

# Study In Galatians

by Sandy Simpson

## **(1) Introduction**

**AUTHOR:** *The apostle Paul (1:1; 5:2). This was the unanimous view of the early church, and even those modern critics who challenge the authorship of many of the New Testament books concede that Galatians is truly Pauline.*

**BACKGROUND OF THE EPISTLE:** *During his first missionary journey (46-48 A.D.), Paul together with Barnabas had the opportunity to establish several churches in the Roman province of Galatia (Ac 13:14-14:23). On his second trip (49-52 A.D.), Paul and Silas visited them again (Ac 16:1-5).*

*It wasn't long, however, before some Jewish Christians came in and began teaching that Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses (similar to what happened at Antioch of Syria, cf. Ac 15:1). In an effort to persuade the Galatians, it appears the tactic was to discredit Paul as an apostle, challenge his concept of the gospel of Christ, and charge his doctrine with leading to loose living.*

**TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING:** *Dating Galatians is affected by one's view of whether the churches of Galatia were located in the north central part of Asia Minor (ethnic Galatia), or in the south central part (the Roman province of Galatia). The "North Galatia Theory" maintains that the churches were in the north, and that Paul had not been there until the beginning of his third missionary journey (54-55 A.D.; cf. Ac 18:23). This would require that Paul wrote his epistle sometime toward the end of that journey, or afterward (i.e., around 57-58 A.D. or later).*

*I subscribe to the "South Galatia Theory", which identifies the churches of Galatia as those established on Paul's first journey (cf. Ac 13:14-14:23). I also believe that the meeting described in Gal. 2:1-10 took place during the "Jerusalem Conference" related in Ac 15:1-29. This view opens several possibilities for the place and time of writing:*

- 1) Corinth, in the period of Ac 18:1-17*
- 2) Antioch, in the period of Ac 18:22*
- 3) Ephesus, in the period covered by Ac 19:1-41*
- 4) Macedonia or Achaia in the period of Ac 20:1-3*

*With such uncertainty one cannot be dogmatic, but in view of Paul's lengthy stay in Ephesus, that would seem a likely possibility, and the date would be approximately A.D. 55.*

**PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE:** *The churches in Galatia were being influenced by those who would "pervert the gospel of Christ" (1:6-7; cf. 3:1). Known as "Judaizing teachers", these individuals taught that Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses (cf.*

*Ac 15:1). Paul recognized that this doctrine would jeopardize the salvation of those souls who accepted it (cf. 5:4). Because the enemies of the true gospel were trying to support their case by undermining Paul's authority as an apostle of Christ, it was necessary to verify that he was truly an apostle "not from men nor through man but through Jesus Christ and God the Father" (1:1). Therefore, Paul writes:*

***TO VERIFY HIS APOSTLESHIP AND THE GOSPEL OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN CHRIST***

*Because of his outstanding defense of the gospel of Christ in which we have freedom from sin and the Law, this epistle has frequently been called "The Magna Carta Of Christian Liberty."*

***KEY VERSE:*** *Galatians 5:1*

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

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The letter to the Galatians mainly deals with the issue of legalism. We have studied 1 & 2 Corinthians, which addresses a number of issues having to do with liberalism. Legalism and liberalism are two errors often on opposite ends of Christianity. Legalism is the error of adding requirements to Christianity or the Scripture; liberalism is the error of taking away from Scripture. As we know from the Bible, we are not to add or take away from what is written.

*Pr 30:6 **Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.***

*Re 22:18-19 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: **If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.***

*1Co 4:6 Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, **"Do not go beyond what is written."** Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.*

*Matt. 15:8-9 "These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; **their teachings are but rules taught by men.**" {Isaiah 29:13}*

The Pharisees were a good example of legalists. They expected everyone to keep the Law, in fact keep all the extra requirements they made into law. But they themselves were not keeping the true intent of the Law and had misinterpreted Scripture in order to set up requirements for themselves and others that they could not possibly bear. The Law itself no one could perfectly keep, and they made it even more impossible with the up to 1500 additional laws added to the 613 in Scripture. Their logic was like this: by putting a fence, a protective barrier around the Holy Law, one would first have to break this law before they would break God's law and become guilty and be punished. The problem was that this unbiblical protective set of laws became the main thing and ended up hiding the real Law from the hearts of the people. This is what always happens with legalism. In the New Testament the legalists were most often Jews. They would come to the Gentiles and tell them that they had to be circumcised or keep other

aspects of the Law in order to please God. But Paul had explained very clearly in his letter to the Romans that keeping the Law did not save the Jews and certainly could not save the Gentiles. It stood as a reminder of sin. Jesus Christ came to free believers from the Law, instead writing the law of Christ on our hearts, which is love. Remember that Jesus said that the love of God and love of your brother fulfilled all the requirements of the Law.

*Matt. 22:37-40 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' {Deut. 6:5} This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' {Lev. 19:18} All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

*Jer 31:33 "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

*Ro 5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

Today we have examples of legalism in certain false teachings such as baptismal regeneration where people add water baptism as a requirement on to salvation, which is by grace alone through faith alone. They add other requirements such as tongues in order to prove you are Spirit-filled when the Bible does not require that. Tongues are only one gift and not all have that gift. In order to promote legalism you often have to take Scripture out of context and focus on one narrow thing instead of understanding the meaning of what was written. Take for instance this verse:

*Mr 16:18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."*

Now these things have happened. A deadly snake bit Paul but nothing happened to him. But Paul did not go around and make a cult out of snake handling like there is today. Remember the cult of Jim Jones? He put poison in cool aid and had his followers drink it believing that they would be saved, either here or in heaven. But not only did they all die in a horrible mass suicide, but we know that those who commit murder, even to themselves, will not be a part of the kingdom of heaven.

*Re 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death."*

Today we have many churches and cults who add requirements on to salvation, to the Gospel message. Paul stated that even if an angel came and added requirements to the Gospel they should be accursed.

*Ga 1:8 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!*

Another Gospel is frequently one that adds requirements to salvation, which is what Paul was addressing. But it can also be on which takes away important elements of the Gospel. Today we have those who preach a gospel of God's love without the facts of the sin nature of men and the punishment of hell for those who do not repent.

Liberalism ends up taking away from what is written. Liberals do not regard Scripture as the highest authority in the life of the believers and often do not believe the Bible is without error. Therefore they become an authority to themselves through new revelation apart from the Word of God. They are so opposed to making any requirements that they take what should be freedom in Christ and turn it into a license to sin.

*Jude 1:4 For certain men whose condemnation was written about {Or men who were marked out for condemnation} long ago have secretly slipped in among you. **They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a licence for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.***

They think they can do just about anything they want as a Christian, but we still must obey the law of Christ, that is love. We must follow what God wants from us, which is to love one another. Yet liberals practice extreme self-love. They are lovers of themselves and of pleasure rather than lovers of God and their neighbors. Paul describes liberals very well to Timothy.

*2 Tim. 3: 2-7 **People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them. They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.***

The two opposite errors of liberalism and legalism continue today and they are errors we must be constantly on guard against so we do not fall either way. Unfortunately in our time things are even worse as some false teachers are combining both legalism and liberalism in an even more deadly mix. Whether or not they do so understanding what they are doing is not as important to realize as the fact that the enemy knows human weakness. He knows that both liberalism and legalism appeal to our sin nature.

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## **(2) Galatians 1:1-9**

Last week we went through an introduction to the letter to the Galatians and also discussed two opposite errors in the churches, namely legalism and liberalism. In his letter to the Galatians Paul addresses the error of legalism. He begins this letter by establishing his calling from God to be the last foundational apostle and then relates the story of how God rescued even the Apostles from the heresy of Jewish legalism and bondage to the Old Covenant in the Law of Moses that was completed in Christ Who brought the New Covenant through His blood.

*Lu 22:20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.*

God used Paul in a unique way to bring his disciples back to the truth of the Gospel, that it is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. You might wonder at Paul's audacity to bring this subject up to those he calls the "pillars" of the Church, but when you think about it who would have been a better choice by God to bring this needed correction? Paul himself had been caught up in legalism and was even a zealot for spreading those ideas and persecuted the Christians because of their faith in Yeshua as Messiah. It is often those who have come out of false teaching who are best equipped to see the problems in the former false teaching they were deceived by. Some of the best people to comment on the errors of the Roman Catholic Church, for instance, are ex-priests and ex-nuns who were led out of the Catholicism because they actually read the Word of God and were born again. Some of the best people who lead others away from cults and false religions were once themselves captives in them. I believe the Lord led me to do the ministry I am doing now in exposing some of the heresies in the Church because he allowed me a close-up personal experience with the false teachings and practices of the Brownsville "Revival". The Lord often also uses those who are weak to confound those who think they are wise.

*1Co 1:27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.*

**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—**

**2 and all the brothers with me, To the churches in Galatia:**

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

**4 who 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.**

Foundational apostles, which are not more today and those who claim this authority are actually false apostles, are not sent from men or by men. This is why it is such a lie for someone like C. Peter Wagner to get churches to take a survey to find out what your spiritual gift is, and one of the gifts is that of being a foundational apostle for the Church. The Apostles did not find out that they were sent from God by taking a survey. Wagner and his false apostles also claim that they can transfer the gift of apostleship by impartation and they are busy traveling all over the world doing this. The problem is that the true

foundational Apostles were not commissioned, and certainly not imparted, with that responsibility from men or by men. Paul had the same problem in his day: that is there were people who claimed they were foundational Apostles going around to the Churches and trying to get people under their authority while giving false revelations and teaching false doctrines. Who sent out Paul? Who commissioned him? Who called and set apart the twelve Apostles? It was Jesus Christ Himself. It is an important point for Paul to bring up the fact that God the Father raised the Son from the dead. If Jesus Christ was not alive, then Paul was not an Apostle. But since Jesus Christ is alive and Paul actually was taught by Him from heaven, then Paul has the seal of foundational Apostleship because one of the criteria to be a foundational Apostles was that they would have had to sit under the teaching of Jesus Christ personally.

*2 Cor. 12: 2-9 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. **Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows.** And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—was caught up to paradise. **He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.** I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no-one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say. To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." **Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.***

This story is about what Paul saw on the road to Damascus. He is talking about himself in the third person so as not to brag about himself but of what God had done. Paul was in heaven being taught by Jesus Christ. Now we know that no man can go to heaven in their mortal body because our bodies carry the effects of the sin of Adam and Eve. So even though Jesus Christ appearing to Paul was so real it seemed like Paul was in heaven, Paul actually had a vision of heaven and Jesus Christ appeared to him.

*Acts. 9: 17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—**Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.**"*

In any case, Paul was a true Apostle, the last foundational one, because he had been sent by Jesus Christ Himself.

*1Co 15:8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.*

No others could claim this except the other 11 Apostles, and if they did they were lying. This is why today there are no foundational apostles and why there were no more foundational apostles in Paul's day, even though apparently many claimed they were. There was a type of apostles, church planting missionary, even in Paul's day but no true apostle claimed to be foundational to the Church because they did not meet the criteria to be a pillar of the church.

