

INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS

In *John 5:39*, Jesus told his Jewish listeners: "*You study the Scriptures because you think that in them you will find eternal life. And they themselves speak about me!*" The Scriptures in this case were the Old Testament Scriptures. One of the *gifts from the Spirit* (which every apostle had) was an *inspired understanding* of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Greek Septuagint Translation of the Old Testament was widely read and studied, even by Gentiles. The writers of the New Testament draw most of their Old Testament quotations from this version. Because the Septuagint was so widely used, it was *ready made* to use in proving the fact that Jesus is the Son of God!!! Compare Paul's use of it in *Acts 17:1-4*.

The *circumcision party* was a continual source of trouble in the early church! They taught that in addition to being united to Christ in baptism, no one could be a true Christian unless he had been circumcised and naturalized as a part of the Jewish Nation, and that he kept the Jewish dietary laws and customs. In the Roman Province of Galatia, some of the Gentile Christians began to doubt what they had been taught by Paul. Under constant pressure from the *circumcision party*, they accepted circumcision (after having already been baptized into Christ) and all the Jewish conditions of membership. Two major questions are raised by this *circumcision party*: Is Paul a true apostle??? Does Paul preach the true gospel??? Their answer to both was NO! There is also some reason to think that they preached a "crossless Christ" in opposition to Paul's "Christ-on-the-cross."

Paul, then, writes to expose the distortion these false teachers have done to the Good News, and to show that the *works of The Law* have nothing

at all to do with being put right with God!!! Some have called this Letter: *The Gospel according to Paul*. But this misses the point!!! BOTH Paul and James preach the SAME GOSPEL!!! Paul stresses *faith*, and James stresses *action*, but both are saying *in effect* the same thing!!! What The Law cannot do, God did!!! He acted in Christ to set us free!!! Jesus is the only source of salvation!!!

No one can know for sure just when or where Paul wrote this Letter. Dates have been suggested from 49 A.D. to 63 A.D.

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

1 From Paul, whose call to be an apostle did not come from man or by means of man, but from Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from death. ²All the brothers who are here join me in sending greetings to the churches of Galatia:

³May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

⁴In order to set us free from this present evil age, Christ gave himself for our sins, in obedience to the will of our God and Father. ⁵To God be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

The One Gospel

⁶I am surprised at you! In no time at all you are deserting the one who called you by the grace of

1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— and all the brothers with me, 2

To the churches in Galatia:

Grace and peace to you 3
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who 4
gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5
to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

No Other Gospel

I am astonished that you 6
are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

1. **From Paul.** When we know the attempt to discredit Paul that had taken place in Galatia, these opening words seem *stark!* **Whose call to be an apostle.** Paul emphasizes, that like the Twelve, his appointment as an apostle came directly from the Lord! [If Paul makes thirteen apostles, remember there were thirteen Tribes, since Levi was not counted.] The false teachers must have said that Paul's appointment came through the church at Antioch (*from man*) and that he received the Holy Spirit through Ananias (*by means of a man*). **Who raised him from death.** "After his resurrection God sent Jesus Christ from heaven to make me an apostle!"

2. **All the brothers.** "These brothers, by joining with me in this letter, affirm the truth of what I am writing." **To the churches of Galatia.** This letter goes to an area, rather than a single congregation.

3. **May God.** Paul's greeting is sincere, even though he has some harsh things to say to them later.

4. **In order to.** At the time of Christ, Jews spoke of two *ages* of time: the *present evil age* meant the time they were then living in; the *New Age* they viewed as a time when sin and death would no longer rule, and they expected it to come with the (first) Advent of the Messiah. Paul writes to tell them Christ has set us free from this present evil age. That means that the New Age is here!!! Compare *Rom. 8:1-4; Matt. 19:28* and notes. **In obedience.** God himself **ACTED** in Christ-on-the-cross!!! That is, God sent his Son, and his Son obeyed by dying to set us free!!!

5. **To God!** Paul is *affirming* the glory of God, and his "Amen" rings with faith!!!

6. **I am surprised at you!** Both the TEV and NIV bring out the *shocked amazement* of Paul. The strength of his feeling is shown by his choice of words in *verses 8 & 9*. **You are deserting the one.** These seem to say they are deserting Paul, but since he always seems to say it is God who calls you by the grace of Christ, this must be the meaning here. Compare *John 6:44-45*. Paul is saying: "By deserting the gospel I preached to you, you are really deserting the God who called you by the grace of Christ!!!"

Christ, and are going to another gospel. ⁷Actually, there is no "other gospel," but I say it because there are some people who are upsetting you and trying to change the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel that is different from the one we preached to you, may he be condemned to hell! ⁹We have said it before, and now I say it again: if anyone preaches to you a gospel that is different from the one you accepted, may he be condemned to hell!

¹⁰Does this sound as if I am trying to win men's approval? No! I want God's approval! Am I trying to be popular with men? If I were still trying to do so, I would not be a servant of Christ.

How Paul Became an Apostle

¹¹Let me tell you, my brothers, that the gospel I preach was not made by man. ¹²I did not receive it from any man, nor did anyone teach it to me. Instead, it was Jesus Christ himself who revealed it to me.

which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Paul Called by God

I want you to know, my brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

7. **Actually, there is no.** "There is no other message from God! I say it this way because some are claiming that God told them to turn you to the Law of Moses."

8. **But even.** "They tell you that Peter, and even I myself, preach that you can be put right with God through the Law. But even if we ourselves, or an angel from heaven (if such a thing were possible), would dare to preach a different gospel, may he be condemned to hell!" The TEV correctly brings out the emphatic *curse* inherent in ANATHEMA! This is not profanity, but a solemn curse from God himself! The "eternally condemned" of the NIV is also correct, but doesn't sound as emphatic. ANATHEMA = condemned to hell = eternally condemned. Paul wants to make this as strong as possible to shock them into awareness of the horrible sin the *circumciston party* is doing!!! Compare Peter's language in *Acts 8:20*.

9. **We have said it before.** He points back to warnings which Silas and Timothy, as well as he himself, have given about this in the past. **Now I.** Here he repeats what he said in *verse 8*. Some say Paul is not using the spirit of *1 Cor. ch 13* here. But this is a crisis situation! What Paul shows is a *holy jealousy* for the honor of God and the message of Christ-on-the-cross!!!

10. **Does this sound?** "I have been accused of saying whatever anyone wants to hear. Does this sound like it??? God will be my judge! If I were trying to be popular with men, I would never have become the servant of Christ!!!" [Some think *still trying* implies that as a Pharisee, he had tried to be popular with men.]

11. **Let me tell you.** "The *circumciston party* says I preach a second-hand gospel, which I have distorted. Let me tell you this is not true!!! My gospel has no human origin!!!"

12. **I did not.** "There is nothing second-hand about my gospel!!" **It was Jesus Christ himself.** Paul is probably thinking of *Acts 26:14-18*.

¹³You have been told of the way I used to live when I was devoted to the Jewish religion, how I persecuted without mercy the church of God and did my best to destroy it. ¹⁴I was ahead of most fellow Jews of my age in my practice of the Jewish religion. I was much more devoted to the traditions of our ancestors.

¹⁵But God, in his grace, chose me even before I was born, and called me to serve him. And when he decided ¹⁶to reveal his Son to me, so that I might preach the Good News about him to the Gentiles, I did not go to anyone for advice, ¹⁷nor did I go to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me. Instead, I went at once to Arabia, and then I returned to Damascus. ¹⁸It was three years later that I went to Jerusalem to get information from Peter, and I stayed with him for

For you have heard of my ¹³ previous way of life in Judaism, how I violently persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond ¹⁴ many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. But when God, who ¹⁵ set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in ¹⁶ me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man. I ¹⁷ did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

Then after three years, I ¹⁸ went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days.

13. **You have been told.** "You know all about my old life. I told you about it myself." Paul would have to defend himself to the Jews everywhere he went. Everyone would want to know why Paul the Destroyer suddenly became Paul the servant of Christ. Nothing in his background and past would imply selfish motives for his converting to Christ!!! Perhaps it was for this very reason that the Lord allowed Paul to experience such weakness (see *2 Cor. 11:23-28*), to prove to the world that he was not acting from selfish motives.

14. **I was ahead.** Paul had been an unusually brilliant and eager student of The Law, and probably had been a *missionary for Judaism*. Compare *Acts 22:3-5*. **Traditions.** Those unique beliefs which made him a Pharisee.

