again from Moses in Deuteronomy 30:11-14 to describe the righteousness of faith. Some commentators have tried to argue from this that Paul is not contrasting these two righteousnesses and that the "but" of verse 6 should be "and." However, it should be noted that Paul does not actually quote the Deuteronomy passage but simply uses phraseology similar to that of Moses. Just as

the Law was near to Israel, so that they didn't have to go beyond the sea to find it, just so the word of faith is near to us. Actually, Paul says the word of the faith, and Galatians 3:23 says that while Israel was under the Law the faith had not yet come.

Paul describes his own righteousness of the Law which he had before his conversion in Philippians 3:4-8. This expression is found also in Romans 2:26; 8:4; and 10:5.

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the Law a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. 3:3-9).

Apparently one of the most law-abiding men who ever lived was Saul of Tarsus. Even after he was saved he could truthfully challenge any man to come up to his standard of law keeping. From his youth he was devoted to the Law of God. He was trained to be a rabbi at the feet of Gamaliel, the eminent rabbinical teacher of his day. (Acts 22:3). He could say, "I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1:14 ASV). In fact, he could say, "as touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

It was possible to keep the Mosaic Law outwardly. As far as man could see, Saul had kept it perfectly. He challenged any one to find a flaw in his observance of it. To be sure, it required much perseverance to fulfill all the ceremonial regulations of the Law, to say nothing of those involved in the traditions of the fathers, but Saul had succeeded. The outward compliance with the Law was what Paul called "the letter" of the Law. But there was also the inward compliance, which Paul called "the spirit" of the Law.

And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the Law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the Law? (Rom. 2:27).

But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (Rom 2:29).

But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter"

(Rom. 7:6). "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (2 Cor. 3:6).

There was nothing wrong in Saul's having perfectly observed the letter of the Law; in fact, it was what God had commanded the Jews to do. But as Paul states, all of these works of the Law were works of the flesh.; All of the righteousness he produced in his outward keeping of the Law was his own self-righteousness. He could boast about it before men, but not before God (Rom. 4:2). Why? Simply because he was "in the flesh" and "they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8), and his motivation was to establish his own righteousness instead of submitting to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3). Paul says nothing about having had faith in God before he met Christ. There were doubtless some Jews who, though they may not have been as punctilious in outward observance of the Law as Paul, had what we might call saving faith in God. There was Simeon (Lk. 2:25-32), who is said to have been a devout and a just man. He observed the Law outwardly and also inwardly. He was no doubt a saved man before he saw the child Jesus, but when he did see Him he acknowledged Him as the Lord's salvation. There were others, like Caiaphas, the high priest (John 18:13), who was also an outward keeper of the Law, but inwardly was unsaved both before he had heard of Jesus and after he had met Him personally. Then there were those like Paul, who kept the Law outwardly but were unsaved until they came to trust in Jesus Christ.

It may appear contradictory for Paul to state on the one hand that "the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the Law" (Rom. 2:26), "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the Law" (Rom. 10:5), and "The righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:4), and on the other hand to declare, "For if righteousness come by the Law, then Christ died in vain" (Gal. 2:21). If righteousness is impossible by the Law, how can Paul say he was blameless as touching the righteousness which is in the Law? It would seem that the only way to reconcile these seemingly contradictory statements is to recognize that there are two kinds of righteousness of the Law: one outward of the flesh, and another inward of the spirit. Saul had the former' He was not a bad or lawless man. In fact, he was acting lawfully under the Mosaic Law in persecuting the early believers whom he thought were advocating the worship of a man (Jesus) instead of God. Saul was blameless in this outward, fleshly aspect of the righteousness of the Law, but as Paul declares, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5). While outwardly righteous he was inwardly ignorant of God's righteousness and was concerned only with establishing his own righteousness. These outward-inward aspects of obedience are recognized throughout Scripture.

For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh upon the heart (1 Sam. 16:7).

This people draw near me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me (Isa. 29:13; Ezek. 33:31; Man. 15:8).

When the Law had done its spiritual work in Paul's heart, he discovered he was

guilty of covetousness and condemned to death ([Rom. 7:7-10](#)).

Very little notice has been given to the spiritual state of those who lived through the dispensational transition from Law to Grace. Exactly what did people have to believe as the basis of salvation before Jesus was manifested? We know, of course, that they had to believe God is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him ([Heb. 11:6](#)). And that same eleventh chapter of Hebrews lists a number of outstanding men of faith. Each one seems to have had some special way in which he manifested his faith. By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice; Enoch pleased God and was translated; Noah prepared an ark; Abraham went out and sojourned in the land of promise; Sarah received strength to conceive seed; Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau; Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph; Joseph made mention of the departing of the children of Israel from Egypt and gave commandment concerning his bones; Moses' parents hid him, not fearing the king's commandment; Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and by faith did many other things in connection with the Exodus.