*Ga 2:9 James, Peter {Greek Cephas; also in verses 11 and 14} and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognised the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.*

*2 Cor. 11:12-15 And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.*

We have covered this topic before so there is no need to go into it further here. If you want more information on this subject and the names of those who are doing this today, then you can read my article called "[False Apostles!](#)".

Paul then gives the Galatian church his greeting. Grace and peace our ours only if we are born again in Jesus Christ through the proclamation and acceptance of the Gospel message. Paul preached that message to the Galatians and those who accepted that message and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul calls his "brothers". Be careful whom you call your brother in the Faith. They must be born again to be your brother, just as they must be born again to become children of God and He their Father.

*Ro 9:8 In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.*

*1Jo 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.*

*Ro 8:21 that {Or subjected it in hope. 21 For} the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

One of the reasons Jesus Christ gave Himself in death was for our sins. But another reason was to save us from this evil age. Someday the redemption that Jesus Christ purchased for us with His death and resurrection will actually liberate this old creation from death which was brought about by sin. He is going to make things right on this earth in the Millennial Kingdom just like He liberated us from death in salvation. This is why it is important for the rest of Christ's reason for dying on the cross to be fulfilled by His one thousand year Kingdom on earth. For God's wonderful redemptive act for those who believe on Him and for His creation He deserves all glory forever. Not all men will be saved because they must make a decision to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but someday God will set things right in this world from the damage done through sin. Finally this universe will be destroyed by fire and God will create a new heaven and earth where sin and death will never be a problem again. Those who believe and are saved will be with Jesus Christ there for eternity.

Now that Paul has given the defense of his apostleship and greetings, he moves on to give the main purpose for this letter.

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

**7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.**

**8 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!**

**9 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!**

Who is the one who called them? Paul. But he did not call them by urging them, as Gentiles, to come under the Law of Moses. Instead he preached the Gospel of grace to them.

*Ac 20:24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.*

*Col 1:6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth.*

The Gospel is the gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone. This is what Paul preached to them and what they had accepted. Yet Jews who called themselves followers of Christ had come in and presented a different Gospel to them. This “gospel” was actually no “gospel” at all because it had not power to save, in fact it had the power to confuse people and keep them from salvation, if they would accept it. This perversion of the true Gospel was so strong and so powerful that even believers could be and were being deceived by it. And so it stands today. Those who came to the Galatians, calling themselves apostles, sent out ones, “angels” if you will (messengers) were preaching another “gospel”. They were perverting the Gospel to the extent that those who believed in their other “gospel” would believe in vain.

*1Co 15:2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.*

Is it possible to believe in a “gospel” that sounds legitimate and yet that belief is actually useless with regards to salvation? Yes! Adding works to salvation, which was the message being brought by these false believers, would and could ruin the salvific effects of the true Gospel message. You have to believe in the right truth to be saved. You can’t just believe anything. You have to believe in the true Gospel message as set forth by Christ and His Apostles. If you add to the message of salvation by telling people they have to obey the whole Law in order to be justified before the Father, you are preaching a message that will not save.

*Ro 3:20 Therefore no-one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

*1Co 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.*

*Ro 8:2 ... through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*

So anyone who declares that the Law (whether added to faith in Christ or apart from it) will save is a liar. No wonder Paul repeated twice, which is always significant in Scripture, that those who were preaching this kind of false gospel should be eternally condemned. Paul was not just wishing this, but he was stating



the fact that without repenting and returning to the true Gospel those who preach such things ARE eternally condemned. Paul tells the Galatians to judge him, the Apostles and even angels by the same standard. Anyone who proclaims the true Gospel has his reward in heaven.

***2Th 2:14 He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

***2Th 1:8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.***

We have the same problems today. We have legalists trying to get people to work their way to heaven, and we have liberals preaching a defective gospel that does not alert people to sin and their need of repentance. In both cases they are false gospels that cannot save. In fact they are so bad that they give a wrong picture of Who Jesus is, Who the Spirit is and what the Gospel is.

***2Co 11:4 For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.***

Yet with this warning many churches today have opened their doors to liberals and legalists and they accept them easily. But if they are allowed to continue, there are eternal consequences to pay. Let's go back one verse.

***2 Cor. 11: 3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.***

Deception of those who claim to be Christians is not just theoretical, it is a distinct possibility if churches continue to put up with people who preach a different gospel.

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## **(3) Galatians 1:10-24**

Last time we looked at Paul's defense of his Apostleship, his calling by Jesus Himself. Paul then warned about those who were coming around with a different gospel, teaching that the believers of Galatia had to come under the Jewish laws, particularly circumcision, in order to be right with God, to be children of God. But keeping the Mosaic Law does not cause a person to become a child of God.

*Joh 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—*

Even in the Old Testament times those who had faith in God like Abraham were justified.

*Ro 4:16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.*

In this lesson Paul begins to make the case for the fact that this circumcision teachings was the very same false teaching that almost caught the Apostles.

**10 ¶ 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.**

**11 I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up.**

**12 I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.**

Then Paul launches into the story behind the story, so to speak, and he is not afraid to name names. We have dealt with this issue before, but it is not wrong to name names when we are warning the churches of false teachers as Paul, John and many others did. In this section we also find out that it is important to point out the sins and mistakes even of those in leadership in the Church for the benefit of all, in particular to explain the truth of the Gospel. Would Peter get mad at Paul for telling the story of what happened between Paul, the other Apostles, and Peter? No. In fact Peter commends Paul.

*2 Pet. 3: 15-16 Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.*

I wonder where there are men today who are as unworried about their personal reputations as Peter was? He knew Paul was recounting the story of how Paul had to straighten out Peter. Yet Peter commends his "dear brother Paul". I am not telling you this to brag, but I allowed the story of my drug problems and wandering away from the Lord to be told all over Micronesia, in fact I told it myself. I decided that my reputation was less important than my testimony of how God had saved me and called me out of darkness.

We all need to be ready to lay down our embarrassment at past sins and failures in order to show the power and strength of God's sanctifying work in our lives.

Paul stresses again that the Gospel does not have its origin in man but in God. Paul did not receive the Gospel message from men, even though most of us received it that way, but the Gospel is not a story men have made up. Those coming into the Galatian church with a false gospel were bringing a gospel of their own making. Paul came with the true Gospel revealed to him directly from Jesus. Again we see that the mark of a true foundational Apostle is that Jesus Christ personally revealed His Gospel to them. Fortunately we have faithful men like Paul and those who came after him to preach the Gospel to us as handed down over the centuries.

*Rom. 10: 14-15 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" {Isaiah 52:7}*

***13 For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.***

***14 I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.***

Paul is not going to talk about the shortcomings of any other Apostle until he first talks about his own background and sin. Paul was a devout Jew schooled in Judaism by Gamaliel, probably the most prominent Pharisee teacher of that time. Paul came from a very Jewish background, as was his understanding of the Scriptures. This is why he persecuted Christians because his Jewish upbringing told him that to say that Jesus Christ was the Messiah was blasphemy. In fact to this day they don't call Jesus "Yeshua" which means "God is delivering" or "God is rescuing" but rather "Yeshu", which is a derogatory term for Jesus by Jews who do not believe He is the Messiah. So Paul was carrying out his duty as a Jew who did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah. Paul was an advanced student of Judaism and was zealous to keep pure the traditions of Judaism. This shows that you can be very zealous and be very wrong.

***15 But when God, who set me apart from birth {Or from my mother's womb} and called me by his grace, was pleased***

***16 to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.***

Paul recognized that he was not set apart by God from birth to defend Judaism but to have the grace of Jesus Christ revealed to him. After Jesus revealed Himself to Paul he realized that God had set him apart from birth and prepared him the unique task of being one of the first to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles and to fight for the integrity of the Faith. He would soon have to do that even among his own brothers in Christ, but God had allowed him to experience the depths of Judaism in order to realize that the Law of Moses only pointed out sin. What Paul did not know and had not been taught by Gamaliel is that Jesus Christ fulfilled the Scriptures as being the Messiah. Paul realized that, though he had been taught by a

famous teacher who knew about much Scripture, it took the Holy Spirit to reveal to him what the Law and the Scriptures were really about.

Paul went out from his experience being taught by Jesus Christ Himself on the Damascus road and instead of going straight to the Apostles in Jerusalem he went into Arabia. It was there the Holy Spirit revealed fully what all Scripture was pointing to, that is Jesus Christ.

*This journey (not recorded in Acts) was during the whole period of his stay at Damascus, called by Luke (#Ac 9:23), "many [Greek, a considerable number of] days." It is curiously confirmatory of the legitimacy of taking "many days" to stand for "three years," that the same phrase exactly occurs in the same sense in #1Ki 2:38,39. This was a country of the Gentiles; (In Arabia) doubtless he preached as he did before and after (#Ac 9:20,22) at Damascus: thus he shows the independence of his apostolic commission. He also (in Arabia) had that comparative retirement needed, after the first fervor of his conversion, to prepare him for the great work before him. Compare Moses (#Ac 7:29,30).*

Moses went to the land of Midian and there the Lord gave him a time of rest and prepared him for the ministry he would be doing for Israel in leading them out of Egypt to the Promised Land.

*His familiarity with the scene of the giving of the law, and the meditations and revelations which he had there, appear in #Ga 4:24,25 Heb 12:18. See JFB on "Ga 1:12". The Lord from heaven communed with him, as He on earth in the days of His flesh communed with the other apostles. (JFB Commentary)*

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

**19 I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother.**

**20 I assure you before God that what I am writing to you is no lie.**

**21 Later I went to Syria and Cilicia.**

**22 I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.**

**23 They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."**

**24 And they praised God because of me.**

Paul did finally go to Jerusalem and met Peter and James. He relates this so that the church in Galatia would understand again that Paul did not get his instructions or mission from the other Apostles. He had already received that directly from Christ and the Holy Spirit instructed him in the Gospel before he even got to Jerusalem. When Paul went to Syria and Celicia he was already preaching the Gospel there and no one except Peter and James knew about him. A story began to circulate about Paul in Judea that there was a man who used to persecute the Church now preaching the Gospel. But instead of persecuting Paul in return or trying to bring down his reputation, they rejoiced because of him. What a testimony both among the Jews and Gentiles! A former devote Jew had been totally changed by the Lord and this miracle was about to change the world!

There are many stories of people who were formerly opposed to Christianity who then gave their lives to Christ and turned everything around. When God get a hold of a person and they testify to the change God has worked in them, it can have greater effect than sometimes we can calculate. There are many examples of people who were changed and ended up having a large effect on the lives of many.

# Study In Galatians

by Sandy Simpson

## ***(4) Galatians 2:1-10***

Now Paul launches into what happened when he met with the Apostles. This is important background information to prove (1) that he is an Apostle commissioned by Jesus Christ Himself (2) that the disciples accepted him as one of their own and (3) that the false teaching of works was very dangerous, so much so that it almost fooled many of the Apostles. Some Christians do not believe they can be deceived. That is foolishness because if the Apostles were almost deceived, then we as modern believers can be also. When the disciples asked Jesus about the end times the first thing he said was this:

*Mt 24:4 Jesus answered: "Watch out that no-one deceives you.*

He spoke this to the Apostles, as they would later be called, so it applies even more to us. We are living in the end times. So we need to learn from history and not be fooled by liberals or legalists.