15. **Chose me.** Compare *Rom. 8:29-30* and notes. Paul is thinking of his unique background and training. By his birth he became at the same time, a Hebrew, a Greek, and a Roman citizen. He was educated in the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek Septuagint, and in all the Greek learning and literature. He was shaped by an intense, but mistaken, spiritual discipline. All of this prepared him for the day he would learn the truth and become a follower of Christ. He had all the qualities needed to be *the* apostle to the Gentiles.

16. **To reveal his Son.** To qualify as an apostle, Paul had to *actually see* Jesus (compare *1 Cor. 15:8-10*). As an apostle, Paul stands **DISCRETE**, and does not depend on *any man* for his authority and appointment.

17. **Nor did I go to Jerusalem.** "Those who were apostles before I was appointed did not teach me the gospel of Christ." Since the Twelve stayed on in Jerusalem (*Acts 8:1*), that city was the center of: *Christianity; Judaism; the circumcision party*. **Instead.** MacKnight has Paul say: "But I went away into Arabia, where there was no apostle; and having there received further revelations from Christ, and studied the (Old Testament) Scriptures by the light of these revelations, I again returned to Damascus without having seen any of the (Twelve) apostles." As an apostle, Paul had been *baptized with the Holy Spirit* in the same way that each apostle had been. The Spirit taught the apostles directly (*John 14:26*). Therefore Paul did not receive his gospel *second-handedly*.

18. **Three years later.** "Not until three years after my being made new in Christ did I go to Jerusalem to compare notes with Peter." This may imply that Paul stayed in Arabia for three years, coming back just before the trouble mentioned in *Acts 9:23* and note. **Two weeks** = fifteen days as Jews count.

two weeks. ¹⁹I did not see any other apostle except James, the Lord's brother.

²⁰What I write is true, I am not lying, so help me God!

²¹Afterward I went to places in Syria and Cilicia. ²²At that time the members of the Christian churches in Judea did not know me personally. ²³They knew only what others said, "The man who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith that he once tried to destroy!" ²⁴And so they praised God because of me.

Paul and the Other Apostles

2 Fourteen years later I went back to Jerusalem with Barnabas; I also took Titus along with me. ²I went because God revealed to me that I should go. In a private meeting with the leaders,

I saw none of the other apostles, only James, the Lord's brother. I assure you ²⁰ before God that what I am writing you is no lie. Later I ²¹ went to Syria and Cilicia. I ²² was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only ²³ heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And ²⁴ they praised God because of me.

Paul Accepted by the Apostles

2 Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who ²

19. **Any other apostle.** It seems that James, the Lord's brother, was an apostle, but not one of the Twelve. However, scholars are divided on this. James was an important person in the Jerusalem church (*Acts 15:13; 21:18*). It may be Paul affirms he only saw these *two*, because Jews believed *ten* men were necessary to form a quorum, and he wants to prove that *they* did not appoint him an apostle.

20. **What I write is true.** Paul affirms that he is *in fact* a divinely appointed apostle of Christ, and calls God to be his witness that he speaks the truth!!!

21. **Afterward.** See *Acts 9:26-30* and notes.

22. **The Christian churches.** In *standard English*, both *Christian church* and *church of Christ* mean the church which Jesus built (*Matt. 16:18* and notes). Paul means he was personally unknown to the messianic community in Judea.

23. **They knew only.** Although they did not know Paul personally, they had certainly heard of him and what he had tried to do in the past (*Acts 9:1-2*). Try to imagine how they must have felt when they heard Paul the Destroyer was now preaching Christ!!!

24. **And so they praised God.** This shows they accepted Paul's conversion to Christ as genuine!!! This contrasts with the attitude of the *circumcision party*!

1. **Fourteen years later.** Probably fourteen years after the visit mentioned in *Gal. 1:18*. [Johnson thinks it should be measured from Paul's conversion to Christ.] This certainly is the Jerusalem Meeting of *Acts ch 15*, and Ramsay gives the date as 49 A.D. The church began in Jerusalem on Pentecost, 30 A.D. (by the corrected calendar), and Paul's conversion must have been between 31 and 33 A.D. The visit of *Gal. 1:18* is probably the same as *Acts 9:26*. Paul made a second visit (*Acts 11:30*) which is not mentioned here. **Barnabas.** *Acts 4:36*. **Titus.** Paul seems to have taken Titus as a *test case*. Many of the Gentile Christians had already been "Gentiles converted to Judaism" before they heard of Christ. Titus was a direct convert from idolatry to Christ. Compare *1 Thess. 1:9*.

2. **Because God.** "The Twelve did not call me to Jerusalem! I want you to know that God himself sent me!" **In a private meeting.** "Not wanting to cause trouble, I talked this matter over privately with

I explained to them the gospel message that I preach to the Gentiles. I did not want my work in the past or in the present to go for nothing. ³My companion Titus, even though he is Greek, was not forced to be circumcised, 'although some men, who had pretended to be brothers and joined the group, wanted to circumcise him. These people had slipped in as spies, to find out about the freedom we have through our union with Christ Jesus. They wanted to make slaves of us. ⁵We did not give in to them for a minute, in order to keep the truth of the gospel safe for you.

⁶But those who seemed to be the leaders—I say this because it makes no difference to me what they were; God does not judge by outward appearances—those leaders, I say, made no new suggestions to me. ⁷On the contrary, they saw that God had given me the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter

seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I had been given the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been given the task of preaching the gospel to the

Peter, James, and John. I had no doubts about the truth of the gospel I had been preaching, but if the other apostles did not stand with me on this, I was afraid all my work as an apostle would go for nothing!"

3. **Was not forced to be circumcised.** The *circumcision party* would expect Peter, James, and John (the "apostles of circumcision") to take their side in the argument. Paul was opposing centuries of anti-Gentile hostility. The future of the whole Christian church hung in the balance!!! Titus was the *test case*, and if Peter, James, and John had insisted that Titus must be circumcised (after he had been already buried with Christ in baptism), the history of Christianity would have been drastically changed!!!

4. **Although some men.** The NIV adds "This matter arose" to show the source of the problem is the false brothers mentioned. These are certainly the ones mentioned in *Acts 15:1*. Paul's choice of words imply that these are a particular group (probably Pharisees) who have infiltrated the churches with the idea of seizing control of them. **The freedom we have.** Christians have been set free from slavery which The Law brings. These false brothers wanted to make slaves of every Gentile Christian by persuading them to obey The Law of Moses. *Chapter 5* examines this.

5. **In order to keep the truth.** Paul's motive was to preserve the *truth!* If he had given in and allowed Titus to be circumcised, that would have compromised the truth. [In the case of Timothy (*Acts 16:3*), he could do it without compromising the truth.]

6. **Who seemed to be the leaders.** Peter, James, and John. **What they were.** "The fact that they were with Christ in his earthly ministry, does not make me any less an apostle, because God doesn't play favorites on the basis of such things!" **Made no new suggestions.** This was their chance to "set Paul straight," if there were some mistakes in what he had been preaching.

7. **On the contrary.** "Not only did they not make any new suggestions, they did accept me as being an apostle equal with themselves!!! They saw that God had sent me to the Gentiles, just as He sent Peter to the Jews!!!"

the task of preaching the gospel to the Jews. ⁸For by God's power I was made an apostle to the Gentiles, just as Peter was made an apostle to the Jews. ⁹James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be the leaders, recognized that God had given me this special task; so they shook hands with Barnabas and me. As partners we all agreed that we would work among the Gentiles and they among the Jews. ¹⁰All they asked was that we should remember the needy in their group, the very thing I have worked hard to do.

Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

Paul Rebukes Peter at Antioch

¹¹When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him in public, because he was clearly wrong. ¹²Before some men who had been sent by James arrived there, Peter had been eating with the Gentile brothers. But after these men arrived, he drew back and would not eat with them, because he was afraid of those who were in favor of circum-

Paul Opposes Peter

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the

8. **For by God's power.** "The same God made both Peter and myself apostles!!!"

9. **Recognized that God.** "These outstanding leaders in the church, James, Peter, and John, recognized that God had appointed me to this work, and had given me the same supernatural powers that they all had!!!" **Shook hands.** "They shook hands with Barnabas and me as a sign of our fellowship as servants of Christ!" **As partners.** "As partners together in the service of Christ, it was unanimous that Barnabas and I would work among the Gentiles and they would continue to work among the Jews in Judea." This last is implied in *Acts 8:1*.