It seems significant that there is no mention of any heroes of faith who by faith looked forward to the coming of a Savior who would die for their sins. Covenant theologians especially place great emphasis upon their belief that Old Testament saints all believed exactly the same gospel message as we must believe today, but as we have often pointed out, if the apostles didn't know and believe that Christ was going to die for their sins after being under the teaching of Christ for three and a half years ([Lk. 18:31-34](#)), it is very unlikely that those who lived centuries earlier understood these things. We have seen that Simeon was waiting for "the Consolation of Israel," which is another way of referring to the Messiah, or "Anointed One." There is no doubt all of the Jews, saved and unsaved alike, were looking for a Messiah to come, for when the wise men came seeking Jesus at His birth they came to Herod and Herod asked the chief priests and scribes where the Christ would be born, and they answered by quoting Micah 5:2. The rulers knew and believed a Messiah would come, but they rejected Him when He came. They were looking, apparently, only for a political deliverer. They felt no need of spiritual help. Godly men, like the father of John the Baptist were also looking for a Messiah who would deliver Israel from their enemies ([Lk. 1:74](#)), but it was for the purpose of serving God in holiness and righteousness through the knowledge of salvation and remission of sins. Therefore belief in a Messiah who was to come may or may not have been a basis of saving faith, depending upon the heart attitude toward God. After Jesus had come into the world, it was not sufficient merely to have faith in God, for now Jesus said, "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him" ([John 5:23](#)). The object of faith no longer involved just the Father, but now included the Son and the Father.

It is our personal belief that those Jews who lived immediately before the ministry of Christ who were in a saving relationship with God, would and did believe on Him as soon as they heard the good news about His death and resurrection. Think for a moment of the mother and grandmother of Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5 cf. [Acts 16:1](#)). They lived in Asia Minor and probably did not hear the gospel until Paul went on his first

missionary journey, some years after the death of Christ. Paul speaks of the unfeigned faith which dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and later in his mother Eunice, and still later in Timothy. Lois and Eunice must have exercised this unfeigned faith before they heard the gospel of Christ and therefore must have been saved. Upon hearing the good news about Christ, they accepted it and were confirmed in their faith. It was not as though the believing remnant in Israel, who lived at the time Jesus came into the world, suddenly lost their saved standing, and then had to get saved all over again by believing in Jesus. No, they simply continued in a saving relationship by acknowledging Jesus as Savior. This truth is the subject of the parable of the sheepfold:

And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them (John 10:4-6).

God had some sheep before the Shepherd came into the world. When He came they recognized His voice and followed him.

HEARING THE LAW

When Paul learned the Galatian churches were reverting to the works of the Law he expressed doubts about their salvation and held great concern for their spiritual welfare. His tone of voice indicates the gravity of the error of turning back to the Law after having received the grace of Christ. Galatianism was not legalism - the belief that salvation can be attained by the works of the flesh. Galatianism was a mixture of grace and works. They had begun in the Spirit by the hearing of faith, and then were trying to advance in their spiritual life by subjecting themselves to the fleshly works of the Law (Gal. 3:1-5). They had been justified by the hearing of faith, and now Paul asks them to hear the Law:

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from mount Sinai, which gendereth (bears children) to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all ... Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free (Gal. 4:21-31).

It may seem strange that Paul asks his readers to listen to the Law and yet he

never mentions Law in the passage. Instead he uses the two sons of Abraham as figures of the two covenants. Ishmael was conceived and born as the result of a purely natural, fleshly plan and action. There was nothing spiritual about it. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). The Law is always over the flesh in Paul's theology. "Because the fleshly mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7,8). The Law needs to be studied in relation to the flesh. Paul speaks of the flesh twenty-nine times in Romans and eighteen times in Galatians, mostly as describing the Adamic, sinful nature of man over which the Law was placed.

Isaac, on the other hand, although conceived in Sarah's womb of Abraham's seed, was the product of the working of the Spirit of God in the body of Sarah. He was a child of promise.

If we put the Ishmael and the Isaac of Paul's allegory on a continuum, we have Ishmael being a co-heir with Isaac. But God says this shall never happen. Therefore, "cast out the bondwoman and her son [the Law]; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect ... Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all (Rom. 4:13,14,16).

CONTRASTING LAWS OF ROMANS SEVEN

Without doubt this is the most Law-saturated chapter in the New Testament. Between the first verse of this chapter and the fourth verse of chapter eight the word Law appears twenty-six times and commandment three times, an average of once for each verse in this section. Several different laws occur: the law of marriage or the law of the husband, the Law of Moses, the law of God, the law of the mind, the law of sin, the law of sin and death, another law, and the law of the Spirit.

In order to understand the meaning and purpose of this chapter one must go back to the previous chapter where the subject is introduced, or better yet, back to the beginning of the book. After a brief salutation and introduction (1:1-17), Paul gives proof that both the Jews, who have God's revealed Law, and the Gentiles, who have not the revealed Law but have a work of law written in their hearts, are all guilty sinners, and God's Law brings in the whole world guilty before Him (1:18-3:20). Next, Paul expounds the gospel of salvation, which is bestowed through faith in the blood of Christ. This salvation declares the believing sinner judicially righteous before God entirely apart from the Jewish Law, and is therefore equally available to both Jew and Gentile (3:21--5:11). Next, Paul introduces the fact that man has a sin nature which can produce nothing but sinful acts. He goes back to the creation of the human race to show how we all shared in Adam's first sin, and how that Christ, the counterpart of Adam, by his one

act of righteousness in His death brought justification of life to all who believe (5:12-21). Having shown how man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law, he now proceeds to show how the justified man is sanctified or made holy in his manner of life, namely, by faith apart from the works of the Law.