***1 ¶ Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also.***

***2 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 seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.***

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

***4 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.***

This is the trip Paul took to Jerusalem where he brought the offerings of the churches there. Paul had been preaching the Gospel for fourteen years already, since his conversion, when he finally met with all the Apostles. Paul wanted to be sure that the Galatian church recognized that Paul's apostolic authority came from Christ, not from a group of men in Jerusalem. Jesus had given Paul a revelation, part of which no doubt had to do with what Jesus also revealed to Peter. This also showed that men did not call Paul to come to Jerusalem, but God had given him Divine instructions apart from the other Apostles. This was also to establish his apostolic authority in the minds of the Galatian believers.

But rather than confront the Apostles on the issue of the Gentiles in public; Paul met with some of the leaders in private. Paul's fear was not that he was wrong or that the Gospel should not be preached to the Gentiles (they all agreed it should) but he feared that everything he had been teaching would be undermined by those who had begun to accept the false teachings of some Jews who were saying that the Gentile Christians needed to come under the Law of Moses, in particular that they needed to be circumcised. Titus went with Paul likely as a demonstration of the fact the God approved of Gentiles whether or not they were circumcised, and Titus was not. God's approval of believers and indwelling of the Holy Spirit does not rest on the Law but on Christ and His finished work on the cross. One thing that false teachers always do: they infiltrate churches to spy on the freedom Christians have then use that freedom to try to make people slaves to false doctrines, in this case slaves again to the Law from which Christ had freed them. Legalists want to put people in chains, the same chains they wear themselves.

They are no content to live their lives to their own standard but they want to impose it on everyone else who will listen to them.

**5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.**

**6 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.**

**7 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, {Greek uncircumcised} just as Peter had been to the Jews. {Greek circumcised; also in verses 8 and 9}**

**8 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.**

But Paul recognized the infiltration of the false brothers and did not give them any room to deceive others. Paul did this so that the ministry to the Gentiles would not be compromised. The 12 disciples did not impress Paul. He treated them like anyone else. This is how we ought to be also. Many times we allow our traditions of honor to keep us from telling the truth. But Paul was not about to give up one of the central themes of the Gospel for anyone, including the original twelve, and we can all be thankful for that. God does not judge by the outside but on the inside motives, and so we should also not be swayed by outward things when the real issues are internal.

*1Sa 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. **Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.**'*

Fortunately the Apostles recognized that Paul had been given a mission by Christ Himself to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. They saw that Jesus had assigned them different places: Paul to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews. We don't all have the same ministries or gifts.

*1Pe 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*

*1Co 12:4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

God was at work in the ministry of the Apostles wherever they were sent. Paul could see that God was at work among the Jews through the ministry of Peter and others. They in turn could see that God was at work through the ministry of Paul to the Gentiles.

**9 James, Peter {Greek Cephas; also in verses 11 and 14} and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognised the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.**

**10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.**

The Apostles, in particular the three who were called the “pillars” of the Church, extended fellowship to Paul and Barnabas. Note: if Peter is supposed to be the “rock” on which the Church is built, how do they deal with this verse that seem that James, Peter and John were the pillars of the foundation of the Church? The fact is that Peter was called the “little stone” *petros* while Jesus is the “rock” *petra*. Jesus is elsewhere referred to as the *petra*:

*1Pe 2:8 and, "A stone (Jesus) that causes men to stumble and a rock (petra) that makes them fall." {Isaiah 8:14} They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.*

*1Co 10:4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and **that rock (petra) was Christ.***

So the Apostles not only recognized that Jesus had called Paul and that he had already been preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, but they agreed that Paul was in the right place and they were in the right place. The Apostles also agreed with Paul's Gospel where he taught salvation by grace alone through faith alone. The only admonition they gave him, which had nothing to do with the salvation message, was that Paul would not forget to help the poor, which he was already doing.

*Jas 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: **to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.***

God does want us to help the poor, particularly widows and their children and orphans. We also need to keep ourselves from being polluted by the world.

*Mr 14:7 The poor you will always have with you, **and you can help them any time you want.** But you will not always have me.*

Jesus Himself stated that we can and should help the poor. But our first responsibility is to serve and worship Him.

*Lu 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because **he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.** He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,*

Jesus was sent to preach good news to the poor. That means not only those who are poor materially, but those who are poor spiritually. We need to be first concerned with poverty of spirit, and that concern will also bring us to help people with poverty of the flesh.

### **God's Partiality Toward the Poor**

*The phrase "God's preferential option for the poor" describes a phenomenon found throughout both the Old and New Testaments: God's partiality toward the poor and the disadvantaged. Why would God single out the poor for special attention over any other group? I used to wonder. What makes the poor deserving of God's concern? I received help on this issue from a writer names Monika Hellwig, who lists the following "advantages" to being poor:*

*1. The poor know they are in urgent need of redemption.*

*2. The poor know not only their dependence on God and on powerful people but also their interdependence with one another.*

3. *The poor rest their security not on things but on people.*
4. *The poor have no exaggerated sense of their own importance, and no exaggerated need of privacy.*
5. *The poor expect little from competition and much from cooperation.*
6. *The poor can distinguish between necessities and luxuries.*
7. *The poor can wait, because they have acquired a kind of dogged patience born of acknowledged dependence.*
8. *The fears of the poor are more realistic and less exaggerated; because they already know that one can survive great suffering and want.*
9. *When the poor have the Gospel preached to them, it sounds like good news and not like a threat or a scolding.*
10. *The poor can respond to the call of the Gospel with a certain abandonment and uncomplicated totality because they have so little to lose and are ready for anything.*

*In summary, through no choice of their own—they may urgently wish otherwise—poor people find themselves in a posture that befits the grace of God. In their state of neediness, dependence, and dissatisfaction with life, they may welcome God’s free gift of love.*

*As an exercise I went back over Monika Hellwig’s list, substituting the word “rich” for “poor,” and changing each sentence to its opposite. “The rich do not know they are in urgent need of redemption...The rich rest their security not on people but on things....” (Jesus did something similar in Luke’s version of the Beatitudes, but that portion gets much less attention: “But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort....”).*

*Next, I tried something far more threatening: I substituted the word “I.” Reviewing each of the ten statements, I asked myself if my own attitudes more resembled those of the poor or of the rich. Do I easily acknowledge my needs? Do I readily depend on God and on other people? Where does my security rest? Am I more likely to compete or cooperate? Can I distinguish between necessities and luxuries? Am I patient? Do the Beatitudes sound to me like good news or like a scolding’*

*As I did this exercise I began to realize why so many saints of the past have voluntarily submitted to the discipline of poverty. Dependence, humility, simplicity, cooperation, and a sense of abandon are qualities greatly prized in the spiritual life, but extremely elusive for people who live in comfort. There may be other ways to God but, oh, they are hard—as hard as a camel squeezing through the eye of a needle. In the Great Reversal of God’s kingdom, prosperous saints are very rare.*



*I do not believe the poor to be more virtuous than anyone else (though I have found them more compassionate and often more generous), but they are less likely to pretend to be virtuous. They have not the arrogance of the middle class, who can skillfully disguise their problems under a facade of self-righteousness. They are more naturally dependent, because they have no choice; they must depend on others simply to survive.*

*I now view the Beatitudes not as patronizing slogans, but as profound insights into the mystery of human existence. God's kingdom turns the tables upside down. The poor, the hungry, the mourners, and the oppressed truly are blessed. Not because of their miserable states, of course—Jesus spent much of his life trying to remedy those miseries. Rather, they are blessed because of an innate advantage they hold over those more comfortable and self-sufficient. People who are rich, successful, and beautiful may well go through life relying on their natural gifts. People who lack such natural advantages, hence underqualified for success in the kingdom of this world, just might turn to God in their time of need.*

*Human beings do not readily admit desperation. When they do, the kingdom of heaven draws near. (Christianity Today, November 13, 1995, p. 52)*

# Study In Galatians

by Sandy Simpson

## **(5) Galatians 2:11-21**

In the last lesson Paul talked in general about his meeting with the Apostles in Jerusalem. Now Paul tells a specific account of his meeting with Peter so that the Galatians will see just how deep the problem of Jewish legalism had gone. It had even had an effect on Peter! The fact that Paul recounts this story tells me that Peter approved of him talking about it even though it pointed out a sin that Peter had to repent of. Sometimes we have to use personal information to help people to avoid those problems we or those we are in ministry with have had. To hide them is not always productive. We had a tendency to hide our past sins, and it is not good to dwell on them if we have repented of them and Christ has forgiven them. But sometimes our willingness to look foolish can help others avoid the same pitfalls we fell into. Paul is not using this story to brag about how superior he is to Peter. He retells it to warn them of the severity of legalism. Legalism seems to be a tendency of sinful people to gravitate towards, which is why the enemy often uses it to get Christians off track. We all somehow think that if we just do enough good works then we will be justified before God. But the Bible is clear that good works are useless unless they come out of Faith and are according to the will of God.

*Eph. 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no-one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

*Ga 3:11 Clearly no-one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." {Hab. 2:4}*

These verses would seem contradictory if we did not understand that no one can be justified by works or by the Law, but those who have already placed their faith in God will do the works that come from Faith, works according to the will, foreknowledge and predestination of God.

**11 ¶ When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.  
12 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 circumcision group.  
13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.  
14 When I saw that they were 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?  
15 "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners'  
16 know that a man is not 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.**

Paul confronted Peter face to face, in person, about what he was doing. He had apparently not begun to teach what he was doing but he had drawn back from eating with Gentile Christians because they were not

following the Mosaic Law with regards to what they ate, and also in the matter of circumcision. This is because Peter had begun to listen to certain men who came from James. Following Peter's example other Jewish believers began to draw back from fellowship with the Gentiles. The issue of coming back under the Law was beginning to cause division among the Christians in Judea. But these ideas were hypocritical and Paul goes on to explain why they were hypocrites. Even Barnabas was being led astray by them, which means that only Paul was left to confront this issue from a Jewish Christian perspective. What this idea of expecting Gentiles to keep the Law was doing was defeating the saving truth of the Gospel. Paul called Peter out on this hypocrisy by pointing out that Peter himself was living in the freedom that Christ purchased yet expecting Gentiles to be bound to the Law. Peter already knew that no man can be justified by the Law but that even in the Old Testament the only way to be justified was through faith.

*Ro 4:13 It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.*

*Ro 4:16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.*

Abraham is the father of all who are in the Faith because Abraham was justified by his faith before there was any such thing as the Law. God did create the first instance of circumcision because it was a sign of the covenant He made with Abraham, but Abraham's faith was what brought about the covenant as well as his justification before God ... God declaring Abraham righteous on the basis of his faith. So even in the Old Testament the promise of salvation comes by faith, not by works or the Law.