10. **Remember the needy.** The NIV adds *continue* to show it was something that was already going on and must be kept up. The TEV adds *in their group* to show that this is concerned with one special group of poor, the Christians in Judea. The hostility of the Jewish leaders certainly made employment impossible for many of the Christians there, and there were also repeated famines. A third factor was the unrest which climaxed in the Jewish wars and brought on the destruction of Jerusalem. We see God's hand in this, as more than once, the Gentile Christians send money and help to the Christian poor in Judea, cementing the bond of fellowship between the Judeans and the Gentiles.

11. **I opposed him in public.** "I want to show you that I am equal in authority to all the other apostles and that I have the right to oppose one of the 'apostles of circumcision' when they are wrong!!!" This was not a sharp confrontation, but a scolding *in public*. But it was serious in that what Peter was doing would have far reaching consequences!!!

12. **Before some men.** Peter had a vision (*Acts 10:9-16*), and he witnessed the Spirit come on Gentiles (*Acts 10:44-47*). This taught him that God had removed the barrier between Jew and Gentile. Knowing this, he ate with the Gentile Christians and thought nothing about it! **But after these men arrived.** Note that James sent them. This implies that James, the Lord's brother, was at this time the head of the *circumcision party*, yet we know that he was willing to take God's side at the Jerusalem Meeting (*Acts 15:13-19*). In eating with the Gentiles, Peter would be violating the customs and Kosher code of the Jewish dietary laws. Knowing this would cause a hostile reaction from the Judean Jews, Peter took the easy way out!

cising the Gentiles. ¹³The other Jewish brothers started acting like cowards, along with Peter; and even Barnabas was swept along by their cowardly action. ¹⁴When I saw that they were not walking a straight path in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter, in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you have been living like a Gentile, not like a Jew. How, then, can you try to force Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Jews and Gentiles Are Saved by Faith

¹⁵Indeed, we are Jews by birth, and not Gentile sinners. ¹⁶Yet we know that a man is put right with God only through faith in Jesus Christ, never by doing what the Law requires. We, too, have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be put right with God through our faith in Christ, and not by doing what the Law requires. For no man is put right with God by doing what the Law requires. ¹⁷If, then, as we try to be put right with God by our union with Christ, it is found that we are sinners as much as the Gentiles are—does this mean that Christ has served the interests

circumcision group. The ¹³ other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

When I saw that they were ¹⁴ not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

"We who are Jews by ¹⁵ birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not ¹⁶ justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

"If, while we seek to be ¹⁷ justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes

13. **The other Jewish brothers . . . even Barnabas.** See how Peter's action set off a chain-reaction!!!

14. **When I saw.** Paul could see clearly the consequences of this action. Peter was being a hypocrite when he taught that all are one in Christ, and then acted as though the uncircumcised Gentiles were *unclean*. This was not an act of panic, but by taking the *easy way out* to avoid trouble, Peter was putting severe pressure on the Gentiles to live like the Judeans did. This is the very thing that was settled at the Jerusalem Meeting!!!

15. **We are Jews by birth.** As Paul continues his public scolding of Peter, he adopts the language of the Judeans, and speaks of *Gentile sinners*.

16. **Yet we know.** "We know by the Old Testament Scriptures, as well as by the Spirit God gave us, that it is not obedience to the Law of Moses, but FAITH in Jesus Christ that puts us right with God!!!" **We, too.** "Peter, you and I who are Jews by birth, had to believe in Christ to be put right with God! The Law of Moses was no help!" On the nature of *faith*, see note on *James 2:19*. **For no man.** "When we Jews convert to Christ, we are declaring that we cannot be saved by The Law!"

17. **If, then.** "But if we, in our effort to reach out through faith to seize Christ and be put right with God, must then *let go* of The Law and put ourselves in the same group with Gentile sinners, does Christ then serve sin??? By no means!!!" The next verse explains.

of sin? By no means! ¹⁸If I start to build up again what I have torn down, it proves that I am breaking the Law. ¹⁹So far as the Law is concerned, however, I am dead—killed by the Law itself—in order that I might live for God. I have been put to death with Christ on his cross, ²⁰so that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me. ²¹I do not reject the grace of God. If a man is put right with God through the Law, it means that Christ died for nothing!

sin? Absolutely not! If I re-¹⁸ build what I destroyed, I prove that I am a law-breaker. For through the 19 law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have²⁰ been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by, faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the 21 grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Law or Faith

3 You foolish Galatians! Who put a spell on you? Right before your eyes you had a plain description of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross! ²Tell me just this one thing: did you receive God's Spirit by doing what the Law requires, or

Faith or Observance of the Law

3 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you

18. **If I start.** "You, by again making The Law an obligation, are proving that what you were doing while you lived as the Gentiles do, was in fact a violation of The Law. That is, during the time you neglected it and did not follow its rules." This is in effect what Paul is saying to Peter.

19. **However, I am dead.** "I and all the other believers DIED with Christ, killed by The Law itself, since its CURSE killed Christ. Now that the Law considers me dead, I am free to live for God!" Compare *Rom. ch 7. I have been.* "The way I died to the Law, was to share or be united to Christ's death on the cross!" Compare *Rom. 6:6; 2 Cor. 5:17.*

20. **But it is Christ.** Under The Law, it was Paul the proud Pharisee who lived. But the old man died with Christ, and now it is Paul the Christian who lives. Or rather, it is Christ who lives in Paul! **I live by faith.** Faith links Paul to Christ!!! Christ is the *vine*, believers are the *branches*! Compare *John 15:1-11.*

21. **I do not reject.** "I do not reject God's grace, but you and the *circumcision party* are doing it when you try to be put right with God through The Law. If The Law puts a man right with God, then Christ need not have died at all!" Motive is all important in Christianity. Paul himself could participate in Jewish rites (*Acts 21:26*) with a clear conscience because he *KNEW* that these had nothing at all to do with his salvation. But for those who *really believed* The Law could save them, the ritual of The Law would condemn them eternally! See *Gal. 5:3-4.*

1. **You foolish Galatians!** "The message that God puts men right with himself through faith is so full of comfort and the proof of it is so plain, that I must ask you foolish Galatians, 'Who put a spell on you???' " [See *Rom. 5:1-2; James 2:19* and notes.] **Right before your eyes!** Paul uses the strongest possible language to bring past facts to life!!! *Christ-on-the-cross* is "what no man ever thought could happen!" Compare *1 Cor. 1:23; Heb. 9:15* and notes.

2. **Tell me.** "Since you think The Law is superior to the Good News of God's act in Christ to set men free, let me ask you this question. You have God's Spirit living in you (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*). Tell me: Did you receive God's Spirit through The Law, or through faith??? When I also gave you the *gifts from the Spirit* (compare *Acts 19:6*), few of you knew anything about the Law of Moses."

by hearing and believing the gospel? ³How can you be so foolish! You began by God's Spirit; do you now want to finish by your own power? ⁴Did all your experience mean nothing at all? Surely it meant something! ⁵Does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you because you do what the Law requires, or because you hear and believe the gospel?

⁶It is just as the scripture says about Abraham, "He believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous." ⁷You should realize, then, that the people who have faith are the real descendants of Abraham. ⁸The scripture saw ahead of time that God would put the Gentiles right with himself through faith. And so the scripture preached the Good News to Abraham ahead of time: "Through you God will bless all the people on earth." ⁹Abraham believed and was blessed; so all who believe are blessed as he was.

heard? Are you so foolish? ³ After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain perfection by human effort? Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? Does ⁴ God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? ⁵

Consider Abraham: "He ⁶ believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The ⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed in you." So those ⁹ who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

3. **How can you be so foolish!** They had begun with a new birth of water and the Spirit (*John 3:5*) and had been following the spiritual religion of Jesus Christ. To go under The Law means trying to save themselves by their own efforts, which is impossible! When they try to put themselves right with God through The Law, they do two things: (1) They say by their actions that there was no need or purpose for Christ to die; (2) They must deny the Holy Spirit (*see Heb. 10:29 and note*).

4. **Your experience?** The Galatian Christians had suffered much in the persecution which hostile Jews brought against them. Compare *1 Thess. 2:14-16*. If they abandon the gospel, all this effort will go for nothing!!!

5. **Does God give you?** "Christians have advantages that those under The Law never did have! You Galatians have the Spirit (*John 7:37-39*), and you have seen the miracles the Holy Spirit did among you. Was this because you obeyed the ritual of The Law, or was it because you heard and believed the gospel???"

