

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE

Galatians

Replying to questions and issues
relating to the evangel as presented
by Paul in Romans

BOB EVELY

2011.

“For freedom Christ frees us! Stand firm, then,
and be not again enthralled with the yoke of slavery.”
Galatians 5:1

*All Scriptures taken from the Concordant Literal New Testament
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About the Author

Paul begins by identifying himself as the writer of this letter (1:1) Let us recall the commission Paul received on the road to Damascus: *He is a choice instrument of Mine, to bear My name before both the nations and kings, besides the sons of Israel.* (Acts 9:15-16) And we know from Acts that Paul did go first to the synagogues to proclaim Christ to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles. Peter, John, James and other New Testament writers had a commission to Israel only. Paul alone was commissioned to go to the Gentiles.

We cannot assume Paul's message to the Gentiles was the same as the message proclaimed by the others unto Israel. Paul stressed that the gospel he proclaimed was not received from man, *but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.* (Galatians 1:11-12) If he preached the same gospel, why would he not have studied under the Twelve who had heard and observed Christ Himself during His earthly ministry? And why would Paul refer to his proclamation as "my evangel" instead of "the evangel?" (Romans 2:16; 16:25-26). Paul notes that he had been entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, and Peter had been trusted with the evangel of the Circumcision. (Galatians 2:7). He did not say that his was the evangel *to* the Uncircumcision; but *of* the Uncircumcision. It was a different message, and this can be clearly seen if we examine the details. Paul is the only one to have mentioned the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:13, or the expectation of the body of Christ in the celestials in Ephesians 2:6. Israel's expectation was always upon the earth, not in the celestials or heavens.

Paul was abandoned by nearly all at the end of his ministry (see 2 Timothy 1:15; 4:16; Acts 21:20). Note in the Acts passage that when Paul returned to Jerusalem he was opposed not by unbelieving Jews, but by believing Jews who were zealous for the law – a clear signal that Paul's message was different than that of the Twelve, and as a result Paul was opposed by Jewish *believers*.

Paul, in his writings, refers to a mystery that had been previously concealed, but which he was now revealing as God had instructed him. ... *His body, which is the ecclesia of which I became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, **to complete the word of God** ... the **secret** which has been **concealed** from the eons and from the generations, yet now was **made manifest** to His saints ...* (Colossians 1:24-16) ... *by revelation the secret is made known to me ... the secret of the Christ, which, in other generations, is not made known to the sons of humanity ...* (Ephesians 3:3-5)

Clearly Paul was commissioned to address a group not previously addressed by the Twelve (the Gentiles), with a different message that had been revealed to him not by man but by Christ Himself.

Introduction

GALATIANS 1:1

Paul opens by identifying himself as the author of this letter. *Paul, an apostle ... and all the brethren with me...* (1:1) And the letter is directed *to the ecclesias of Galatia* (1:2)

Paul identifies himself as **an apostle**, from the Greek *apostello*. The same Greek word is translated “commission” when in verb form. An apostle is one who has been commissioned by God. But Paul is a new breed of apostle. Jesus chose only twelve. When Judas departed, the remaining eleven were careful to replace him with only one ... bringing the number back to twelve. There were twelve tribes in Israel, and precisely twelve apostles when God was working thru Israel. But Paul is an *additional* apostle ... not one of the Twelve.

The recipient of this letter is **the ecclesias** of Galatia. The word *ecclesias* is from the Greek *ekklesia* ... literally *out-called-ones*. Often translated *church* the word simply means those who have been called out from a larger group. It does not always refer to the *church*. It is not always the same group that is called out. Modern Bible translators have done a disservice in translating *ekklesia* as *church*, because it could be that a different group of *out-called-ones* are being referred to in various instances. When we encounter the word, we must seek from the context to understand who the *out-called-ones* are.

Reference is made in 1:4 to **the present wicked eon**. Eon comes from the Greek *aion* and refers to a period of time of indefinite length. We remember from our study of science that the word eon refers to a very long time period; but not endlessness.