No one will be justified by keeping the Law. The only way to justification in the Old Testament was to have faith in God and in the New Testament to have faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. The new covenant is based on faith in Jesus Christ alone and there is no other way to be saved in our time.

*Joh 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.*

Whereas in the Old Testament it was possible to be justified by faith in God apart from the Law, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and others were, in the New Testament the only way to be justified is by faith in Jesus Christ, recognizing that He is the Messiah.

*Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

Three important things you must believe about Jesus Christ. (1) He is Lord, He is God. (2) He is Jesus, God Who came in the flesh to provide us a way to salvation and reconciliation with the Father. (3) He is Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God sent by the Father.

*17 "If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not!*

*18 If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a law-breaker.*

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

Rather than worrying about sinning against the Law, Paul points out it is far more serious to rebuild what Jesus Christ destroyed. Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Law, but He also came to destroy what the Law points out which is sin, as well as the work of the devil.

*1Jo 3:8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.***

*Heb 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—*

*Ro 8:2 because **through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.***

*Ro 10:4 **Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.***

So Paul makes the point that to resurrect what Christ put an end to is a sin against the Lord, it is a form of being a law-breaker. You can break the law of Christ by requiring men to keep the whole Law, which is impossible. Why? Because if you break even one part of the Law you will be considered to have broken it all, which is why no one can be saved by the Law.

*Jas 2:10 **For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.***

Yet even James who was promoting these ideas obviously came to understand what Paul said about the Law because he wrote:

*Jas 2:12 **Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,***

*Jas 1:25 **But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.***

What is this “law that gives freedom”? Is it the Mosaic Law? No. It is the law of Christ, which is love.

*Ga 6:2 **Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.***

*Mr. 12: 30-31 **Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.** {Deut. 6:#4,5} **The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'** {Lev. 19:18} **There is no commandment greater than these."***

**20 I have 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.**

**21 do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"**

The only way to justification is through faith in Christ who set us free according to His grace. Salvation is by grace, not by keeping the Mosaic Law. We must identify with Christ in His death, dying to our sins and sin nature, and coming to a new life with a new creation in us through the Holy Spirit. The life we live is then by faith, no by works. We must not set aside the grace of God by calling people back to the death sentence of the Law. Righteousness could never be gained through the Law, even before the Law

was given. If we add requirements on to salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone we make Christ's death on the cross useless for people. This is why the legalistic errors of false religions are so bad because they seek to be justified either with God or within themselves by works such as Buddhists, Hindus, and others. Cults of Christianity are just as bad with cults such as the (1) SDA teaching that Christians should not eat certain foods and other selective parts of the Law.

But even worse are those who call themselves Christians who teach legalism such as: (1) the Catholics with their sacraments, infant baptisms, prayers to Mary and other false teachings adding requirements on to salvation (2) Hyper Pentecostals and Third Wavers with their "anointings" and lying signs and wonders (3) denominations like Church of Christ and Christian Church who teach baptismal regeneration (4) denominations like some Lutherans and others who practice infant baptism that is supposed to save a child before they have even made a choice to follow Christ (5) Oneness Pentecostals such as the Apostolic Pentecostal Churches and United Pentecostal Churches and others that teach baptismal regeneration and other false teachings such as God is not three in One, etc.

It is always a danger to pick up the practice of legalism in the churches. It can end up nullifying the gift of grace.

# Study In Galatians

by Sandy Simpson

## **(6) Galatians 3:1-14**

Now we come to the reason Paul wrote about what happened even among the Apostles with regard to legalism. His accounting of what happened even to the leadership of the Church was done in order to warn the Galatians about Jews who were coming around teaching the false idea that Gentiles needed to be circumcised. Yet we already know that salvation is by grace through faith alone. Under the new covenant outward circumcision no longer matters, but circumcision of the heart.

*Ro 2:29 No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.*

The new requirement after Christ, in fact from the beginning, was that a man is considered a child of God if there has been a circumcision of the heart, a removal of sin because of the sacrifice and forgiveness of Jesus Christ and a setting apart to God through Him. Therefore Jews and Gentiles, who were born again, circumcised in the heart, were all to be considered children of God.

*Col 3:11 Here there is no Greek (or "Hellen" also translated Gentile) or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*

Yet the Galatians were apparently buying into the legalism being taught by some Jewish false brethren.

**1 ¶ You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.**

**2 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?**

**3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?**

**4 Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing?**

**5 Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?**

False teaching is very much like being put under a witchcraft spell. It has the power to delude and deceive to the point where we accept a different "gospel" rather than the true Gospel. Paul had preached the true Gospel of salvation by grace alone to the Galatians. The true Gospel, at its core, centers on the crucifixion of Christ to die in our place for our sins. This message is the opposite of a works Gospel or trying to be saved by keeping the Law. Christ kept the whole law for us so that we might be liberated from having to keep it ourselves.

*Ro 8:2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*

*Ro 10:4 Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.*

*Joh 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

No one can keep the law and thereby be held as righteous by God. Only Jesus Christ kept the whole Law on our behalf. How could He do that? Because the Law came from God and Jesus Christ is God. We cannot receive the Holy Spirit through keeping the Law. The only way to receive the Holy Spirit is to believe in Jesus Christ and be born again.

*Tit 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. **He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,***

So if a person has repented of their sins and trusted Jesus Christ to forgive them why would they then go back to trying to be justified by works? Human effort cannot save. This is the false idea of all false religions, and it was the false idea of many Jews who did not understand that Jesus Christ came to once and for all show that human effort is useless to save. Paul's questions show the foolishness of thinking that human effort can effect salvation. The Holy Spirit had worked the miracle of rebirth and had done other miracles among them to confirm His presence not because of the Law but because they had put their faith in Christ's substitutionary sacrifice on the cross for them.

- 6 ¶ Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." {Gen. 15:6}**
- 7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.**
- 8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." {Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18}**
- 9 So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.**

Christians follow in the pattern of Abraham. They are spiritual children of Abraham because he believed and it was credited to him as righteousness. This all happened hundreds of years before the Law was given to Moses. So those who are justified before God are not those who try to keep the Law but those who trust God. The Gospel was announced to Abraham in the covenant God made with him. God said that all nations would be blessed through him. What does this mean? It meant a number of things. First of all it meant that from the seed of Abraham would come the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Second it meant that the nation of Israel coming from Abraham and his promised son, Isaac, would be a blessing to the whole world. Third it meant that the pattern of justification and salvation had been established through the faith of Abraham. This pattern would continue in the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. What a privilege it was for Abraham to be called "the man of faith". This was his legacy to us all.

- 10 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." {Deut. 27:26}**
- 11 Clearly no-one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." {Hab. 2:4}**

If a man tries to keep the Law he must keep every bit of it.

*Deut. 27: 26 "Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"*  
*Jas 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*

With this in mind why would people go back to trying to keep the whole Law? It is so much easier to trust in Jesus Christ, the only One who could keep the whole Law and did on our behalf. Jesus not only kept the Law, he kept the intent of the Law. That is even more impossible for people to do. Remember when Jesus explained the depth of the Law?

*Mt. 5:21-22 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, {Exodus 20:13} and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother {Some manuscripts brother without cause} will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' {An Aramaic term of contempt} is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' **will be in danger of the fire of hell.***

*Mt 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' {Exodus 20:14} But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

Jesus was clearly the only one who could keep the deeper meaning of the Law. The only way we can begin to obey the Law is to be saved and have the Holy Spirit teach us through the written Word, sanctifying our hearts and minds.

Even in the Old Testament justification was by faith. That is what is stated in Hab. 2:4. So even the prophets understood the basis God had for declaring someone to be righteous, which was faith in Him.

***12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." {Lev. 18:5}***

***13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." {Deut. 21:23}***

***14 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.***

Jesus Christ became our substitutionary atonement. He died in our place so that we might not have to die. Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse Himself. Amazing that the Creator God of this universe became a curse for us! Unthinkable. Unfathomable. Christ did that by being crucified on what was called "a tree" or the cross. Anyone hung out for public display to die was being cursed by society. How amazing to think that the very act of the Jews and Romans that was so sinister would turn out to be the salvation of many. Christ's work on the cross was so that the blessing given to Abraham would be fulfilled, not just to the physical descendants of Isaac, but also to all the nations, the Gentiles. Jesus Christ then promised before He left to send another, the Holy Spirit. His death and our faith in Him would allow us to receive the promise of the Spirit. That Spirit now writes the law of Christ in our lives, which is the law of love.

***2Co 3:3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.***

The Holy Spirit today indwells those who have believed and been saved by Jesus Christ, and His requirements are then written in our hearts, not on tablets of stone as the Law of Moses.



### ***Illustration of the Law and Grace***

*Some years ago, I had a little school for young Indian men and women, who came to my home in Oakland, California, from the various tribes in northern Arizona. One of these was a Navajo young man of unusually keen intelligence. One Sunday evening, he went with me to our young people's meeting. They were talking about the epistle to the Galatians, and the special subject was law and grace. They were not very clear about it, and finally one turned to the Indian and said, "I wonder whether our Indian friend has anything to say about this."*

*He rose to his feet and said, "Well, my friends, I have been listening very carefully, because I am here to learn all I can in order to take it back to my people. I do not understand all that you are talking about, and I do not think you do yourselves. But concerning this law and grace business, let me see if I can make it clear. I think it is like this. When Mr. Ironside brought me from my home we took the longest railroad journey I ever took. We got out at Barstow, and there I saw the most beautiful railroad station and hotel I have ever seen. I walked all around and saw at one end a sign, 'Do not spit here.' I looked at that sign and then looked down at the ground and saw many had spitted there, and before I think what I am doing I have spitted myself. Isn't that strange when the sign say, 'Do not spit here'?"*

*"I come to Oakland and go to the home of the lady who invited me to dinner today and I am in the nicest home I have been in. Such beautiful furniture and carpets, I hate to step on them. I sank into a comfortable chair, and the lady said, 'Now, John, you sit there while I go out and see whether the maid has dinner ready.' I look around at the beautiful pictures, at the grand piano, and I walk all around those rooms. I am looking for a sign; and the sign I am looking for is, 'Do not spit here,' but I look around those two beautiful drawing rooms, and cannot find a sign like this. I think 'What a pity when this is such a beautiful home to have people spitting all over it -- too bad they don't put up a sign!' So I look all over that carpet, but cannot find that anybody have spitted there. What a queer thing! Where the sign says, 'Do not spit,' a lot of people spitted. Where there was no sign at all, in that beautiful home, nobody spitted. Now I understand! That sign is law, but inside the home it is grace. They love their beautiful home, and they want to keep it clean. They do not need a sign to tell them so. I think that explains the law and grace business."*

*As he sat down, a murmur of approval went round the room and the leader exclaimed, "I think that is the best illustration of law and grace I have ever heard." (H. A. Ironside, Illustrations of Bible Truth, Moody Press, 1945, pp. 40-42.)*

# Study In Galatians

by Sandy Simpson

## *(7) Galatians 3:15-29*

Now Paul goes into a further explanation of the purpose of the Law and the covenant given to Abraham. This is important in order to understand how faith was always the way to be reconciled with God even before the Law of Moses was given and people were made painfully aware of just how sinful they were.