6. **About Abraham.** *Gen. 15:6*. "The Scriptures (Old Testament) prove that God intended both Jews and Gentiles to be put right with him through faith, and not through The Law." **And because of his faith.** This quotation shows Abraham, whom every Jew thought of as sort of a "guardian angel" (*see Matt. 3:9 and note*), being accepted as righteous by God **BECAUSE OF HIS FAITH!** Abraham had a positive faith (*see James 2:22 and note*).

7. **Are the real descendants.** "You are no relation to Abraham, unless you have the same kind of faith which he had!" Those who reach out through faith to seize Christ are the ones who are Abraham's descendants!!! *See verses 26-29.*

8. **Saw ahead of time.** "Since God had already decided to put men right with himself by faith, the scripture tells about it." **The Good News.** The promise that through Abraham, God would bless all the people on earth, (and not just the Jews). The quotation is found in *Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18*.

9. **So all who believe.** We see Abraham had an active faith, not passive, and God blessed him because of his faith! Therefore, all who believe with the active faith that Abraham had, are blessed as he was! [On the nature of faith, see note on *James 2:19*.]

¹⁰Those who depend on obeying the Law live under a curse. For the scripture says, "Whoever does not always obey everything that is written in the book of the Law is under God's curse!"

¹¹Now, it is clear that no man is put right with God by means of the Law; because the scripture says, "He who is put right with God through faith shall live." ¹²But the Law does not depend on faith. Instead, as the scripture says, "The man who does everything the Law requires will live by it."

¹³But Christ has redeemed us from the curse that the Law brings, by becoming a curse for us; because the scripture says, "Anyone who is hanged on a tree is under God's curse." ¹⁴Christ did this in order that the blessing God promised Abraham might be given to the Gentiles by means of Christ Jesus, so that we, through faith, might receive the Spirit promised by God.

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

10. **On obeying the Law.** "If you depend on the rites of The Law to save you, you are putting yourself under a curse! For The Law brings God's curse on all who do not keep it perfectly! And, if you break only one command, you are guilty of breaking them all (*James 2:10*)!!!" The quotation is *Deut. 27:26*.

11. **By means of the Law.** "Besides, The Law itself proves that no one is put right with God by means of The Law." The quotation is *Habakkuk 2:4*. *Alford* (Greek Testament) also translates this: "*The just by faith shall live.*" *Alford* says: "He is not seeking to show by what the righteous shall live, but the ground itself of that righteousness which shall issue in life; and the contrast is between *HO DIKAIOS EK PISTEOS* and *O POIESAS AUTA*." Compare *Rom. 5:1*. But faith is more than just believing (*James 2:19*). Faith reaches out!!

12. **Does not depend on faith.** *Johnson* says: "It is not a system of faith, but proclaims life by doing the Law, rather than by faith. But since none can keep it perfectly, all are under the curse (*verse 10*)." The quotation is *Lev. 18:5*.

13. **But Christ has redeemed us.** "The Law held us under its curse, but Christ bought us from the curse by becoming a curse for us. It was impossible for us to free ourselves from the curse, but what we find impossible, God did through Christ (*Rom. 8:1-4*)!" The quotation is *Deut. 21:23*. Compare *Matt. 20:28*; *1 Tim. 2:6*; *1 Cor. 6:20*; *7:23*; *Titus 2:14*.

14. **In order that.** "Christ-on-the-cross gives to the Gentiles (and Jews) the blessing God promised to Abraham (*verse 9*)!" It is correct to say that: through Christ, God made His promises to Israel (and the Gentiles) come true; and: Christ was the one who fulfilled Israel's contract to God (through the Law). Compare *Rom. 8:3-4*; *Acts 13:32-33*; *Heb. 9:15* and notes. **Might receive the Spirit.** The presence of the Holy Spirit is one large difference between The Law and the Good News!!! Compare *John 7:37-39*; *Acts 5:32*; *1 Cor. 6:19-20*. See notes on *verses 2 & 5*.

The Law and the Promise

¹⁵Brothers, I am going to use an everyday example: when two men agree on a matter and sign a covenant, no one can break that covenant or add anything to it. ¹⁶Now, God made his promises to Abraham and to his descendant. The scripture does not say, "and to your descendants," meaning many people. It says, "and to your descendant, meaning one person only, who is Christ. ¹⁷What I mean is this: God made a covenant and promised to keep it. The Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, cannot break that covenant and cancel God's promise. ¹⁸For if what God gives depends on the Law, then it no longer depends on his promise. However, it was because God had promised it that he gave it to Abraham.

¹⁹What 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

The Law and the Promise

Brothers; let me take an 15
example from everyday life,
Just as no one can set aside
or add to a human covenant
that has been duly estab-
lished, so it is in this case.
The promises were spoken 16
to Abraham and to his seed.
The Scripture does not say
"and to seeds," meaning
many people, but "and to
your seed," meaning one
person, who is Christ. What 17
I mean is this: The law, in-
troduced 430 years later,
does not set aside the cove-
nant previously established
by God and thus do away
with the promise. For if 18
the inheritance depends on
the law, then it no longer
depends on a promise;
but God in his grace gave
it to Abraham through a
promise.

What, then, was the pur- 19
pose of the law? It was added
because of transgressions
until the Seed to whom the
promise referred had come.
The law was put into effect
through angels by a media-

15. **An everyday example.** "To disprove the claims of those who are saying that God's promise to bless the Gentiles through Abraham and his descendant, is to come true through converting them to Judaism, I show you this example."

16. **Now, God made.** "God promised to bless all the people of the world through Abraham and his descendant. God specifically said *DESCENDANT* to point to Christ." Jewish thought understood *descendant* (seed) to mean *one chosen family* (Israel). Paul points this directly to Christ, who is in a far higher sense than Abraham, the *FATHER* of the *one chosen family*.

17. **What I mean is this.** "I want to show you that God made a covenant and promised to keep it. Since this was with Abraham and his *descendant*, it did not terminate with the death of Abraham. Not until four hundred and thirty years later did The Law come, and it came without the consent of either Abraham or his descendant Christ, but only with the consent of the Jewish Nation. The Law, then, cannot possibly break that covenant which God made and cancel God's promise, by introducing a new and different method of blessing the people of the earth."

18. **For if.** "If you earn it, it is not a free gift! If it is through The Law, it cannot be through God's promise!" **However.** Abraham proves the point! See *verse 9*.

19. **What was?** "Why did God give The Law??? To restrain sin by clearly showing what wrongdoing is!!! But it was temporary and was meant to last only until Abraham's *descendant* came." **By angels.** See *Heb. 2:2; Acts 7:38, 53. A go-between.* Note that The Law came through both angels and a go-between. But God made his promise directly to Abraham. This shows that The Law was inferior to the *promise*. [The Good News was spoken directly through God's Son!!! *Heb. 1:2; 1 Tim. 2:5-6.*]

a man acting as a go-between. ²⁰But a go-between is not needed when there is only one person; and God is one.

The Purpose of the Law

²¹Does this mean that the Law is against God's promises? No, not at all! For if a law had been given that could bring life to men, then man could be put right with God through law. ²²But the scripture has said that the whole world is under the power of sin, so that the gift which is promised on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

²³Before the time for faith came, however, the Law kept us all locked up as prisoners, until this coming faith should be revealed. ²⁴So the Law was in charge of us until Christ came, so that we might be put right with God through faith. ²⁵Now that the time of faith is here, the Law is no longer in charge of us.

²⁶It is through faith that all of you are God's

tor. A mediator, however, ²⁰ does not represent just one party; but God is one.

Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But ²² the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Before this faith came, we ²³ were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now ²⁵ that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Sons of God

You are all sons of God ²⁶ through faith in Christ Jesus,

20. **Is not needed.** "When God makes a promise, no go-between is needed!" See the contrast in *Heb. 12:18-24*.

21. **Does this mean:** "The Law is not in competition with God's promise, because The Law does not give life at all! If it could give life, then The Law could be said to be *against* God's promise. The Law, by placing men under its curse and taking away their hope of mercy, forces them to reach out to seize God's promise through faith!!!" See notes on *Rom. 3:31*.

22. **But the scripture.** "The scripture shows that all the people of earth, both Jew and Gentile, are held as slaves by sin and are under God's curse. The only way out of this curse, is through the promised gift which comes THROUGH faith in Christ!!! We reach out through faith to seize the sacrifice of Christ and make ourselves part of it (verse 27)."