In order to gain this victory over sin, we must first understand that the Holy Spirit in His saving work has baptized us into Christ, so that His death, burial, and resurrection have, in God's sight, become ours (6:1-10). Next, we must accept this truth by faith and reckon ourselves to have died unto sin and yield our new life unto God (6:11-13). It is only at this point that we come to the subject matter of chapter seven. It is introduced in 6:14, where Paul states, "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the Law but under grace." In this section Paul shows not only the inability of the Law to produce a holy life, but the very opposite - the Law stirs up the sinful passions which cause man to rebel against the Law. The moralist would argue that to take one's self from under Law and to place one's self under free grace could lead only to a life of sin, but Paul proves that the reverse is true.

A. Man Is Under Law Until Death: 7:1-3.

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the Law,) how that the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the Law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the Law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that Law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man (Rom. 7:1-3).

Paul is not dealing here with the problem of marriage and divorce as a practical matter, but rather is using this law to illustrate his doctrinal teaching about the Christian's relationship to the Law of Moses. (Paul does refer to the Law of marriage in a practical way in 1 Corinthians 7:39, showing that a widow is at liberty to remarry whom she will, but only a man who is a believer.) An interesting sidelight on the scriptural relationship of the headship of the husband over the wife appears in the Greek word in verse 2, which is translated the woman which hath an husband." The Greek says, "For the under-man woman is bound by law." This is the only occurrence of this Greek word in the New Testament. The word is *hupandros* - *hupo* (under) and *andros* (man). It shows that a married woman is considered to be under the headship or authority of her husband. Paul probably used this word instead of the usual word for marriage, *gameo*, because in his illustration he wanted to emphasize the dominion which the Law held over the Jews.

B. The Believer Becomes Dead to the Law: 7:4-6.

Wherefore,, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the Body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins (passions of sins), which were by the Law, did work in our

members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Vincent explains how this marriage illustration applies to the believer:

The law, in vv. 1,2, is represented by the husband who rules (hath dominion). On the death of the husband the woman is released. In verse 4, the wife (figuratively) dies. "Ye are become dead to the law that ye should be married to another." But as the law is previously represented by the husband, and the woman is released by the husband's death, so, to make the figure consistent, the law should be represented as dying in order to effect the believer's release. The awkwardness is relieved by taking as the middle term of comparison the idea of dead in a marriage relation. When the husband dies the wife dies (is brought to naught) so far as the marriage relation is concerned. The husband is represented as the party who dies because the figure of a second marriage is introduced with its application to believers (ver. 4). Believers are made dead to the law as the wife is maritally dead-killed in respect to the marriage relation by her husband's death. (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. III, p. 73,74, Charles Scribner's Sons, N.Y. 1914).

The "motions of sins" (*pathemata*) means "the sinful passions." Old English used "motion" for emotion or impulse. When we were in the flesh before we were saved these sinful passions which were stirred up by the Law worked in the members of our body to bring forth fruit for death. But in the new life in Christ we bring forth fruit for God. A passage in Romans speaks of these motions or passions and is one of the strongest condemnations of homosexuality in the Bible.

Because they do this, God has given them over to shameful passions, even the women pervert the natural use of their sex by unnatural acts. In the same way men give up natural sex relations with women and bum with passion for each other. Men do shameful things with each other, and as a result they are punished as they deserve for their wrongdoing (Rom. 1:26,27 TEB).

These terrible sinful passions were stirred up or aroused by the Law. Such is the nature of the fleshly human nature that the commandment stirs up rebellion. We have all heard of the mother who warned her little boy while preparing dinner never to put beans up his nose. Although Johnny had never thought of doing such a thing, we all know what he did after he was commanded not to. We recall the scene in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* when Christian was in the house of Interpreter (the Holy Spirit). He was taken into a room which had been closed up for a long time. A maid came in and began sweeping. Clouds of dust were stirred up, choking every one in the room. This was Bunyan's way of illustrating the effect of the Law on human nature. Of course, he went on with his illustration and had another maid, Grace by name, who came with a bowl of water and sprinkled the floor, settling the dust, and then cleaned away the dirt. Now the question arises, Isn't the Law evil if it stirs up desires and passions to do evil? The answer follows:

C. The Law Ordained to Life, Brings Death: 7:7-14.

What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead [inactive]. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. [Paul may have been referring to his youth before he became morally accountable when he was alive without the law. It would seem Paul did not realize the Law had pronounced his death sentence until his conversion, since he claimed to have been blameless as touching the righteousness which is in the Law in Philippians 3:6.] "And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. 7:7-14 cf. Gal. 2:19).

It sounds strange indeed to hear Paul saying of himself, using the present tense, "I am carnal," after having written to the Corinthians condemning them for being carnal (1 Cor. 3:1-4). However, the Revised Greek text in the Romans passage reads *sarkinos*, made of flesh, and not *sarkikos*, fleshly. Paul is contrasting the Law which is spiritual in nature with himself who is not spiritual by nature, but made of flesh. At the time Paul wrote these words he was not a carnal, unspiritual Christian. But being made of flesh he did have a fleshly nature. The word "sold" is a perfect passive participle, "having been sold under the sin." Some versions translate: "sold as a slave to sin." This was his condition as an unsaved man, as is true of all mankind.