**15** *Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no-one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.*

**16** *The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," {Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 24:7} meaning one person, who is Christ.*

**17** *What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.*

**18** *For if 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.*

God added the Law to His covenant with Abraham. God's covenants are not static, that is unchanging. Instead God not only added the Law but also added the New Covenant to the Old thus fulfilling the promises of the Old. The promise to Abraham that the entire world would be blessed through him, though a picture of Israel and later the Church was specifically speaking of Abraham's "seed" not "seeds". Seeds would be all Abraham's offspring. But since God's covenant promise was given to Abraham's "seed" it is specifically talking about Jesus Christ. Jesus, on His human side, was a descendant of Abraham. The law, which was given to Moses for the people of Israel 430 years after Abraham, did not nullify the covenant of God and do away with His promise to send a Savior for the whole world. If Abraham's inheritance as the father of "the seed" depended on the Law, then it was not a real promise. But God gave this promise to Abraham before the Law so that it would not be dependant on the Law.

**20** ¶ *What, then, was the purpose 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 mediator.*

**21** *A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.*

So now we can understand from what Paul is teaching that the Law was given because of the sins of Israel so that they would be looking forward to freedom from it in Christ. The problem is that many Jews do not realize this truth and therefore cling to the Law for their salvation, when the Law was never effective to save because no one could keep it. Not even Moses could keep it. Remember that Moses could not go into the Promised Land because he disobeyed the Lord's command to him to speak to the rock.

*Ex 17:6 I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.*

*Nu 20:1-12 ¶ In the first month the whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried. Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. They quarrelled with Moses and said, "If only we had died when our brothers fell dead*

*before the LORD! Why did you bring the LORD's community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here? Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!" Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell face down, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. The LORD said to Moses, "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so that they and their livestock can drink." So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honour me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."*

If not even Moses could obey the Lord how could others expect to obey the whole law. The reason this offense of Moses was so serious is that the rock was a foreshadowing of Christ because Jesus is the Rock of our salvation (Ps. 95:1).

*1Co 10:4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.*

Did you know that it was the preincarnate Christ who accompanied Israel in the wilderness and who delivered them from the Egyptians? So when Moses hit the rock what he did foreshadowed the Jews crucifying Jesus Christ. Jesus was the seed of the promise Who would destroy sin that was brought to light by the Law. The promise of Jesus Christ would bring one mediator between God and man. The Law had to have a separate mediator between God and man, but in Jesus Christ God became His own mediator, thus the promise of the seed is superior to the Law.

***21 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.***

***22 But 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.***

Does the Law then oppose the promises of God? No. If the Law could have brought righteousness there would have been not need for a Savior, no need for the promise of the seed. The promise of salvation through God's own Son was greater than the Law because the whole world is a "prisoner of sin". This means that people are born into sin, have a sin nature, the old self, and also choose to sin. They are doubly condemned.

*Ro 6:6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, {Or be rendered powerless} that we should no longer be slaves to sin—*

We have a body of sin that is tied genetically to the sin of Adam and Eve. We are born into sin.

*Ro 8:3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the **sinful nature**, {Or the flesh; also in verses 4, 5, 8, 9, 12 and 13} **God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. {Or man, for sin} And so he condemned sin in sinful man, {Or in the flesh}***

Not through the Law but through Christ can we receive the new creation in the Holy Spirit.

*1Pe 4:3 For you have spent enough time in the past **doing what pagans choose to do**—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.*

So sin is not just in our nature, we choose to act out of the nature and do sin. It is only by faith in Jesus Christ that we can be given a new self and the help of the Holy Spirit to put off the old self.

*Eph. 4: 22-24 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to **put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to **put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

**23 Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.  
24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ {Or charge until Christ came} that we might be justified by faith.**

Paul reveals the true purpose of the Law, which few Jews understood, and certainly most Gentiles did not understand. The Law was given to lead people to Christ so that they might be justified by faith, not works. Before Christ came the Jews were held prisoner to the law, locked up in rules and regulations until the time the seed would be revealed. The Law cannot save, but it was put there to help men understand their need for a Savior. The Law helped men see the sinners they were, and so brought about the understanding in those of faith in God that they needed the perfect sacrifice for sin in the Messiah. The only way to be justified, made right with God, declared righteous by God, is to believe in His Son and accept His gift of grace through faith.

**25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.  
26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,  
27 for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

Since Jesus Christ came and established the New Covenant in his blood by way of His crucifixion and being raised from the dead, the Law no longer has to supervise Christians. They have become sons of God, both Jew and Gentile, through faith alone. Another good picture for water baptism is given here. It is not only a picture of death in Christ but it is also a picture of being clothed in Christ, surrounded by Him. It is a picture of putting on the bridal clothes of the groom. Water baptism is a picture of what has already happened in the spiritual, that is death to self, belief on the Lord Jesus Christ, clothed in His righteousness, and raised to new life. The new life, the new self has already come and water baptism is a complete picture of what only Jesus Christ has done for those who are born again. Water baptism is not an end in itself just as the Law as not an end. It points to something else. In water baptism we give testimony to what already took place on the inside because of the work of Jesus Christ alone.

**28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***  
**29 *If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.***

So now, under this New Covenant in Christ, there is no longer a division between Abraham's physical descendants to whom the Law as given, God's people, and the new people of God, which come from every nation. Not only that but God broke down all the divisions in Christ, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female are all one in Christ. The tearing of the veil of the temple when Christ died signified this. Until His death certain people could not come into the Holy of Holies; only the High Priest on one day of the year. But then the veil was torn in two it signified the New Covenant where anyone could approach God through faith in Christ.

***Mr 15:38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.***

Now anyone who belongs to Christ is of the seed of Abraham, both in the fact of Jesus Christ being the physical seed of the promise, and through justification by faith just as Abraham was declared righteous by faith.

# Study In Galatians

by Sandy Simpson

## ***(8) Galatians 4:1-20***

Paul left off in the last chapter by talking about the fact that if we belong to Christ we are also heirs to the promise made to Abraham. In fact we are the fulfillment of that promise.

***1 ¶ 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.***

***2 He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.***

***3 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world.***

***4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,***

***5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.***

Paul give an illustration that is an example of God's unfolding promise to His followers. When Israel was given the Law it was like they were still children. Even more the Gentiles were in slavery to the things of this world, the dictates of men, the structure of cultures that were really not reflective of God's design at all. At least the children of Israel were given the Law and they had the promise given to Abraham. Finally when God's timing was perfect, God sent His Son who was born of a woman who was a descendant of Abraham, born under the Law.

***Ro 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.***

But His mission was not to continue the Law but to redeem the children of Israel from under it so that they could be true sons of God by faith like Abraham. When Christ died He not only died to redeem those under the Law, but also to redeem those without God and without hope in the world.

***Eph. 2:12-13 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.***

***6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, {Aramaic for Father} Father."***

***7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.***

God provided a better way than the Law, in fact the Law, as we have seen, did not make a way to the Father but pointed out that man cannot be reconciled with the Father apart from Faith. But then God not only sent His Son to make a way for us, he sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. Did you know that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ? This is why we can say that we have Jesus Christ in our hearts because it is the Spirit of His Son. Remember that God is one in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Because we have the Spirit living in our hearts when God looks at us He sees the Spirit of His Son in us, therefore He regards us with the love He has for His Son. The Spirit in us calls out "Abba" or in our modern day English, "papa" or "daddy". Because Jesus Christ in us calls to the Father, we also cry "Abba". God has become our Father.

*Ro 8:15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. {Or adoption} And by him we cry, "Abba, {Aramaic for Father} Father."*

Those who have not believed in Jesus Christ and who do not have His Spirit in them are not sons of God and God is not their Father. God is their Creator but they are still slaves to sin, and the penalty for sin is death. But when we become children of God and He became our papa, we then also inherit what He has promised to His children all the way back to Abraham. God has promised his children new life, life eternal and rewards for those who do good works from faith.

*Ro 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

*1Jo 2:25 And this is what he promised us—even eternal life.*

*Re 22:12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.*

*Joh 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

**8 ¶ Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.**

**9 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 again?**

**10 You are observing special days and months and seasons and years!**

**11 I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.**

Gentiles did not know God. This proves beyond any doubt that those who teach that the Gentiles have always been worshipping God by having a god (in their pantheon of gods) who they call a “supreme being” or that the people groups of the world went out from Babel with the true knowledge and worship of God, are liars. This is not the only place where it is said of the Gentiles that they “did not know God”.

*1Co 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, **the world through wisdom did not know God**, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.*

*1Jo 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that **it did not know him**.*

*Ro 1:28 Furthermore, since **they did not think it worth while to retain the knowledge of God**, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.*

*1Th 4:5 not in passion of lust, like **the Gentiles who do not know God**;*

*Eph. 2:12-13 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, **without hope and without God in the world**. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.*

*2Th 1:8 **He will punish those who do not know God** and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*

Gentiles who are not saved are slaves to idolatry and demonic powers. They are under the dominion of the evil one.

*1Jo 5:19 We know that we are children of God, and **that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.***

This is why I wrote my book called “Idolatry In Their Hearts: with Mike Oppenheimer ... to partly address this false teaching that Gentiles only need to go back in their history to discover that they were worshipping the true God all along. What a lie! In fact this is along the same lines as what Paul was warning the Galatians to avoid. They were moving back to where they came from instead of moving forward in the grace of Christ. If they embraced the false teaching of the false Jewish teachers about circumcision they would become slaves again from the very legalism they had escaped. The Law is legalism but so were their practices in false religion. They would be trading one wrong for another and thus canceling out God’s grace to them through Jesus Christ.

One way they were going backwards was that they were beginning to celebrate certain dates and seasons like they did when they were pagans. One way they were likely being told to do this was for them to observe the Sabbath. But that is a function of the Law. We are to continue to meet together but the reason a day of worship was set aside as Sunday under the New Covenant was so that new Christians would not think they had to observe the law of the Sabbath. In fact any day of the week can be set aside for meeting together for fellowship and Bible study, but the early Church changed the meeting day of the Sabbath to Sunday, the first day of the week, in celebration of Jesus being raised from the dead. But this was not a law as it was in the Mosaic Law. The Bible and writings of early church fathers all confirm that it became an important change for the Church to meet together on the first day of the week.