23. **Before.** "Before the Good News of God's act in Christ was revealed (*1 Cor. 2:7-10*), The Law kept us locked up as prisoners, criminals condemned by The Law, to be set free only when this faith should be revealed!" Compare *Heb. 9:15* and note.

24. **Was in charge.** The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says of the PAIDAGOGOS: "For he was a confidential dependent, usually a slave, neither qualified to instruct, nor invested with authority to control his young master, but appointed to attend on him, to safeguard him, and to report to his father any disorderly or immoral habits on which it might be necessary for the father to place a check." This is what The Law did. See notes on *Rom. 3:31*.

25. **Now.** "There is no longer any NEED for The Law to be in charge of us!!!"

26. **It is through faith.** "The Law had no authority or ability to make us God's sons! It is through faith that both Jews and Gentiles are adopted as God's sons (*Rom. 8:15*)!" [In the Bible, the masculine usually (but not always) includes the feminine. Sons includes daughters.]

sons in union with Christ Jesus. ²⁷You were baptized into union with Christ, and so have taken upon yourselves the qualities of Christ himself. ²⁸So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are the descendants of Abraham, and will receive what God has promised.

4 But to continue: the son who will receive his father's property is treated just like a slave while he is young, even though he really owns everything. ²While he is young, there are men who take care of him and manage his affairs until the time set by his father. ³In the same way, we too were slaves of the ruling spirits of the uni-

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JEWISH RITES

for all of you who were united with Christ in baptism have been clothed with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

4 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were children, we were enslaved by the basic princi-

27. Baptized into union. Faith = trust = action. Note salvation is *seized*, not achieved! Baptism is a promise made to God (1 Pet. 3:21 and note). **The qualities of Christ himself.** "By being baptized into union with Christ and taking upon yourselves the qualities of Christ himself, you become more truly the sons of Abraham and of God than anyone who has only a fleshly claim to be a descendant!!!"

28. So there is no difference. "The Law made a difference between persons. All that has been canceled and terminated!!! Under the Good News, no Jew is superior to a Gentile, no slave is inferior to a free man, no man is superior to a woman!!! You are all one, in salvation, in promises, in dignity, and in privileges, IN UNION with Christ Jesus." See Eph. 2:15.

29. If you belong to Christ. "Since Christ is the descendant of Abraham, in your union with Christ, you become what He is, and will receive God's promise, as a spiritual descendant of Abraham." [In the Bible, *faith* means: (1) *belief/trust* - active, obediential; (2) the *obedience* which faith produces; (3) the *teaching* contained in the Good News. Remembering this will help to identify the meaning in a particular context.]

1. **The son.** Since God intended all along to put men right with himself through faith in Christ, two questions arise: (1) Why didn't Christ come immediately when our first parents sinned? (2) Why did God leave mankind for so many ages under the control of the law of nature and the Law of Moses, when neither of them could give any hope of forgiveness or eternal life? Paul answers these questions with the example of a "young son."

2. **While he is young.** "An orphan son, before he reaches the age of legal maturity, is treated just like a slave, and there are men who take care of him (guardians) and who manage his affairs (trustees), even though he really owns everything." **Until the time.** "Not until the time his father set, does he have actual possession of all that is his."

3. **We too were slaves.** "Before the First Coming of Christ, the ruling spirits of the universe formed a valuable discipline for the education of the world, although they held us as slaves." Compare verse 9; Col. 2:8, 20. Those same ruling spirits are condemned when their traditional hold on human society becomes opposition to the higher teaching of Christ!

verse, before we reached spiritual maturity. ⁴But when the right time finally came, God sent his own Son. He came as the son of a human mother, and lived under the Jewish Law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might become God's sons.

⁶To show that you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who cries, "Father, my Father." ⁷So then, you are no longer a slave, but a son. And since you are his son, God will give you all he has for his sons.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

⁸In the past you did not know God, and so you were slaves of beings who are not gods. ⁹But now that you know God—or, I should say, now that God knows you—how is it that you want to turn back to those weak and pitiful ruling spirits? Why do you want to become their slaves all over

ples of the world. But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over

4. **The right time.** "When the time of preparation was completed, at the *right time*, God sent his own Son! He sent him from heaven into our own world!"

5. **To redeem.** "Since both Jews and Gentiles were held slaves by the ruling spirits of the universe, God sent his own Son as a human being to **BUY FREEDOM** for us, so that we might become God's sons and receive every blessing God has for his people!!!"

6. **To show.** "You believing Jews and Gentiles are sons, and to show this God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts so that we can come to him in complete confidence, each calling him *Father* in our own language!" Compare notes on *Acts 2:6; 26:14*. In Christ, God becomes our Father in a sense which only a son (or daughter) can experience!!!

7. **No longer a slave.** [Both the TEV and the NIV follow the corrected Greek text.] "You who have the Holy Spirit as a pledge or guarantee, are no longer a slave under The Law and driven to obey through fear of punishment. You are a son, who is motivated by love (*1 John 4:18*). Since you are a son, you are heir to the treasures of heaven!!!"

8. **In the past.** "Don't be foolish enough to give up your favored status as God's sons!!! Remember what you used to be when you did not know God! Remember when you were slaves to idols and the spirits of dead men who only existed in your imagination!"

9. **But now.** "But now in Christ you have chosen God to be your Father, or rather, God had identified you as his sons (*verse 6*). How can you possibly think of turning back and making yourselves again slaves to those weak and pitiful ruling spirits, by converting to Judaism???" The false teachers claimed to know God. Paul brings out the fact that it is much more important that God knows you and identifies you as his son or daughter!!!

again? ¹⁰You pay special attention to certain days, months, seasons, and years. ¹¹I am afraid for you! Can it be that all my work for you has been for nothing?

¹²I beg you, my brothers, be like me. After all, I am like you. You have not done me any wrong.

¹³You remember why I preached the gospel to you the first time; it was because I was sick. ¹⁴But you did not despise or reject me, even though my physical condition was a great trial to you. Instead, you received me as you would God's angel; you received me as you would Christ Jesus. ¹⁵You were so happy! What has happened? I myself can say this about you: you would have taken out your own eyes, if you could, and given them to me. ¹⁶Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

again? You are observing 10 special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for 11 you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

I plead with you, brothers, 12 become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. As you 13 know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even 14 though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. What has happened to 15 all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. Have I now become your 16 enemy by telling you the truth?

10. **You pay special attention.** "These holydays, even though Moses commanded them, are no more effective to gain the favor of God than were the pagan rites you formerly practiced when you worshiped idols." Both Paul and the Jewish Christians continued to pay special attention to these *holydays*, but the difference lies in *motive*. What Paul condemns is Christians doing these things with the idea of putting themselves right with God! Because this credits them with an *intrinsic sacredness* out of harmony with the true freedom of the Spirit. For the Christian, every day is equally holy, and no day is holy in the special sense that a holyday was to a Jew. Even the *Lord's Day* is not a "Christian Sabbath." [*Sabbath*, for a Christian, comes in Eternity!!!] Compare *Heb. 4:9-11*.]

11. **I am afraid for you!** "You seem to love these weak and pitiful spirits so much, that I am afraid for you! Can it be that my work has been for nothing? You do not seem to value and understand the freedom you have in Christ!"

12. **Be like me.** Paul may be thinking that as he gave up the advantages of Judaism to become free from The Law as they were, so they should remain free in Christ, as he is! *MacKnight* understands it: "*Brethren, I pray you to continue in friendship with me; for I am your true friend, having reproved you from love, and not from resentment. For all the time I was with you, ye injured me in nothing.*"

13. **You remember.** Some sickness sent Paul into their area originally, and they showed him great love and respect! *Ramsay* thinks it might have been malaria, and that he went into the highlands of Galatia hoping to recover.

14. **But you did not.** Even though Paul's physical condition put a strain on the Galatians, they did not despise him for it or reject him as unfit to be a messenger from God. *MacKnight* has Paul say: "You received me with as much respect as if I had been Christ Jesus himself."

15. **You were so happy!** "The Good News I preached to you then made you jubilant!!!" **What has happened?** "What has changed your attitude toward me???" **You would have.** This is a figure of speech describing great gratitude! Some think this implies that Paul's sickness was a chronic eye disease.

16. **Have I now?** "After all the love and devotion you showed to me your spiritual father, have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth of Christ and urging you to hold firmly to it???"