D. Paul's Inner Conflict: 7:15-24.

In the section which concludes the chapter, this indwelling sin as master continues to exert its power to control the life of the believer. The ensuing conflict is between the former master, indwelling sin, and Paul's inner man or his renewed mind. There has been a great deal of controversy over this passage concerning the spiritual state of the man described in it. Is Paul describing his experience before he was saved or after he was saved? Or is he speaking of man generically without distinction between the regenerate and the unregenerate? For example, J. Sidlow Baxter states:

The fact is that our wretched man in Romans 7 is not meant to represent either the believer or the unbeliever in distinction from each other: he is simply the representative human being, exhibiting one of the fundamental needs of our fallen human nature (*Explore the Book*; Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1972, Vol. VI, p. 64).

George Williams adopts a similar view:

The "I" of this passage is the "I" of generic argument. The apostle imagines himself as having lived prior to, and subsequent to, Moses, and as being the contemporary of the philosophers of all ages who applauded virtue but practiced vice. For though the law of conscience, in which they delighted, summoned them to a life of virtue, yet a different law in their nature compelled them to a life of vice (vv. 22 and 23).

The controversy therefore whether the apostle Paul speaks in these verses of himself as a regenerate or an unregenerate man does not arise, for the fact here stated is true of all men whether Christian or non-Christian. All possess a conscience and all possess a carnal nature. The difference is that the Christian (v. 25) enjoys a new life (8:2) which liberates him from the power of his sinful nature. (George Williams, *The Student's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*; Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications, 1949, p. 852).

This is how Paul describes the inner strife which caused him to cry out: "O wretched man that I am."

For that which I do I allow not [do not know or understand]: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh.) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin [personified] that dwelleth in me. I find then a law [a principle], that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin (7:15-25).

Our interpretation of this passage will depend largely upon the meaning we give to the expression, "the inward man." If we make the inner man to be the same as the new man (Eph. 4:24), which is the regenerated new nature, there can be no doubt but that Paul is thinking about himself as a saved person crying out for deliverance. The same would hold for the inward man as used in [Ephesians 3:16](#) and [2 Corinthians 4:16](#). However, in the latter passage Paul is contrasting the immaterial part of man with the material part. The same is true in [Luke 11:39,40](#). Some scholars, as we have already quoted, take the inward man of Romans 7:22 to be man's moral nature which is ruled by the conscience, and if that be the case, the wretched man could be an unregenerate man. Of course, there is the question of whether the natural man delights in the Law of God. Only the Jew had the Law of God. All men have a conscience, but conscience is not the Law of God, although it is called a work of the Law ([Rom. 2:15](#)).

The word wretched in English means to be distressed in body or mind. The Greek word (*talaiporos*) seems to have the meaning of enduring toils and troubles. The etymological meaning is: to bear calluses, wrought through the exhaustion of hard labor. The expression does not imply wrong doing *per se*, although it might describe the consequence of wrong doing.

Paul deals with this inner conflict of the believer again in Galatians 5:16-24:

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the LAW.

After listing the "works of the flesh," he continues:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

"Walk in the Spirit." There is no preposition before Spirit. Spirit is in the dative case. The same construction occurs twice in verse 25. The word walk (*peripateite*) is often used by Paul in a metaphoric sense for manner of life, but never in a literal sense. The phrase, "lust of the flesh," occurs also in Ephesians 2:3; 2 Peter 2:18, and I John 2:16.

The statement, "so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," should be rendered, "in order that ye may not do the things that ye would." "Cannot" seems to imply impossibility. This statement is sometimes interpreted in an antinomian way to excuse sin by saying we cannot stop sinning because we cannot do the good things which we ought to do. While it is true that the flesh sometimes gets the victory, Paul makes it plain that if we walk spiritually we will NOT fulfill the cravings of the flesh. If we ask God, "May I sin?" His answer will always be, "You may not."

When the believer is bearing the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit, he is doing nothing against the Law; therefore he is not under the Law.

Paul concludes this section with the admonition: "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit." Spirit is in the instrumental dative case and should be rendered, "by the Spirit." A different word for walk from that in verse 16 is used here. *Stoichomen* is a military term meaning "to walk or march in line, to hold ranks." Since the Spirit is our sphere of life, we should keep in step with the Spirit. When we do that through faith we are not under the Law.

The believer is thus set free from the law of sin (the believer's sin nature) by the law of the Spirit of life (the indwelling Holy Spirit). The two laws in Romans 8:2 are principles, not codified laws.

For what the law (of Moses) could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness [righteous requirements] of the law [of God] might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:3,4).

Because the carnal [fleshly] mind [which we have by nature] is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:7,8).

The believer is no longer considered to be in the flesh, since faith declares that the flesh was crucified with Christ. Victory over sin comes only by the power of the Holy Spirit. This fact is emphasized by the mention of the Holy Spirit eighteen times in this chapter. Paul places great emphasis upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit whom he mentions eighty-four times in his epistles. Law as a rule of life over the flesh is always contrasted with the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It is a mistake to place the Law of Moses on a continuum with the law of the Spirit. The Law of Moses was weak through the flesh, but the law of the Spirit sets us free from the law of sin and death.