*Acts 20:7 **On the first day of the week** we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.*

*1 Cor. 16: 2 **On the first day of every week**, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*

*Rev. 1: 10 **On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit**, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,*

***But every Lord’s Day, gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure.** (Didache 14, ANF 7.381 (c. 90 AD)*

***We have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord’s Day.** (Ignatius of Antioch, Epistle to the Magnesians 9, ANF 1.62 (c. 105 AD)*

***But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God ... made the world. And Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead on that same day.** (Justin Martyr, First Apology, ANF 1.186 (c. 160 AD)*

The days referred to are also likely the Jewish Festivals. Now if you are observing those “days” as an educational process that is one thing. If you are observing them because you think, as a Gentile, you have to do that to please God, then that is wrong. It is “Law keeping” instead of freedom in Christ. The Jewish Festivals are rich with pictures of the coming Savior, but now that the Savior has come it is more important to serve Him and preach the Gospel about Him. This could also be a reference to their old pagan rites of the new moon, etc. But since Paul is dealing mainly with Jewish legalism, then the direct



reference would be to the observance of Sabbath and Jewish festivals. Paul was afraid that his teaching to them on grace was going to be undermined by Jews who wanted to enslave people again to the Law.

**12 ¶ *I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong.***

**13 *As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you.***

**14 *Even 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.***

**15 *What has happened to 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.***

**16 *Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?***

Verse 13 is a good verse to give to those who say that Christians should be wealthy and without sickness. That is a lie. It was because of an illness that Paul had to postpone his missionary journeys and stay in Galatia to preach the Gospel. No doubt some were saved as a result. The Galatian Christians were kind to Paul and did not consider his illness to be a burden but they welcomed the opportunity to fellowship with him and learn from him. But now Paul had received reports that they were no longer satisfied with him or tolerant of his teaching on grace, but were rather turning to the Law and false teachers. It is interesting to me that often people will be your friend as long as you are telling them what they can accept. As soon as you see them going the wrong way and they don't want to accept it or hear it, they turn against you. This has happened to me many times. There are a number of people in a certain mission in Micronesia who I tried to help see they were headed in the wrong way. Because of that many turned against me and slandered me behind my back. How do I know this? The islands are a very small place and when you say something about someone it usually comes back around to them sooner or later, usually sooner. But I am not concerned with my own reputation. I would rather speak the truth, and I do it because I love them and want to see the churches stand for the truth, than to agree with them and their false teachings and ungodly practices.

**17 ¶ *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.***

**18 *It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you.***

This is exactly what I have been telling Christians in Micronesia. There are always people who are zealous to win them over, to give them money or scholarships to buy their friendship, and to try to prove to them that they are holier than those who brought the Gospel to them. They are "Johnny-come-latelys" as the phrase in English goes ... those who come in after and end up dividing the sheep.

***Ac 20:29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.***

Paul was right. Savage wolves came everywhere Paul planted the seeds of the Gospel and established churches. This is what the enemy does. He comes behind with destruction for the flock. It is only by the grace of God that Christians can stand against the false teachings of legalism and liberalism. What wolves do is come in and divide the flock instead of bringing it together in unity. They were trying to carve off a piece of each early church group for themselves. This is what wolves do. In one of the island of Micronesia the people from Brownsville came with their "signs and wonders" show and about 1/3 of the

people of that church left to follow them. But they did not even bother to establish a proper church or pastor there and it wasn't very long before virtually everyone who had left the church came back, embarrassed for the rotten things they had said against the church leadership and missionaries. But I have seen this happen over and over. Zealousness for the Lord and the Gospel is a good thing. Zealousness for legalism is not. Paul was a perfect example of this hard lesson.

***19 ¶ My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 17 how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!***

It is always hard to write letters to people who are headed in the wrong direction. But it has to be done. Paul was wishing he could sit with them face to face and discuss these issues so that they could see the love in his face when he chastened them, but that was not possible. The issue was far too serious to let go because it was very likely that if Paul let it go the Galatian church would be completely apostatized by the time he returned. Remember that you have to get the leaven out of bread before warm water is added. Once that happens and the leaven is kneaded into the dough, the loaf begins to rise and there is no stopping that process. Paul was attempting to get them to remove the leaven before it took hold. The reason is that false teaching, once it has taken root in a church, is very hard to get out. I have seen a few denominations come back from the brink of apostasy when the church leadership was able to admit they had been deceived and dealt with the problem head on publicly. But that is rare. The time to try to save a church is before the leaven of false teachings has had time to work into the dough. Paul's tone in the letter looks like he is being very blunt and is angry with them. But in reality he is trying to wake them up by getting them to think through the issue of grace versus the Law.

# Study In Galatians

by Sandy Simpson

## ***(9) Galatians 4:21-31***

***21 ¶ Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says?***

***22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman.***

***23 His 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.***

***24 These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.***

***25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.***

***26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.***

***27 For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labour pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband." {Isaiah 54:1}***

***28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.***

***29 At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.***

***30 But what 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." {Gen. 21:10}***

***31 Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.***

Many times when we learn some new truth, there is a door into that truth that we have to step through in order to understand the rest of it. Any man who does not understand the difference between Law and Grace will never understand the gospel. It is like trying to learn to drive without learning how to use a steering wheel and the brakes. In this passage we just read, Paul gives an illustration of the difference between Law and Grace to make it easier to understand.

Paul uses an Old Testament story from the life of Abraham about the two sons of Abraham, Hagar and Sarah. This is significant because the Jewish Legalists all claimed to be the sons of Abraham. Paul shows them the difference between Law and Grace and proves that the Legalists were not under grace and therefore not the spiritual children of Abraham.

In verses 21-23 the Galatians had not yet turned back to the bondage of the Law but they desired to. Paul was trying to stop them and focus them on life under grace. Paul challenged them to be aware of what the Law really was. By using Abraham as an illustration, Paul was appealing to the founder of the Jewish nation. Actually it was God's plan all along to use Abraham in a number of ways as a foreshadowing of faith in Jesus Christ. All Jews trace their ancestry to Abraham. Paul reminded the Galatians that Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. Isaac was born of Sarah, the free woman, after Ishmael. Isaac was the promised son from God; Ishmael was the son of a fleshly decision. Ishmael was born of Hagar, the slave woman. According to ancient law and custom the status of a mother affected the status of her son. Ishmael was born in

the ordinary way, requiring no miracle and no promise of God. Isaac was born as the result of a promise in a miraculous way. Abraham and Sarah were beyond the age of childbearing, but God miraculously fulfilled His promise in bringing life out of the deadness of Sarah's womb.

In order to emphasize the contrast between Law and grace Paul treated those two mothers figuratively in verses 24-27. But Paul was not the author of this prefiguring, it was God Himself. Paul compares them to two covenants. One was the Mosaic Law, which had its origin at Mount Sinai. Those under this legal covenant were slaves. As Hagar brought forth a slave son, so does the Law. The other covenant was Grace, the covenant of promise to Abraham. As Sarah brought forth a free son, so does grace.

In verses 25-26 Hagar and Sarah are also an illustration of the two Jerusalems. Hagar stood for the first-century city of Jerusalem - a city enslaved to Rome and in slavery to the Law. Sarah, stood for the heavenly Jerusalem above. She was the mother of all the children of grace. This heavenly city, which one day will come to earth (according to Rev. 21:2), is now the "city of the living God" (according to Heb. 12:22).

*Rev. 21: 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.*

*Heb. 12: 22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,*

The heavenly Jerusalem is the home of all departed believers.

Paul applied this passage Sarah, who though previously barren, was later blessed with a child.

*Is. 54:1 "Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labour; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the LORD.*

Sarah would ultimately have more children than Hagar.

So now Paul goes on to the interpretation of these illustrations. In applying the truth from the biblical illustration, Paul made three comparisons.

In verse 28 Paul compared Isaac to Christians. As "Isaac" experienced a supernatural birth and was a child by means of a promise, so believers experience a supernatural birth by way of the promised one.

*John 3:3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

*John 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.*

*Rom. 1: 2-4 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David,*

*and who through the Spirit {Or who as to his spirit} of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.*

As children of promise Christians are in a distinct category and should not live as children of bondage to the Law.

In verse 20 Paul compares Ishmael to false teachers. Paul compared Ishmael's persecution of Isaac to the false teachers' opposition to believers. Abraham celebrated the weaning of Isaac with a banquet. At that time, Ishmael mocked Isaac, laughing at his younger step brother, since Ishmael was the elder son and assumed he would be heir to his father's estate (Gen. 21:8-9). That early squabble has perpetuated in the two groups even to today. The Jews and the Arabs/Muslims still don't get along. Paul compared the legalists to Ishmael as those who were born out legalistic self-efforts. Islam is one of the most legalistic religions today, worshipping a false God "Allah" that requires them to keep his perverted laws. Paul charged them of persecuting the true believers who were born by the power of the Spirit. With few exceptions Paul's persecution came from the Jews, the people in bondage to the Law.

In the last verse Paul compared Abraham to the Galatians. When Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac, she made Abraham expel the slave woman and her son God granted Sarah's request (cf. Gen. 21:10, 12). Paul was telling the Galatians to excommunicate the Legalists the same way Abraham excommunicated Hagar and Ishmael. This is because true believers are children of the free woman, not the slave woman.

**Something else to think about ...** God had a plan to bring his promise to Abraham to fruition through Isaac. But many times we jump the gun and try to make human plans in the place of what God wants to do because we do not want to wait on His timing. Because Abraham and Sarah did not wait they produced many nations who are now opposed to God, in fact want to wipe out Israel and Christianity. Today these nations are the ones that cause terror and death all over the world in wars and violence. Those descendants of Hagar are, by in large today, Muslims. What if Abraham had just waited?

Radio personality Paul Harvey tells the story of how an Eskimo kills a wolf: "First, the Eskimo coats his knife blade with animal blood and allows it to freeze. Then he adds another layer of blood, and another, until the blade is completely concealed by frozen blood. "Next, the hunter fixes his knife in the ground with the blade up. When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, he licks it, tasting the fresh frozen blood. He begins to lick faster, more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is bare. Feverishly now, harder and harder the wolf licks the blade in the arctic night.

So great becomes his craving for blood that the wolf does not notice the razor-sharp sting of the naked blade on his own tongue, nor does he recognize the instant at which his insatiable thirst is being satisfied by his OWN warm blood. His carnivorous appetite just craves more--until the dawn finds him dead in the snow!"

Though it may not sound appealing to us, there is nothing essentially wrong with the wolf's appetite for blood. It was created a carnivore, crafted with that craving. The wolf is also free,

though tricked it is not forced to lick the knife. But at some point the craving takes over until the wolf is no longer free, He has become slave to a desire that God created in him. Here's the question that the story of the wolf raises for you and I today: How can God given desire cause ungodly trouble? The answer is when we try to accomplish God's Purpose with a Human Plan.

We need to be careful not to substitute a human plan for the plans of God. We need to wait on Him.

*Ps 37:7 **Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.***

*Ps 27:14 **Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.***

# Study In Galatians

by Sandy Simpson

## *(10) Galatians 5:1-12*

***1 ¶ 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.***

There is a modern Christian praise and worship song that is taken from this verse. It is a song that repeats a few phrases over and over again, which is not what Christians should be doing when they sing. The Bible tells us not to repeat things over and over again like the pagans do; yet this is what you hear in many churches during the singing time. Actually Mt. 6:7 is talking about repeating things over and over in prayer thinking that God will hear us because we are praying with many words. But this also applies to singing song to the Lord. A certain amount of repetition is fine because music often repeats phrases. But many modern “worship” songs repeat things so many times it tends to put people into an altered state of consciousness. But I digress. The song I am talking about is called “The Freedom Song”.

*Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.  
Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.  
There is peace. There is love. There is joy.*

*It is for freedom He set us free.  
It is for freedom He set us free.*

*I'm free.  
I'm free.  
I'm free.*

*We will walk in His freedom, walk in His liberty.  
We will walk in His freedom, walk in His liberty.  
We will dance in His freedom, dance in His liberty.  
We will dance in His freedom, dance in His liberty.*

*(Performed by Darrell Evans)*

Now this song is fine as far as it goes, though the repetition in this song is annoying and counterproductive. But the more important problem is that Gal. 5:1 has been pulled out of context. Freedom in Christ is a wonderful thing, but on the other hand liberals don't want to think about standing firm in the Faith. There is no freedom where people are not standing firm, either against liberal teachings or legalistic teachings as Paul is addressing. Paul states, in context, that those who have made a commitment to Christ and have His indwelling Spirit have freedom from the Law. He is writing the Law of Christ on their hearts, but they need to stand firm or else that liberty can turn again into bondage if we listen to false teachers.

***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.***

**3 Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is required 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.**

If the Galatians allowed themselves to be circumcised because they believed the false teachers, they would come back under the law of sin and death from which they had been delivered. Christ would then be no value to them because they would be relying on their own works to save them. This is why a works salvation false gospel is so dangerous. When you go back to works, you then must obey the whole Law in order to be saved, and we have already seen that no man can obey the whole Law. Thus anyone who relies on the Law for salvation is condemned. This is such a serious issue that a person can be alienated from Christ and fall away from grace. There are many Christians today who say you cannot fall from grace. But that is not what Paul taught. Even Jesus talked about people who believe for awhile then fall away because their Faith had not real roots, so when hard times come they don't survive through them.

*Lu 8:13 Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. **They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.***

This is why self-deception is so dangerous. No one can take a true believer out of the hand of Jesus Christ (John 10:28-29) but only God knows those who will stand till the end (Gal. 5:1, Eph. 6:14-18).

*Heb 3:14 **We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.***

So the Lord knows who will stand firm to the end, thus they are saved and no one can take them out of the hand of Jesus. But we must stand firm in the Faith and not go back to works. If we do that we prove we have not come to share in Christ.

**5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.**

There is an initial decision to believe Christ. But we must follow Him, obey Him, and stand firm in the Faith. Thus we await through the Spirit the time when we will be made fully righteous, not just standing in the substitutionary righteousness of Christ. Someday when we are made new at the resurrection, we will receive eternal bodies that are no longer subject to sin and death.

*1 Cor. 15: 42-44 **So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.***

*Re 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. **There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.**"*

**6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.**



The law of Christ is love, not works. Jesus did away with the requirements of the Law so circumcision no longer has any value. What has value is the same thing that had value with Abraham, that is faith. Faith will express itself in love.

*1Co 13:2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*

*Col 1:5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel*

*Phm 1:5 because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.*

James said that faith without works, which come from faith, is dead. I would say that the Bible also teaches that faith without love is dead. Faith will always result in love of God and love for the saints.

**7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?**

**8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.**

Paul paints a picture here of a runner in a race. When you run a race you don't want people passing you and cutting you off. That slows you down and, in fact, can make you stumble and fall. The false Jewish teachers, instead of helping Gentile Christians, were actually keeping them from the truth of grace. Paul states that these ideas did not come from him or, more importantly, from Jesus Christ.

**9 "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."**

We have looked at this verse and others like it many times in our studies. False teaching of every kind, if allowed in the church, will result in everyone being leavened. Once false teaching has been allowed to work through the dough of a church, it is virtually impossible to stop. It has to be stopped either before it comes in contact with believers, or shortly thereafter. If leaven has already come in it needs to be taken out as soon as possible and explanations made to the believers as to why it was necessary. Paul has already called for the excommunication, the throwing out, of the Jewish false teachers from fellowship. This leavening is the reason why. God many times used the picture of unleavened bread as an example of those who are set apart to follow Him. This is why in our communion service we use unleavened bread like they ate at the Last Supper or Passover. We must figuratively leave Egypt but must also not go back to Egypt. The Bible consistently talks about leaven as being a bad thing, though not in every case. It is most often used to typify false teaching and sin.

*1Co 5:7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are.*

*For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. (talking about sin in the body of Christ)*

*Lu 12:1 Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. (talking about people who teach that keeping the Law will make a person righteous, even when they were not actually keeping the Law)*

**10 I am 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.**

**11 Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offence of the cross has been abolished.**

***12 As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!***

Apparently there was one Jewish teacher, in particular, who was teaching the Galatians they needed to be circumcised. We don't know who this person was but he was likely one of the leaders of this movement, but the rebuke applies to anyone who was teaching this heresy. This false teacher was getting people to slander Paul and trying to ruin his ministry. But Paul's ministry did not come from men, but from Jesus Christ. Paul preached the offense of the cross. This is the true Gospel.

***Ro 5:15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.***

***Ro 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:***

Through the humiliation and offense of the cross Jesus Christ was able to reconcile many to God. If people do not recognize the offense of the cross, and are not willing to be offended about their sin, then no salvation is possible. If Paul were to go around preaching circumcision he would have abolished the offense of the cross, thus abolishing salvation. This is exactly what the false teachers were doing. Paul makes a very strong statement but it is not as bad as it seems. He basically is saying if circumcision is such an important thing, why not go all the way and cut everything off. Perhaps if they cut it all off they might be brought to repentance. If they cut off the whole thing maybe that would not only take care of the sin of circumcision but also the sin of sexual immorality. Remember that Jesus said if a part of your body causes you to sin it would be better to remove it than to end up in hell.

***Mr. 9: 43-48 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched". And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched". And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." {Isaiah 66:24}***

Jesus was not starting a new cult where people cut off body part, but he was making a point that it is better to not have hands, feet and eyes to sin rather than have them be the cause of a person going to hell. This was Paul's same point.

As it is, the false brethren were agitators who were really only interested in enticing people to follow them into their own sins.

# Study In Galatians

by Sandy Simpson

## *(11) Galatians 5:13-26*

**13 ¶ You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; {Or the flesh; also in verses 16, 17, 19 and 24} rather, serve one another in love.**

**14 The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbour as yourself." {Lev. 19:18}**

**15 If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.**

**16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.**

Paul is making sure they understand that to go back to the Old Testament Law and be circumcised was to “indulge the sinful nature”. The new law of Christ was that of love and service, not servitude under the Law. If we only learn to love our neighbor as ourselves we would be not only obeying the Law but be in obedience to the law of Christ. I have brought up this point in other lessons, so not need to go deeply into it here, but our problem is not that we do not love ourselves enough like false teachers Rick Warren, Oprah Winfrey and other would lead us to believe, but our problem is that we love ourselves to the exclusion of others. Our first and last thought, in our sinful nature, is for ourselves. Today we live in the “me generation” where self-love is taught and prized as some kind of magic, life-giving formula. But it is actually self-destructive and proves that we actually have not love for God or for our neighbor.

*To truly love yourself, you need to know the five truths that form the basis of a healthy self-image. (1) Accept yourself. (2) Love yourself. (3) Be true to yourself. (4) Forgive yourself. (5) Believe in yourself. (Learn To Love Yourself! by Rick Warren, Ladies Home Journal, March 2005)*

This is such falsehood. I say let's follow what the Bible says about self. First of all, learn to love Jesus Christ!

**(1) Rather than “Accept Yourself”, deny yourself.** Don't chase after vanity. The Bible tells us that if we would have abundant life (John 10:10) we must deny ourselves and follow Christ (Luke 9:23) by taking up our cross and following him to death. God only accepts us on the basis of our belief in (Rom. 10:9) and relationship to (John 14:23) His Son Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12), Who He sent to die (1 John 4:10) to pay the penalty (Rev. 5:9) of death (Rom. 6:23) for our sins (Rom. 3:23). God does NOT accept us outside of His Son (John 14:6). When we are in Christ we become "precious and priceless". God loves all people He has created so much that He sent His only Son (John 3:16) to die as the only sacrifice (Heb. 10:12) of forgiveness possible (Col. 1:14, Acts 4:12), but God hates wickedness (Ps. 97:10, Is. 61:8, Mal. 2:16, Prov. 6:16-19), and only those who turn away from wickedness (2 Tim. 2:19), repent (Acts 3:19) and accept the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9) as their Savior (John 4:42, 1 Tim. 4:10) will be called "children of God" (John 1:12).

**(2) Rather than “Love Yourself”, love Jesus Christ.** God said in reference to His chosen people Israel "Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion

on you." (Isaiah 54:10 NIV) So this has little to do with the Gentile readership of Ladies Home Journal. But moving on ... God is not fickle and He does not have "grouchy days" but God is a righteous judge and will send those people who are "lovers of themselves" (2 Tim. 3:1-9) to judgment (Rom. 2:5) and hell (Rev. 21:8). Where is the concept of "feeling loved" mentioned in the Bible? The answer is nowhere. God has given us the ability to feel, but our feelings can be misled by ourselves, others, the world, and the enemy. To base a relationship with the Lord on how you "feel" is totally subjective, and provides an opening for the devil to deceive. The enemy does not deceive with bad things, but with "good" things including "good" feelings (2 Cor. 11:14). God does love world (John 3:16), but the world is judged (John 12:31, 1 Cor. 11:32). God loves people (Matt. 18:14), but they are on their way to judgment without hope (Rom. 1:20, Rom. 3:23, Rom. 5:12). God has many creatures (Gen. 1:1-2:25), but the only people who can call God "Father" (Gal. 4:6) are those who are saved by His Son and have a personal relationship with Him (Titus 3:7). There can be no "breakthrough" without you allowing the conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8) through the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16) and the Gospel preached (Rom. 10:14) to break your hard heart (Heb. 4:7) so that you confess you are a sinner (1 John 1:9). You must repent of your sins (2 Tim. 2:19) and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ to experience sonship (Rom. 8:15).

**(3) Rather than "Be True To Yourself", be true to Jesus Christ.** Accept and enjoy a new life in Christ (Rom. 6:4) when you become one of His children (1 John 3:1). He will lift you up (James 4:10). He foreknew everyone who would be true to Jesus Christ (2 John 1:9) and because of that they are predestined, called, justified, and glorified (Rom. 8:29-30). Get to know Jesus Christ (John 17:3, 2 Pet. 3:18). Let God who created your gifts and abilities (James 1:17) use them (Ps. 100:1-5), but more importantly He gives you spiritual gifts as well (1 Cor. 14:12). These are to be used to build up others, not spend them on your vanity. We are weak, but the Lord is strong (2 Cor. 12:9-10). But we are not to be content in our weakness (sins), but strive through Christ to live holy lives (1 Thess. 4:7, 2 Tim. 1:9). No one can do this without being born again (John 3:3).