¹⁷Those other people show a deep concern for you, but their intentions are not good. All they want is to separate you from me, so that you will have the same concern for them as they have for you. ¹⁸Now, it is good to have such a deep concern for a good purpose—this is true always, and not only when I am with you. ¹⁹My dear children! Once again, just like a mother in childbirth, I feel the same kind of pain for you, until Christ's nature is formed in you. ²⁰How I wish I were with you now, so that I could take a different attitude toward you. I am so worried about you!

The Example of Hagar and Sarah

²¹Let me ask those of you who want to be subject to the Law: do you not hear what the Law says? ²²It says that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman, the other by a free woman. ²³His son by the slave woman was born in the usual way, but his son by the free woman was

Those people are zealous ¹⁷ 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, ¹⁸ provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you. My dear children, for ¹⁹ whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, how ²⁰ I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

Hagar and Sarah

Tell me, you who want to ²¹ be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that ²² Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His ²³ son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

17. **Those other people.** "The *circumcision party* claims to love you and to be working for your own good. But their intention is to turn you away from the truth of Christ, and to separate you from me." **So that you.** Compare what Jesus said in *Matt. 23:15*, and see note there.

18. **For a good purpose.** *Alford* understands this verse to say: "I have no wish, in thus writing, to set up an exclusive claim to show a deep concern for you - whoever will really teach you good, at any time, let him do it and welcome."

19. **My dear children!** From the deep concern of *verse 18*, Paul narrows it down by speaking as a *parent*. He had brought the Galatians *into the world* as spiritual children, and his claim on them is greater than any new teacher could have! **Until Christ's nature.** Their eternal destiny depends on their developing the knowledge, spirit, and qualities of Christ in themselves. This does not contradict salvation by faith, as *James 2:22* shows.

20. **How I wish.** "If I were with you now, I would better know just what to say to help you!"

21. **Do you not hear?** "The Law itself teaches that Abraham's descendants by faith, who will receive all God has for his sons, are not slaves to The Law!"

22. **Abraham had two sons.** "These two sons of Abraham are an example of what I mean."

23. **By the slave woman.** "This son was born through the natural strength of his parents, but being born a slave, he had no claim to receive his father's estate." **By the free woman.** "This son was born through supernatural strength that was given to his parents by God's promise. He was born free, and had claim to all that his father had."

born as a result of God's promise. ²⁴This can be taken as a figure: the two women are two covenants, one of which (Hagar, that is) comes from Mount Sinai, whose children are born in slavery. ²⁵Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia, and she is a figure of the present city of Jerusalem, a slave with all its people. ²⁶But the heavenly Jerusalem is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷For the scripture says,

"Be happy, woman who never had children!
Shout and cry with you, you who never
felt the pains of childbirth!

For the woman who was deserted will
have more children

than the woman living with her husband."

²⁸Now, you my brothers, are God's children as a result of his promise, just as Isaac was. ²⁹At that time the son who was born in the usual way persecuted the one who was born because of

These things may be taken ²⁴
figuratively, for the women
represent two covenants.
One covenant is from Mount
Sinai and bears children
who are to be slaves: This is
Hagar. Now Hagar stands ²⁵
for Mount Sinai in Arabia
and corresponds to the pre-
sent city of Jerusalem, be-
cause she is in slavery with
her children. But the Jeru- ²⁶
salem that is above is free,
and she is our mother. For ²⁷
it is written:

"Be glad, O barren
woman,
who bears no children;
break forth and cry aloud,
you who have no labor
pains;
there are more children of
the desolate woman
than of her who has a
husband."

Now you, brothers, like ²⁸
Isaac, are children of prom-
ise. At that time the son ²⁹
born in the ordinary way
persecuted the son born by
the power of the Spirit. It is

24. **A figure.** "These two women symbolize the two covenants by which men and women become the church and people of God. The one came from Mount Sinai, making Abraham's descendants by Isaac the only *visible church* and people of God, is symbolized by Hagar, whose children are born in slavery."

25. **She is a figure.** "She represents the present city of Jerusalem, that is, the Jewish church which was organized on that covenant, and is a slave with all its people, slaves to The Law."

26. **But the heavenly Jerusalem is free.** "But the *church* of Christ, the messianic community, which is made up of all who reach out through faith to seize Christ and make themselves part of Him, is free and not slave! It is organized on the covenant which comes from Mount Zion (*Heb. 12:22-24*), which I call the heavenly Jerusalem, both because its *completeness* will come in Eternity and because heaven is its source. The free woman, Sarah, is the symbol of this, and she is the mother of all who believe in Christ!"

27. **For the scripture says.** "What I say about the meaning of Abraham's wives and sons is not just something which I dreamed up! Isaiah spoke about this very thing (*Isa. 54:1*)! Sarah was the *deserted wife*, because when she could not have children, Abraham took Hagar as a second wife and by her had Ishmael. God's promise to Sarah was that she would be a mother of *nations*, and that comes true in the Gentiles converting to Christ!"

28. **Now, you.** "Even though you are not Abraham's descendants as we Jews are, yet like Isaac, who became their son by God's promise, you, my brothers, are God's children as a result of His promise! In this way, you are also children of Abraham and Sarah!"

29. **Persecuted the one.** "At that time, Ismael the slave son persecuted Isaac the free-born son. It is the same way now, when certain Jews who are *slave-sons* persecute us the *free-born-sons*!"

God's Spirit; and it is the same now. ³⁰But what does the scripture say? It says, "Throw out the slave woman and her son; for the son of the slave woman will not share the father's property with the son of the free woman." ³¹So then, my brothers, we are not the children of a slave woman, but of the free woman.

Preserve Your Freedom

5 Freedom is what we have—Christ has set us free! Stand, then, as free men, and do not allow yourselves to become slaves again.

²Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: if you allow yourselves to be circumcised, it means that Christ is of no use to you at all. ³Once more I warn any man who allows himself to be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the whole Law. ⁴Those of you who try to be put right with God by obeying the Law have cut yourselves off from Christ. You

the same now. But what ³⁰ does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Therefore, ³¹ brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Freedom in Christ

5 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free: Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. ² Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every ³ man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. ⁴ You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

30. **But what does?** *Gen. 21:10*. "I show you that the scripture says to throw out the slave woman and her son. This means that all who have *no spiritual relationship* to God will be thrown out, no matter who their ancestors are. Only the true sons (and daughters) by the Promise of God, will share what the Father has for his sons!!!"

31. **But of the free woman.** "I have showed you from The Law itself that we who are God's children by faith, are Abraham's true descendants, born of the free woman, and we will receive our Father's property!!!"

1. **Freedom is what we have!** "Because Christians are the children of the free woman, you Gentiles must not allow yourselves to be made slaves again by believing that the Law of Moses is necessary to your salvation!!!"

2. **I, Paul, tell you this.** "As a true apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ I tell you this true fact: If you let yourselves be circumcised as if it were necessary for this to be done in order for you to be saved, Christ-on-the-cross will no longer be available to you!!"

3. **To be circumcised.** That is, with the idea of this being part of his salvation. As a national sign (*Acts 16:3*) or a health practice, everyone can be circumcised with no change at all in their relationship to Christ. But when a Gentile is circumcised to show he is placing himself under The Law, it cuts him off from the blessings of Christ. **To obey the whole Law.** Because the Law of Moses was so complicated and required expensive travel back to Jerusalem at certain times of the year, the false teachers told the Gentiles that they would only have to keep certain parts of The Law such as holydays (*Gal. 4:10*), Kosher dietary rules, not fraternizing with the uncircumcised, etc. Paul says plainly that if you place yourself under The Law, you are obligated to keep the entire mass of rules and regulations!! Compare *James 2:10* and note.

4. **Have cut yourselves off from Christ.** "By trying to be put right with God through The Law, you have in fact RENOUNCED Christ!!! Therefore you are outside God's GRACE and cannot expect to receive the PROMISE which comes through Christ-on-the-cross!!!"

are outside God's grace. ⁵As for us, our hope is that God will put us right with him; and this is what we wait for, by the power of God's Spirit working through our faith. ⁶For when we are in union with Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor the lack of it makes any difference at all; what matters is faith that works through love.

⁷You were doing so well! Who made you stop obeying the truth? How did he persuade you? ⁸It was not done by God, who calls you. ⁹"It takes only a little yeast to raise the whole batch of dough," as they say. ¹⁰But I still feel sure about you. Our union in the Lord makes me confident that you will not take a different view, and that the man who is upsetting you, whoever he is, will be punished by God.