PAUL'S PRACTICE OF LAW

The book of Acts records that on several occasions Paul entered into the ceremonial practices of the Law. For example, he had Timothy circumcised when he joined Paul in his missionary work ([Acts 16:3](#)). It is stated he did this because of the Jews who were in that vicinity who knew Timothy's father was a Greek. In [Acts 18:18](#) while in Cenchrea he took a vow and had his hair cut off. In Acts 18:18 he cut short his visit in Ephesus because he said, "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem." And in Acts 21:21-24, in order to prove he had not taught the Jews of the dispersion to forsake Moses and the customs, he went into the temple at Jerusalem and shared the expenses for the animal sacrifices for four Jews who were under a Nazarite vow, thus showing that he was living in obedience to the Law.

Having read all that Paul has said in his epistles about the believer not being under the Law, and even saying that Christ would be of no profit to one who is circumcised, one naturally asks how Paul could have himself entered into these practices of the Law just mentioned.

Some students of the Word believe Paul was inconsistent, that he compromised himself in hopes of avoiding trouble or of winning over the Jews at Jerusalem. It is our belief that Paul was consistent in his actions and that his practice of these rituals of the Law can be explained only by a dispensational understanding of the Scripture. (See chapter VI of the author's *book, Understanding the Book of Acts*, Grace Publications, for a complete exposition of this problem.)

One has no problem with Paul at this point if he understands what was going on in God's program at the time these things occurred. The Twelve apostles had never been given a command, either while Christ was on earth or later during the period of the

book of Acts, to cease circumcision or temple worship. It was during the passion week, just a couple of days before His crucifixion, that Christ spoke some of His last instructions to His apostles "saying, the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23:2,3). The book of Acts opens with them "continuing daily with one accord in the temple" (Acts 2:46), and the last record we have of Jerusalem in Acts 21 is what we have just recorded above: Jewish believers in the temple under a Nazarite vow offering animal sacrifices, and even Paul taking part with them. These actions become inconsistent only when we suppose that Israel nationally was cast aside at the Cross and that God began a completely new dispensation of the Church (the Body of Christ) on the following day of Pentecost. Is it not strange that so many Protestants still follow this Roman Catholic tradition, when there is not a line of Scripture to substantiate it? Acts 3:26 is proof that God had not cast Israel aside, for Peter makes it clear in addressing "Ye men of Israel ... Unto you FIRST God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." And just before he spoke these words, God had offered to send Jesus Christ back to earth to bring about the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel if they would only repent and be converted.

It is not until Saul is converted and begins his missionary travels to the Gentiles and begins writing epistles to his converts that we hear anything at all about God doing something different, entirely apart from Israel and the Law of Moses. And that change of program, outwardly, did not take place suddenly. There was a period of transition, a sort of gray area, during which there was a mixture of practices. Paul insisted that circumcision and Law-keeping had nothing to do with justification before God, and he therefore forbade the Gentiles to practice these things. The Jews, however, were already circumcised. Furthermore, the temple was still standing in Jerusalem and to this point God had issued no orders to the Jewish believers to forsake the temple and Moses. It must be remembered that the Mosaic Law was a combination of moral, civil, and religious laws. Jews who did not pay their religious tithe or tax to the temple and did not observe the other requirements of the Law were guilty of breaking the Law. That is one reason why Paul obeyed these rules when in Jerusalem, and why he had the right to adopt the practice at that time expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:20-23:

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews, To those under the Law I became like one under the Law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became as weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some (NIV).

Paul would allow Timothy, who had a Jewish mother, to be circumcised, but not for a moment would he consider having Titus, a gentile, circumcised (Gal. 2:3-5). Paul did not oppose circumcision *per se*. When he said, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing," he surely did not mean that no circumcised person could receive benefit from Christ, for he himself was circumcised. He plainly meant, "If ye be

circumcised as a means of being justified before God, Christ shall profit you nothing." This fact is made plain in Galatians 5:4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified (are trying to be justified) by the Law; ye are fallen from grace." Falling from grace, according to Paul, is not falling into sins of immorality, but trying to be saved by one's own religious efforts. It is as Paul states in the latter part of Romans 11:6, "But if it [salvation] be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." One who seeks to be justified by Law has literally "fallen out of the realm of Grace."

If Paul were here with us today, now that the transition has ended and the temple has been destroyed and God has ceased His dealings prophetically and redemptively with the nation of Israel, we do not believe he would continue in some of these Jewish practices. But during the time he did observe them, we believe he had the right and that there was no inconsistency in his becoming as a Jew or as under the Law.

ISOLATED REFERENCES TO LAW

There are several isolated references to Law in Paul's epistles which should be noted in order to complete the references to this word. In 1 Corinthians 9:7-10 Paul takes a principle from the Law to support his teaching that preachers of the gospel should be financially supported by those to whom the Word is ministered. He asks:

Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the Law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. (cf. Deut. 25:4).

If God takes care of sparrows, He surely takes care of oxen which are worth more than sparrows. Paul sees a higher principle and application in the Law. It reminds us of our Lord's interpretation of the sabbath, when he said, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (Mk. 2:27,28). The Law is good in itself ([Rom. 7:12,13,16](#)) and was ordained for the good of man, but it has no power in itself to make men good. "It was weak through the flesh" (Rom. 8:3).

For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the Law made nothing perfect (Heb. 7:18,19).

Paul refers to the Law in discussing the purpose of speaking in tongues.

In the Law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people [Israel]; and yet for all that they will not hear me, saith the Lord.

Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not [the unbelieving Jews]: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe (1 Cor. 14:21,22).