**(4) Rather than "Forgive Yourself", forgive others as God forgives you.** God is perfection (Ps. 18:30, James 1:17). We are sinners (Rom. 5:12). But God expects believers to come to unity in the Faith (Eph. 4:13), to believe what is right according to the Word of God (Titus 1:9, 1 Pet. 1:23). God expects honesty (Eph. 4:15, Rev. 21:8). For a teacher like Rick Warren to have "honesty" as a "Christian" he would need to deal with the issue of sin. But he does not. The only basis for wiping a person's slate clean of sins, again, is the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:19) shed substitutionally on our behalf. We must confess our sins (1 John 4:9) and believe that only Jesus Christ can save us (Eph. 1:13). THEN ... God will not not "hold a grudge" but will remove our sins as far as the east is from the west (Ps. 103:11-12). Jesus Christ has forgiven those who believe in Him (1 John 2:12). We in turn need to forgive others (Luke 11:4, Col. 3:13). There is no mention about "forgiving ourselves" in the Bible. How can a guilty person forgive themselves?

**(5) Rather than "Believe In Yourself", believe in Jesus Christ.** I talk with many successful women who are plagued with pride and self-absorbtion. What causes that? It is because they are not listening to the prompting of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8), they are not reading God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15), but instead are completely caught up in the "me" culture that is in the world and in the churches thanks to people like Rick Warren (Rom. 6:18). How do you reverse this? By coming to know the truth about yourself as a sinner (1 John 1:8), the truth about Jesus Christ as the God-man

(Phil. 2:6-11), the truth about the world (John 14:17), flesh (John 6:63) and the devil (John 8:44), the truth about heaven (Heb. 12:23) and hell (2 Pet. 2:4-9). You can "affirm" and positively confess yourself all the way to perdition. But what good will it do you in the end (Jer. 5:31)? The truth is that God has created you to come to the point where you bow your knee to the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:6-11) and make Him the Lord of your life (Luke 4:8) INSTEAD OF YOURSELF. You can bow now or be forced to bow before you are sentenced to the lake of fire (Rom. 14:11).

The Galatians had started having division and were backbiting each other over what the false teacher(s) had taught them about circumcision. This is what destroys many churches, the introduction of false teachings. This is where the word "heresy" comes from. Heresy is from the word *heretikos*, which means "schismatic, factious, a follower of a false doctrine". *Schismatic* means a person who causes divisions over doctrine. There is a good kind of division and a bad kind. The good kind is to get away from and denounce false teaching; the bad kind is to allow false teachers to divide a good church. If we live by the Spirit we will be in unity, both spiritual unity and doctrinal unity, or unity of the Faith. If we are not living by the Spirit we will cause division over false teaching.

***17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.***

***18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.***

Those led by the Spirit, obedient to the voice of God through His written Word and the counsel of the Holy Spirit, will not want to go back to works salvation. They will live according to the law of Christ. Those who are not truly born again will cause conflict by trying to get people to follow a set of rules in order to be justified with God. What they need to hear is the true Gospel of grace and accept it.

***19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 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.***

Paul spells out how we can tell if a person is not living according to the Spirit. In fact, likely, they are not in the Spirit at all. Those who do the things we have just read are practicing sin. John says that those who practice sin, as opposed to practicing righteousness, are not of God.

***1 John 3:4-8 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.***

So we can know people by their fruit, both good fruit and bad fruit. If a person persists in sin, they are practicing sin and they are not true followers of Christ, but the devil still has them. On the other hand we can know true believers by their good fruit.

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

I did a whole study on the fruit of the Spirit and that is available on my site under the name "[The Fruit Of The Spirit](#)". Suffice it to say you will find these qualities in a Spirit-led Christian. We are not perfect but we are forgiven and moving toward righteousness, practicing righteousness instead of practicing sin. You have to practice to get better at something. If you practice the fruit of the Spirit it will become easier with the Spirit's help. If you practice sin that also gets easier with the help of the devil.

**24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.**

**25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.**

**26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.**

Those who are true believers have gone to the cross spiritually with Christ. They have made a choice to confess and repent of their sins and turn, with the Lord's help, toward righteousness. They have put off the old self and put on the new self.

*Lu 9:23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*

*Eph. 4: 22-24 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to **put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to **put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

We need to walk in the Spirit, not behind or ahead, but in beside and in step with Him. If we are in step with the Spirit, walking with Him in fellowship, we will not become conceited and provoke people or envy people. We will display the fruit of the Spirit with people, especially with our brothers in the Lord.

# Study In Galatians

by Sandy Simpson

## *(12) Galatians 6*

Now Paul comes to some practical advice about how to deal with sinners. This is particularly addressing those who have bought into the false teachings of the false brethren. The Bible is clear that in dealing with false brethren we are to mark and avoid them.

*Ro 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*

But when it comes to brothers and sisters in the faith we are to go beyond rebuke into restoring them in love. We are to always deal with fellow believers by speaking the truth in love.

*Eph 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

**1 ¶ Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.**

**2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.**

**3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.**

**4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else,**

**5 for each one should carry his own load.**

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

Here are the principles Paul gives to help people who are living in sin but are willing to repent.

**(1) v.1 - If you are living in obedience to Christ, particularly if you are an elder in the church, it is your job to help restore someone who is caught in sin.**

Those who are spiritual are usually the elders in a church. They are uniquely qualified to help younger believers with problems of sin as they have been through many of those sins in their own life and now are living the victory of Christ over them.

**(2) v. 1 - When we are trying to help others we must be careful not to be tempted to sin ourselves.**

A good example of this is when a pastor agrees to counsel a woman. He should either have his wife present or ask another female deaconess to counsel them. He should never be alone with another woman as this can cause a temptation to sin. I have seen pastors fall because they did not protect themselves this way.

**(3) v. 2 - We are to carry one another's burdens. This is how we show love for our brothers in the Lord.**

We are to first put our burdens, our cares, our problems, on the Lord,

*Matt. 11: 28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

But then we are also to help others carry their burdens in life. I am not talking about putting a basket of taro on your head and taking it home from the taro swamp, although that would qualify if you were helping someone. But I am talking about helping others who have suffered loss, are grieving, and are weighed down in sin and the things of the world.

**(4) v. 3 - We need to be careful about pride rising up and blinding us to our own faults.**

Pride is one of the three most deadly sins in people.

*1Jo 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

*Pr 29:23 A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honour.*

*Pr 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.*

*Pr 8:13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behaviour and perverse speech.*

The man of lowly spirit is the one who does not fall, is able to see his own faults, and is honored in the end.

**(5) v. 4 - We should test ourselves to be sure we are not playing spiritual "oneupsmanship".**

What does "oneupsmanship" mean? It is the desire to always outdo the other guy, to show oneself as better than someone. We need to be aware that this kind of desire is always lurking beneath the surface and can rise at any time, which is why we need to continually check our motives to be sure we are not trying to prove we are holier than someone else and make them feel inferior.

**(6) v. 5 - We should each do what the Lord calls us to do, exercising our spiritual gifts for the benefit of the church and believers.**

We are not to compete but to encourage one another and help others through the use of the gifts of the Spirit the Lord has given us.

*1Co 14:12 So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.*

*1Co 12:4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

**(7) v. 6 - If we gain new insight in the Word we should share that with those who teach. It is a help to them.**



Teachers have an added responsibility before the Lord to teach accurately according to the written Word. They will be happy with any new insight you might gain from the Lord. This is why we share at the end of our Bible studies so that people may share an insight the Lord has given them with others and with the teachers. This can be a blessing to all as long as what is said is glorifying to the Lord and is correct.

**7 *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.***

**8 *The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature {Or his flesh, from the flesh} will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.***

This is an illustration that farmers could really understand. When you sow seed of wheat, for instance, you will reap wheat from the plant produced by the seed. God knows what spiritual seeds we sow. If we sow to please our sinful nature, then we will reap destruction. If we sow to please God, we will reap eternal life. Our motives in sowing spiritual seed, therefore, are very important. This is why we should be continually checking our motives for doing what we are doing.

**9 *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.***

**10 *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.***

Sometimes when we are living our lives in the Lord we can get tired. But be careful because the devil can use that weariness to try to get you depressed, and if he can get you depressed then maybe distraught, and if distraught then maybe even suicidal. Don't even let the enemy take you down that path. Keep reminding yourself that your life is in the Lord's hands and when He comes His reward is coming with Him. Isaiah even went through a time of self-doubt and weariness. But he reminded himself of the fact that God is a just God and will reward those who serve Him.

*Isa 49:4 But I said, "I have laboured to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due to me is in the LORD's hand, and my reward is with my God."*

*Re 22:12 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done."*

Sometimes it seems like the hardest people to do good for are fellow believers. But that is our first and most important task. We should always be looking for ways to do good for our brothers and sisters in Christ and for anyone else when God gives us the opportunity.

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

Paul finishes his letter to Galatians in his own handwriting to prove its authorship. Often Paul's letters were dictated to someone else who wrote them down. Paul makes fun of his writing technique but with the dual purpose of proving that it was his own handwriting.

**12 *Those who want to make 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.***

**13 *Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh.***

Paul now, in his own handwriting, reveals the evil behind the legalist teachers. The reason is that they could not bring themselves to preach the Gospel of grace because their fellow Jews would persecute them for it. So rather than risk losing their Jewish friends, they made a compromised false gospel trying to marry the Old Covenant in with the New. Yet even they could not obey the Law they wanted Gentiles to keep. What they wanted were followers to themselves after their own warped message.

***14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which {Or whom} the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.***

Paul's message would never change to suit men. Paul was not afraid of persecution from the Jews or Gentiles. His ultimate goal was not to build churches or get a following to himself. His goal was to preach Christ, and Him crucified.

*1 Cor. 2: 1-2 When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. **For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.***

Paul would preach the heart of the Gospel and not go around pretending that he knew everything as the Pharisees did. He would stick to the central theme of Christianity, that is the death of Jesus Christ in our place to pay the penalty for sin and to abolish the law of sin and death.

***15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.***

The most important miracle of all is the new creation God creates in those who believe in His Son.

*2Co 5:17 **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!***

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

Peace and mercy will follow those who are in Christ, in the New Covenant. Even Israel, if they would but put their faith in the Son of God, could have peace and mercy. We need to pray for the salvation of the Jews.

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

What marks did Paul bear? Paul bore the spiritual marks of having been crucified with Christ as we all do. Paul also bore the marks of spiritual persecution as well as bodily beatings and floggings. Paul certainly suffered for Christ and the marks of that persecution were evident on him.

*2 Cor. 11: 23-28 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been **flogged** more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the **forty lashes minus one**. Three times I was **beaten with rods**, once **I was stoned**, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from*

*my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have laboured and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.*

This was proof of his dedication to preaching Christ, and Him crucified. It also proved that he had born these things in order that many Gentiles would be saved.

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

Taking his farewell of them, he wishes them grace, and the protection of the Spirit of Christ in their spirits against the deceits of the false apostles, who labored to beat false teaching into their brains.