¹¹But as for me, brothers, why am I still persecuted if I continue to preach that circumcision is necessary? If that were true, then my preaching about the cross of Christ would cause no

5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. For in Christ Jesus neither 6 circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. "A little 9 yeast works through the whole batch of dough." I am 10 confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be. Brothers, if I am still preach- 11 ing circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the

5. **Our hope.** "We who are in Christ look forward to the time when God will put us right with himself by *setting our whole being free in the Resurrection (Rom. 8:18-23)*! God's Spirit who lives in us Christians (*Rom. 8:11*) is both the guarantee and the means of this!!!" [Compare the contrast in *Gal. 3:2, 5*. The Spirit does not make himself available to people through The Law!!!]

6. **For when we are.** "In our union with Christ, such things as circumcision have no meaning at all!!! It is that faith which works through love, that God counts!!!"

7. **You were doing so well!** "You were making such great progress in the Good News of Christ! You were really *living* God's truth!!! How could you let anyone talk you out of it???"

8. **It was not done by God.** "God calls people to be saved (*John 6:44-45*), but I have already showed you from The Law itself that God's promise does not come through The Law! Certainly God himself would not now be calling you to obey The Law!!!"

9. **It takes only a little yeast.** "The errors of one teacher are enough to turn a whole church away from the truth!!!"

10. **But I still feel sure.** "I do not want you to think you are beyond God's reach. I still have confidence in you, because of *our union in the Lord*. But God will punish the man who is upsetting you by the things he teaches!"

11. **But as for me.** "My enemies tell you that I still preach circumcision, and perhaps point to Timothy as an example. But if that were true, why would they continue to persecute me??? If I did preach that circumcision were necessary to salvation, my *offensive preaching* about Christ-on-the-cross would cause no trouble with the *circumcision party* and the unbelieving Jews!" (Compare *1 Cor. 1:23* and note.)

trouble. ¹²I wish that the people who are upsetting you would go all the way; let them go on and castrate themselves!

¹³As for you, my brothers, you were called to be free. But do not let this freedom become an excuse for letting your physical desires rule you. Instead, let love make you serve one another.

¹⁴For the whole Law is summed up in one commandment: "Love your fellowman as yourself."

¹⁵But if you act like animals, hurting and harming each other, then watch out, or you will completely destroy one another.

The Spirit and Human Nature

¹⁶What I say is this: let the Spirit direct your lives, and do not satisfy the desires of the human nature. ¹⁷For what our human nature wants is opposed to what the Spirit wants, and what the Spirit wants is opposed to what human nature wants. The two are enemies, and this means

cross has been abolished. As ¹²for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

Life by the Spirit

You, my brothers, were ¹³called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge your sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up ¹⁴in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you keep on biting and ¹⁵devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

So I say, live by the Spirit, ¹⁶and you will not gratify the desires of your sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires ¹⁷what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do

12. **I wish.** Both the TEV and the NIV give the *literal* translation of what Paul actually said. Paul is speaking in *bitter irony!* The *Expositor's Greek Testament* says: "ΑΡΟΚΟΠΣΟΝΤΑΙ. This word was habitually used to describe the practice of mutilation which was so prevalent in the Phrygian worship of Cybele. The Galatians were necessarily familiar with it, and it can hardly bear any other sense."

13. **You were called to be free.** "The Good News of Christ has called you *out* from slavery *into* the freedom which Christ gives!" **But do not let.** "Your freedom does not mean you are free to sin as you please!" **Instead.** "Let love be the motivation of your life to such a degree that you will serve one another, in a spirit of *community!*"

14. **For the whole Law.** "The Law of Moses is *condensed* in this one commandment: Love your fellowman as yourself. You cannot please God without doing this!!!" Compare *Matt. 22:39; Rom. 13:8; 1 John 4:20.*

15. **But if you act like animals.** "But if, in your *frantic action* either for or against The Law, you begin to act like animals, hurting and harming one another as you bite and devour each other, *watch out!!!* You may condemn each other to hell!!!" Compare *Acts 26:9-11; James 4:1-5.*

16. **Let the Spirit.** The voice of the Spirit speaks through the New Testament especially, and as we listen to Him speak and guide our lives by what He says, we will avoid the evil desires of human nature that make us bite and devour each other.

17. **Is opposed.** "The evil desires of our human nature (*verse 20-21*) are in conflict with what the Spirit wants us to do (*verses 22-23*)." **This means.** "If you are to live your life in the Spirit, you cannot please yourself and do everything you are tempted to do."

that you cannot do what you want to do. ¹⁸If the Spirit leads you, then you are not subject to the Law.

¹⁹What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; ²⁰in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies, they fight, become jealous, angry, and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; ²¹they are envious, get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these. I warn you now as I have before: those who do these things will not receive the Kingdom of God.

²²But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace,

not do what you want. But ¹⁸if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit ²²is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith-

18. **If the Spirit leads you.** "If you listen to the Spirit speak through the teaching of the Good News (see note on *Rom. 3:31*), as sons and daughters of God (*Rom. 8:14*) you have escaped from the curse of The Law!!! You have no need to be circumcised and follow its ritual!!!"

19. **What human nature does.** Paul is talking about the evil side of our human nature, not ordinary human desires and needs. Even Christians still have this *evil side*, as the case of the Galatian Christians show. The Devil tries to use this *side* of us to seduce us to sin!!! **Immoral.** Sex acts outside the marriage relationship [fornication]. **Filthy.** Such things as pornography, that lead to adultery, homosexuality, and immorality in general. **Indecent actions.** Sinning openly and not caring who knows it! The sort of things that shocks public morals.

20. **Idols.** Worship to these included obscene and bizarre practices. **Witchcraft.** This formed part of idolatry. The pagan priests claimed to be able to speak with and control the evil spirits. By this they frightened people and made themselves rich. **Enemies.** Who bear grudges against each other and will never forgive and forget. **Fight.** Hostility, such as the kind that brings on unreasonable lawsuits. Compare *1 Cor. 6:7*. **Jealous.** Which leads to selfish scheming and plotting against others. **Angry.** Violent, uncontrolled anger. **Ambitious.** The selfish spirit that is willing to crush others just to *get ahead*. **Separate.** The spirit that causes people to form parties and groups (sects) in religion out of selfish motives.

21. **Envious.** The success of others makes them unhappy. **Get drunk.** Drunkenness has always been a sin. **Have orgies.** Drunken dancing that leads to immoral actions and the attitude of indecency. **Those who do these things.** Part of the preaching of the Good News, was this warning that those who continue to rebel against God by doing such things as these will have no part in the Eternal Kingdom!!!

22. **But the Spirit produces.** Christians are the temple of the Holy Spirit (*1 Cor. 6:19-20*). The real evidence of the Spirit living in them, is not speaking in tongues and miraculous powers! The real evidence is these things which Paul now mentions. These are what the Holy Spirit produces as *fruits* in the *branches* of the *true vine* (*John 15:1-10*). **Love.** AGAPE - Christian love. See *1 Cor. ch 13*. **Joy.** Love induces joy in the Christian! Jesus was a "man of sorrows" to some degree, yet he was also a man of joy (*Heb. 12:2*) and showed a sense of humor in the things he said to the Pharisees. Joy is especially associated with the Holy Spirit (compare *Rom. 14:17; 1 Thess. 1:6*). Joy contrasts with apathy, gloom, remorse, etc. **Peace.** An inner harmony and serenity. The Christian can have a different attitude toward everyone and everything, because he is a refugee, a citizen of another world!!! Just a short time and he will be going home!!! **Patience.** Being able to put up with the other people's faults. The endurance of wrong without anger to revenge. **Kindness.** The attitude that actively reaches out with a helping hand to others. It is both gentle and generous. **Goodness.** This is the motive behind kindness. Compare *1 Cor. 13:6*. **Faithfulness.** Reliability, loyalty.

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³humility, and self-control. There is no law against such things as these. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have put to death their human nature, with all its passions and desires. ²⁵The Spirit has given us life; he must also control our lives. ²⁶We must not be proud, or irritate one another, or be jealous of one another.

Bear One Another's Burdens

6 My brothers, if someone is caught in any kind of wrongdoing; those of you who are spiritual should set him right; but you must do it in a gentle way. And keep an eye on yourself, so that you will not be tempted, too. ²Help carry one another's burdens, and in this way you

fulness, gentleness and self- 23
control. Against such things 24
there is no law. Those who
belong to Christ Jesus have
crucified their sinful nature
with its passions and desires.
Since we live by the Spirit, 25
let us keep in step with the
Spirit. Let us not become 26
conceited, provoking and
envying each other.