In correcting the abuse of this sign-gift, Paul appeals to the Corinthians to become mature in their understanding by realizing that the practice of this rather unusual gift was not a sign of super-spirituality, but simply a way that God had of speaking to the Jewish people. If the Jews knew their Old Testament they should have recognized that tongues was a God-appointed means of talking to them. Yet God had predicted that in spite of this supernatural sign the Jews would not listen to Him. Since the Jews required a sign (1 Cor. 1:22), and since God has cast Israel aside as a nation for the duration of the present dispensation, there is no further need or reason for the exercise of this gift.

In the same 14th chapter of 1 Corinthians Paul makes another incidental reference to the Law in verse 34: "Let your women keep silence in the churches [assemblies]: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the Law." Paul's reference to the Law is not to the Mosaic Law given at Sinai, but to Genesis 3:16, one of the books of Moses. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Paul recognizes this principle throughout his writings. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3). "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). Paul does not thereby make woman a slave, for he commands husbands to love their wives, even as Christ loved the Church (Eph. 5:25), and even though "the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man, neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man ... nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman: but all things are of God" (1 Cor. 11:8,9,11,12). Since Paul recognized the right of women to pray and prophesy (1 Cor. 11:5), we must understand the "keeping silent" in a qualified sense. There were many problems in the Corinthian church, and one seems to have been the disturbance caused by women interrupting the service with their talking among themselves or by asking questions.

Another incidental mention of the Law is in Titus 3:9. Titus was pastor on the isle of Crete. The Cretians were a difficult people to deal with. One of their own prophets had said that the Cretians were always liars and lazy gluttons, so Paul instructed Titus to rebuke them sharply. After encouraging Titus to instruct his people to bring forth good works, he says, "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the Law; for they are unprofitable and vain." Apparently the strivings about the Law concerned ceremonial purity of certain foods, for in 1:14,15 Paul refers to giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men which involved purity. The Law of Moses did restrict the diet of the Jews and wherever there were Jewish converts the matter of diet, like circumcision, became a bone of contention. Paul had to give considerable space in his letters to this subject. (See Rom. 14:1-23; 1 Cor. 8:1-13; Gal.

3:10; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 4:1-5.)

Paul also wrote to Pastor Timothy at Ephesus about the same matters as he did to Titus.

As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith; so do I now. But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain talking; desiring to be teachers of the Law, though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm. But we know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully, as knowing this, that the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for abusers of themselves with men, for menstealers, for liars, for false swearers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine; according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust (1 Tim. 1:3-11 ASV).

It should be noticed that "godly edifying" of the AV, should be "a dispensation of God." (Edifying is in Greek, *oikodomian*. *Dispensation is oikonomian*. It was easy for an ancient scribe to get these two words confused, mistaking an "n" for a "d" or vice versa). Also the word "commandment" in the AV does not refer to the Ten Commandments, but is a different word and should be translated "charge," as in verse 3. The end or goal of the charge Paul was giving Timothy was love out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. Then Paul describes some of the troublemakers who wanted to be teachers of the Law, but who did not understand what they were talking about. No doubt Paul is now speaking of the Mosaic Law, although what he says is true of civil laws also. If every one were sinlessly perfect there would be no need of laws or law enforcement police. The Law is good (cf. [Rom. 7:16](#)), but it is only for evil doers, and Paul almost exhausts the list of such in his description. It would seem from this fact that those who put themselves under the Law are confessing that they are evildoers. It is true we are all evildoers by nature, but as believers we have attained "the righteousness which is of faith" (Rom. 9:30). We have passed out of the old order of nature by the death of Christ and we have been raised to walk in newness of life. We have been declared righteous and have the empowerment to live godly lives. Therefore we no longer need the Law.

END AND ESTABLISHMENT OF LAW

"For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4).

In what sense is Christ the end (*telos*) of the Law? Three different views have been expressed:

- Christ has brought an end to the Law Dispensation; He has terminated it.
- Christ has completely satisfied all of the holy and righteous claims of the Law in His vicarious death; He has fulfilled the Law.
- Christ is the goal to which the Law pointed.

No doubt all three of these things are true. The latter view is supported by Galatians 3:24, "Wherefore the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." The middle view is supported by such statements as Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Similarly, 1 Timothy 1:5, "Now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." However it would seem in Romans that Paul is emphasizing the termination of the Law system. His twice repeated statements earlier that the believer is not under Law but under grace ([Rom. 6:14,15](#)), his observation that people were justified by faith before the Law system came into being and that they are now being saved completely apart from it ([Rom. 3:21, 4:10](#)), and his use of the illustration of death ending the marriage relationship ([Rom. 7:1-4](#)), all indicate that termination of the Law Dispensation is in the mind of the apostle in 10:4.

The idea of termination is prominent in other of Paul's epistles. In 2 Corinthians 3:11-13 Paul speaks of that which was engraven upon tablets of stone (the Law), and he says:

For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech. And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.

Surely that which is done away and abolished is terminated. Again in Ephesians 2:15 he states the same idea of termination, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the Law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of the twain one new man, so making peace."

It needs to be emphasized that Paul's teaching about the reign of the Law having come to an end in no way opens the door to sin or licentiousness. His opponents slanderously reported that Paul's doctrine opened the door to lawlessness (cf. [Rom. 3:8; 6:1,2](#)). Christ is the end of the Law for RIGHTEOUSNESS, not unrighteousness. The glory of the Law fades into insignificance when compared with the glory of the new dispensation. The result of abolishing the Law of commandments contained in ordinances was the formation of a new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness ([Eph. 4:24](#)).