We sometimes see *aion* (or eon) in Scripture in the singular, and sometimes in the plural. A careful study of Scripture reveals that there was a time before the eons (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; 1 Corinthians 2:7) and there will be an end of the eons (1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 9:26). There will be eons to come in the future (Matthew 12:32; Ephesians 1:21; Hebrews 6:5) and there will be an end to this present eon (Matthew 13:39; Matthew 24:3).

And there are a number of instances where Scripture refers to this present eon, as in this passage in Galatians 1.

Modern Bible translations confuse this distinction between the eons, using the word *eternal* where that word seems to fit, and using another word (like *age* or *world*) where *eternal* will not fit the context. But if we translate the Bible consistently we will see very clearly that there are different time periods being referred to (eons or ages), each with a beginning and an end.

Paul notes that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins, *so that He might extricate us out of the present wicked eon*. This appears to refer to the

snatching away of the Body of Christ in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (commonly referred to as *the rapture*), when Christ will descend and when the dead and the living will be *snatched away* to meet the Lord in the air.

Currently God is working thru the Body of Christ and not Israel. But after the *snatching-away*, when the Body is removed from the earth, the events described in the book of Revelation will take place upon the earth. And then once again God will be working thru Israel upon the earth, which explains the many references to Israel throughout the book of Revelation.

A Different Evangel

GALATIANS 1:6

The Galatians were being led astray. This is what prompts Paul's writing to the Galatians. *I am marveling that thus, swiftly, you are transferred from that which calls you in the grace of Christ, to a **different evangel**, which is not another, except it be that some who are disturbing you want also to **distort** the evangel of Christ* (1:6). The false message that is misleading the Galatians is not just another message of the same kind ... it is a *different* message ... a *distortion* of the evangel of Christ.

Paul warns that if anyone brings an evangel different from the one that he brings, it should be rejected. *But if ever we also, or a messenger out of heaven, should be bringing an evangel to you beside that which we bring to you, let him be anathema!* (1:8)

Even if Peter, for example, were to bring an evangel different from what Paul had brought, it should be rejected. As we read on, we will see that this is the problem. Peter and the Twelve were commissioned to proclaim an evangel to the Circumcision (Israel), while Paul has been called as a different kind of apostle (not one of the Twelve) and to declare a different evangel to the body of Christ (thereby explaining the opposition Paul encounters). So Paul declares, "Listen only to the evangel that I bring." Yet today most churches proclaim the evangel from Peter and the Twelve, ignoring Paul's admonition. Most within the church today are being led astray to a *different* evangel ... a *distortion* of the evangel ... that mixes-in elements from the Circumcision evangel. Most denominations trace their pastoral authority to Peter as the rock upon whom the church was originated. But the ecclesia (called-out-Ones) when Christ spoke those words to Peter was exclusively Jewish ... and in Paul God is working in a different way, through the Body of Christ comprised of Gentiles and Jews alike with no distinction.

We who are within the Body of Christ today should heed the strong words Paul has for those who are presenting a different, distorted evangel ... as he implores those in Galatia to accept only the evangel that he brings.

Paul's evangel came through revelation

GALATIANS 1:10

If Paul was to proclaim the same message as the Twelve (but only to a different group of recipients ... the Gentiles), it would have made sense to have Paul spend time being trained by the Twelve. After all, they were with Christ during the entire time of His ministry upon the earth. They witnessed His miracles, His crucifixion, His resurrection and His ascension into heaven.

But Paul makes it clear that *his* evangel was not received from a man. *For I am making known to you, brethren, as to the evangel which is being brought by me, that it is not in accord with man. For neither did I accept it from a man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (1:12) God severed Paul (1:15), or cut him apart from the others of his Jewish brethren. God called him through His grace, as opposed to judging him for his persecution of Christ.*

After his conversion, **Paul did not seek guidance from Peter and the other apostles** in Jerusalem. ... *I did not immediately submit it to flesh and blood, neither came I up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I came away into Arabia, and I return again to Damascus. (1:17)* It is significant that Paul distanced himself in this way from the other apostles. The evangel he proclaimed was not taught to him by the others ... it was *revealed* to Him by Jesus Christ. This should cause us to ask why this direct revelation was necessary. Could it be that the message Paul was to bear was different? Most Bible teachers today indiscriminately teach equally from Paul's writings and from the others as if there is no difference. But Paul goes out of his way to distance himself from the others here in Galatians. By blending together Paul's evangel with the evangel proclaimed by Peter and the others of the Twelve, are we guilty of *distorting* the evangel intended for us ... and are we being led astray by a *different evangel*?