Doing Good to All

6 Brothers, if a man is 2
trapped in some sin, you
who are spiritual should re-
store him gently. But watch
yourself; you also may be 2
tempted. Carry each other's
burdens, and in this way you
will fulfill the law of Christ.

23. **Humility.** Not proud or arrogant, but willing to listen to others and willing to cooperate. Compare 2 Cor. 10:1 and note. It is the *mekness* of Matt. 5:5 and note. **Self-control.** See 1 Cor. 6:12 and note. **There is no law.** "To praise these good qualities which the Spirit produces, I remind you that there never was a law of a religion which prohibited these things or that punished a man for doing them!!!"

24. **Have put to death.** The New birth of water and the Spirit (John 3:5) marks the dividing line between the world and the church. In dying with Christ and being buried in the liquid grave (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12) you have put to death and crucified with Christ the evil side of human nature. Your love to Christ and your loyalty to him, will not allow you to follow the evil desires of your human nature!

25. **The Spirit.** "The Spirit has given us life (Titus 3:5) and we are free (2 Cor. 3:17-18). Therefore, we must permit Him to control our lives, by actively following his instructions (Rom. 8:5-9)."

26. **We must not be.** These things destroy Christian community and fellowship!

1. **My brothers.** Paul begins to emphasize the spirit of *community* which is a very necessary part of the church of Christ. Even those who are being *led by the Spirit* sometimes are surprised into sin. Compare Gal. 2:11-13; 1 John 1:8-10. The *normal human thing* to do, is to be hostile to those who sin. The *Christian thing* to do is to set them right. It is the special responsibility of the *spiritual* to do this. But it must be done in a gentle way, because hostility might destroy the very one you are trying to save. **And keep an eye on yourself.** Don't think you are immune to temptation! Being aware of our own weakness will help us to be gentle toward others.

2. **Help carry.** "Instead of being hostile and scolding one another, you must *help each other* carry burdens.' This is the spirit of *community* Burden = BARE! MacKnight says: "This is an allusion to the custom of travelers, who when too heavily laden with their baggage, relieve one another, by bearing the burden of the weak or fatigued, and in that manner show their good disposition toward each other." **The law of Christ** requires benevolence and good will even to those who are surprised into sin.

will obey the law of Christ. ³If someone thinks he is something, when he really is nothing, he is only fooling himself. ⁴Each one should judge his own conduct for himself. If it is good, then he can be proud of what he himself has done, without having to compare it with what someone else has done. ⁵For everyone has to carry his own load.

⁶The man who is being taught the Christian message should share all the good things he has with his teacher.

⁷Do not deceive yourselves; no one makes a fool of God. A man will reap exactly what he plants. ⁸If he plants in the field of his natural desires, from it he will gather the harvest of death; if he plants in the field of the Spirit, from the Spirit he will gather the harvest of eternal life. ⁹So let us not become tired of doing good; for if we do not give up, the time will come when

If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each man should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, for each man should carry his own load.

Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we

3. **If someone.** "If you are so proud of your own righteousness that you are hostile to your weak brother and will not help him, you are only fooling yourself. When you think you are too strong to fall, you are living in a *fool's paradise!*"

4. **Should judge his own.** "You must not use the faults of others as the standard for your own conduct. There is no honor in looking at your brother and saying, 'I am better than you!' If what you do is good, measured by God's standard, then you can be proud of your actions."

5. **For everyone.** "At the Judgment, each of us will have to answer for himself!" Load = **PHORTION**. This can also mean that certain things (such as sickness) and the normal duties of life must be the responsibility of the individual and cannot be shared.

6. **The man who is being taught.** The idea is that the one who is being taught ought to support the one who is teaching him. Food, money, housing, etc., is the general meaning. But it goes deeper than this, and Paul may be thinking of spiritual support as well.

7. **No one makes a fool of God.** No one can avoid or evade the laws by which God rules the universe. **Exactly.** "Whatever you plant, that is what you can expect to reap!!!"

8. **If he plants.** Paul may be scolding the Galatians for their selfish use of their money. That is, spending it all on their own pleasures, and not giving a share to the Lord's work (*verse 6*). The moral principal is: *continued self-indulgence brings its own penalty.* **From the Spirit.** Material things will perish, even our own bodies. The spiritual is eternal! If, then, we spend our time and money and ourselves planting in the field of the Spirit, the result will be eternal companionship with Christ!!!

9. **Not become tired.** "You must continue to do good, whether it is to help carry another's burdens, taking care of the sick, sharing sympathy and material things with another, and lifting up Christ in your lives. God will give you all that he promised!"

we will reap the harvest. ¹⁰So then, as often as we have the chance, we should do good to everyone, but especially to those who belong to our family in the faith.

Final Warning and Greeting

¹¹See what big letters I make as I write to you now with my own hand! ¹²Those who want to show off and brag about external matters are the ones who are trying to force you to be circumcised. They do it, however, only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³Even those who practice circumcision do not obey the Law; they want you to be circumcised so they can boast that you submitted to this physical ceremony. ¹⁴As for me, however, I will boast only of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; for by means of his cross the world is dead to me, and I am dead to the world. ¹⁵It does not matter at all whether or not one is circumcised. What does

do not give up. Therefore, ¹⁰ as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Not Circumcision but a New Creation

See what large letters I ¹¹ use as I write to you with my own hand!

Those who want to make ¹² a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. Not even ¹³ those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh. May I never boast ¹⁴ except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor ¹⁵ uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new

10. **We should do good to everyone.** "We should do good to everyone, whatever their country or religion should be or whatever their physical appearance. But we do have a special responsibility to those who belong to our family in the faith."

11. **See what big letters.** Paul had someone else write down his letters, but he usually wrote the ending in his own handwriting to prove the letter really came from him. The fact that he says "big letters" causes some to think he had trouble being able to see well. See note on *Gal. 4:15*.

12. **Those.** Some of your teachers want to show off and be popular with their unbelieving friends, and so they try to force you to be circumcised. It is not because they think circumcision is necessary to being put right with God. They only want to escape from the shame of the cross, and avoid persecution from their unbelieving friends."

13. **Even those.** "Those of the circumcision party do not obey The Law themselves! They are really hypocrites when they try to force you to be circumcised. They only want to be able to boast that you submitted to this physical ceremony." [Note that it is Gentile Christians, who have already been baptized into Christ, whom the *circumcision party* tried to force into the physical ceremony of circumcision.]

14. **I will boast only of the cross.** To some, the *cross* symbolized shame and disgrace. But to Paul, Christ-on-the-cross was God's act to set men free!!! **For by means.** "The world can no longer seduce me or frighten me! By means of HIS CROSS, the world is dead to me, and I am dead to the world. In Christ I am no longer under the control of sin and death!!!"

15. **It does not matter at all.** "I boast in Christ-on-the-cross, my only hope of salvation and the only means of my being put right with God!!! Whether anyone is circumcised or uncircumcised does not matter at all, because the only thing that puts us in God's favor is being a new creature in Christ (*2 Cor. 5:17*)."

matter is being a new creature. ¹⁶As for those who follow this rule in their lives, may peace and mercy be with them—with them and with all God's people!

¹⁷To conclude: let no one give me any more trouble, because the scars I have on my body show that I am the slave of Jesus.

¹⁸May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, my brothers. Amen

creation. Peace and mercy ¹⁶ to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

Finally, let no one cause ¹⁷ me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

The grace of our Lord ¹⁸ Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

16. **Who follow this rule.** "To you believing Gentiles who follow this rule (*verse 15*) and who come to God by being a new creature in Christ, may peace and mercy be with you, and with all God's people! Peace in this life, and mercy at Christ's coming!!!"

17. **To conclude.** "Let no one give me any more trouble by saying I am not a true apostle. Like a slave who has been branded, I have on my body the scars which show I belong to Christ. These are much better proofs that I am really Christ's servant, than the marks of circumcision!"

18. **May the grace.** Paul's benediction is deeply sincere and friendly! Paul has scolded them harshly, but they are "*my brothers.*" [The controversy over circumcision and The Law probably began as soon as the first uncircumcised Gentile converted to Christ. But the real issue was between Christ-on-the-cross (*I Cor. 1:23* and note) and the Christ-but-not-the-cross which the circumcision party wanted to have.]