The abolishing of the Law system does not abolish morality, or what is right or wrong. If we abolished the police department, things would still be either right or wrong, but with human nature being what it is, the result of such action would be disastrous. Why then is it not disastrous for the believer in Christ? Simply because the believer

must reckon his old sinful nature to have died with Christ, so that he is dead to sin and therefore freed from sin ([Rom. 6:2,7](#)), and has been raised from the dead to walk in newness of life. That is what faith is all about. Faith is not simply believing there is a God, or the glib repeating of a formula. Faith is a belief that you were put to death in Christ's death and that you have been raised from the dead to walk in newness of life. To walk by faith means to live as though these facts are true, which indeed they are. The problem is that the believer still has the principle of sin within his body, and too often he walks by sight instead of by faith. If the world were populated by a race of people having a divine nature that was incapable of sin, it would be not only needless but ridiculous to have a police force or any form of law enforcement.

Paradoxically, Christ established the Law by abolishing it. He did not abolish it as God's standard of righteousness, but as a dispensation over Israel.

"Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law" ([Rom. 3:31](#)).

Again, we must distinguish between the economy or dispensation of the Mosaic Law and the moral principles of the Law of God. The latter are in no way dispensationally related. They are as unchangeable as is the nature of God. Even in the code of the Ten Commandments there is one commandment which applied only to Israel. If one is to keep the Ten Commandments, he must of necessity keep the sabbath day. To keep the sabbath one must cease from every form of work on that day: "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death" ([Ex. 31:15](#)). How can Seventh-day Adventists or any other seventh-day groups claim they are actually keeping the sabbath of the Ten Commandments when they make their own rules for what they can and cannot do, and when they do not enforce the Law? If we keep on reading in Exodus 31:16 we will see plainly stated just who is supposed to keep this day.

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed ([vv. 16,17](#)).

The sabbath is never mentioned in the Bible until the children of Israel came to Mt. Sinai. Abraham was justified by faith four hundred years before the sabbath was given to Israel. The reason the sabbath command is placed among the moral commands of the Law is clearly stated, "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel."

It was this whole legal system which had been imposed upon God's covenant people that was done away ([cf. 1 Cor. 13:10](#)). It is most important to see that "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth" ([Heb. 11:13](#)). Verse 39 says the same thing, "And these all,

having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise." The promise was basically regeneration, the impartation of the Holy Spirit, the adoption, as Paul describes it in Galatians 3:29-4:7. It is apparent, then, that the Law was imposed upon a people who were still in the flesh, even though they had faith in the promise that some day in the future, at the time appointed by the Father, they would become full-fledged sons of God by regeneration. (See Deut. 30:1-6, where the future "circumcision of the heart" means regeneration.) God did not impose the Law for the purpose of making them sons of God. He imposed it upon men in the flesh in order to reveal sin as a transgression and to show the impossibility of the flesh to produce a righteousness which is acceptable to God. After this legal system has accomplished its objective, and the long awaited promise has been fulfilled, there is no further need of the legal system.

Thus there is a seeming paradox. On the one hand the Law has been done away, and on the other the Law has been established. The Law has been established in several ways. All of its righteous claims and penalties against the sinner have been paid in the sacrificial death of God's Son. God raised Him from the dead as evidence He is completely satisfied with that work. The Law is also established in that God has placed within the believer the Holy Spirit of life who is able to fulfill in the believer's life the righteous requirements the Law decrees.

THE LAW OF CHRIST

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

Paul spent the first half of Galatians trying to show believers they had been set free from the Law, and now in the last chapter he tells the believer to fulfil the law of Christ. This is the only time this expression occurs in Paul's writings. What does he mean by it? Paul had said earlier in this epistle, "For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Gal. 5:14). Paul also wrote to the Romans:

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law (Rom. 13:8-10).

Jesus, the night before the extreme manifestation of His love in giving Himself to die for the sins of the world, said to His disciples:

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another (John 13:34,35).

Jesus told the lawyer who had asked, Which is the great commandment of the Law? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with

all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40). Love fulfills the Mosaic Law given fifteen centuries before Christ. Why then did Jesus say He was giving a NEW commandment, when the old one said the same thing? The newness of this commandment was the kind of love that was called for. They were to love as He loved them. To what degree did He love? Paul answers that question:

For scarcely for a righteous man will men die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:7,8).

Moses required man to love his neighbor as himself. Christ's Law is to love his neighbor more than himself, even as Christ did. John tells us, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). Many of those early believers did just that. And many missionaries during the ensuing years have laid down their lives in carrying the gospel to a people who often persecuted them and even put them to death. Paul, in defending the doctrine of the resurrection, asked, "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:30,31). "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Rom. 8:36).

This kind of love could never be generated by the flesh, man's sinful nature. It can come only as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). And Paul informs us if we are led of the Spirit, we are not under the Mosaic Law system (Gal. 5:18), which was put over the flesh, the works of which he then enumerates. The Mosaic Law was against all of the works of the flesh, but of the fruit of the Spirit he says, "Against such there is no Law" (Gal. 5:23). Who could ever imagine a Law that said, Thou shalt not love, Thou shalt not be good, Thou shalt not have self-control? And we should remember that it is in this context of love as the fruit of the Spirit that Paul utters the words of our text, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ."

SUMMATION

In Paul's epistles, grace is always the antithesis of Law. We are not under Law but under grace. And faith is the antithesis of works. We are justified by faith entirely apart from works. Any effort to put Law and grace on a continuum frustrates the grace of God. Paul declares, "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." And again, "And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Law and works are just the opposite of grace and faith. These two opposites cannot be placed on the same level without denial of the truth.

The teaching that the Law and the gospel of the grace of God are of the same nature, varying only in degree, is contradicted by Scripture. Peter testified that the Law

was "a yoke ... which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." Is this in any way the nature of the gospel? And further, Peter says it would be "tempting God" to put this yoke upon the neck of Paul's Gentile converts ([Acts 15:10, 11](#)). And what figure of speech does Paul use in comparing Law with grace? He likens the Law given at Mt. Sinai to the son of the slave girl, Hagar, who was born in the ordinary course of nature, as compared with the son of the free woman who was born as a result of God's promise in a supernatural way. It is most important to see that Paul says Hagar represents the covenant made at Mt. Sinai (Gal. 4:24). Is Paul associating Hagar and Sarah as being on a continuum, or is he contrasting them?

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

And in the next chapter of Galatians Paul uses the same terminology as Peter did in describing the Law, "the yoke of bondage." Paul clearly states that dispensationally Israel under the Law of Moses was treated no differently from that of a slave, in contrast to the full liberty of sonship under the gospel (Gal. 4:1-7).

Again, in Galatians 3:17-21, Paul goes out of the way to explain he is talking about the Law of Moses given at Mt. Sinai. He even dates it - four hundred and thirty years after the Abrahamic Covenant. His argument here is that the Mosaic Covenant cannot disannul the promise made to Abraham. If Paul considered the Law to be a dispensation of what Covenant theologians call the Covenant of Grace, why would Paul even raise the question of annulment? He raised the question, because "as many as are of the works the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them." Israel was under the curse, for they had not continued to perform all things which were written in the book of the Law. How, then, could they ever inherit the promise made to Abraham? Paul answers by showing that no one, not even God, can disannul or add to a covenant which has been confirmed, as was the Abrahamic Covenant. Therefore when the Law was added four hundred and thirty years later it was not added to and thus did not become a part of the Abrahamic Covenant. Paul uses two different words for "adding" in Galatians 3:15 and 19. The Law was added in the sense it was temporarily brought in alongside of the promise until Christ should come to take away transgressions and bring an end to the Dispensation of Law.

It is impossible for Law to give life (Gal. 3:21), and that is what those who are dead in trespasses and sins need. This rules out the possibility of attaining eternal life by keeping the Law. It is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5). Paul makes plain from the beginning of his Gentile ministry the impossibility of being justified by the Law of Moses.

And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses (Acts 13:39).

It would seem, however, that Paul had problems with people who, after they had trusted Christ for salvation, turned back to the Law as a means to sanctification. They

began in the Spirit, but they then sought to become mature by the flesh ([Gal. 3:3](#)). The Law is always associated with the flesh. When we try to control the flesh by an outward rule or law we become entangled with a yoke of bondage. We lose our liberty ([Gal. 5:1](#)), and become subject to ordinances, "touch not; taste not; handle not" ([Col. 2:21](#)). Regarding attainment of spiritual maturity by the keeping of rules, *The Living Bible* paraphrases Colossians 2:23:

These rules may seem good, for rules of this kind require strong devotion and are humiliating and are hard on the body, but they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person's evil thoughts and desires. They only make him proud.

As Christians we know Christ died for the sins of the world. But many Christians have never heard that they also died in their identification with Christ's death. A Christian may be defined as one who has died – "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God" ([Col. 3:3](#); see also [Rom. 6:1-10](#); [7:4](#); [Gal. 2:20](#)). Believing the gospel means we not only believe Christ died for us, but that we died with him. Most Christians have believed only half of the gospel. When we believe that we died with Christ we will reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord ([Rom. 6:11](#)). When we do this, we are walking by means of the Spirit, and if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the Law ([Gal. 5:18](#)). Paul's simple conclusion of the whole matter is, "If the Spirit is the source of our life, let the Spirit also direct our course" ([Gal. 5:25](#), NEB).

A concordance study of the word "GRACE" would make a valuable counterpart to this present study. It would serve to further show the uniqueness of these subjects in the Pauline scriptures. The word "grace" is not even once mentioned in Matthew or Mark. The Greek word does occur eight times in Luke, translated "thank" four times, as "favor" twice (once referring to Mark and once to Jesus), and once as "gracious words." John uses it three times ([1:14,16,17](#)). Grace appears eighteen times in Acts, but not in the sense of salvation until [11:39](#), where Gentile salvation outside Israel began. After that it is used eleven times in connection with Paul's missionary ministry. But "grace" appears 119 times in Paul's epistles, compared to 45 times in all of the other New Testament books. Since grace and Law are contrasted as opposites in Paul's writing, it is only to be expected there would be a great emphasis upon Paul's use of "grace." It is to be hoped that those who have gone through this study will follow up with a study of their own on grace in the unique revelation given through the apostle Paul for members of the Body of Christ.