Paul submits evangel in Jerusalem

GALATIANS 2:1

Three years lapsed before Paul went to Jerusalem, relating his story to Cephas (1:18). And after fourteen years he went again to Jerusalem to "submit" to them the evangel that he heralded.

Was Paul *required* by the apostles to go to Jerusalem? When Paul went to Jerusalem to submit his evangel, he did not do so because he was *required* to go by others that had authority over him. *Now I went up in accord with a revelation, and submitted to them the evangel which I am heralding among the nations... (2:2)*

The fact that Paul submitted to the others the evangel he was heralding **shows us that his evangel was different** from that which was being proclaimed by the others.

Verse 3 shows us that the controversy that led to Paul's appearance in Jerusalem was concerning circumcision. *But not even Titus, who is with me, being a Greek, is compelled to be **circumcised**. Yet, it was because of the false brethren who were smuggled in, who came in by the way to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they shall be **enslaving us**...* (2:3) Paul's evangel spoke of freedom in Christ Jesus, but those who had infiltrated the ecclesia were attempting to enslave them again to the law ... promoting circumcision and other elements from the law.

When Paul went to Jerusalem he submitted his evangel *to those of repute* (2:2). But whatever the reasons for their being considered "of repute" was of no consequence to Paul. *Now from those reputed to be somewhat – what kind they once were is of no consequence to me (God is not taking up the human aspect)...* (2:6) Paul received his evangel directly from Christ Jesus thru a revelation, and he is not under the authority of Peter or the others who were *of repute* within the ecclesia in Jerusalem.

The evangel of the Uncircumcision

GALATIANS 2:7

There were two different evangels (gospels) to be proclaimed to two different people groups. ... *I have been entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, according as Peter of the Circumcision...* (2:7) The evangels were different. Paul did not simply bear the same evangel as Peter, but **to** the Uncircumcision. He was entrusted with the evangel **of** the Uncircumcision. If Paul had consented to blending the two messages together, much controversy would have been eliminated. And when Paul returned to Jerusalem late in his ministry he would not have been opposed by the Jews who believed but who were zealous for the law (Acts 21:20).

But to blend the evangels together would have been a distortion, and would have created a different evangel ... and this is what Paul so vehemently defends against.

In Jerusalem, all agree *that we, indeed, are to be for the nations, yet they for the Circumcision...* (2:9) It seems clear that at this point in time there are two evangels ... one proclaimed by Paul and Barnabas to the nations, and another by the Twelve to the Jews. Paul does not contend that Peter and the others needed to change the evangel they had been proclaiming to make it consistent with his ... but they agreed to take the respective evangels entrusted to them to the groups God had placed under their care.

There appears, then, to be a Jewish ecclesia (church) hearing the evangel as proclaimed by Peter, and a Gentile ecclesia (church) hearing Paul’s evangel. And if we study closely the writings of Paul as compared with the writings of Peter, James and John we will see many differences.

<i>Evangel of the Uncircumcision (Paul)</i>	<i>Evangel of the Circumcision</i>
The Body of Christ	The Bride of Christ
New creation	Born again
Expectation in the heavens	Expectation upon the earth
Awaiting Christ to snatch us away	Awaiting Christ to reign upon the earth
Justified by faith alone (Romans 4:1-3)	Justified by faith plus works (James 2:24)
No legal requirements (circumcision, sabbath, tithing, etc.)	Legal requirements observed

Peter’s hypocrisy

GALATIANS 2:11

Despite the agreement in Jerusalem, when Cephas (Peter) comes to Antioch he *severed himself* from those of the nations, because he feared those of the Circumcision. (2:13) Paul withstood Peter to his face, saying, *If you, being inherently a Jew, are living as the nations, and not as the Jews, how are you compelling the nations to be judaizing?* (2:14) **This, then, is the problem that Paul was contending with in this letter.** The Jews were adding to Paul’s evangel by requiring the Gentiles to observe elements of the law. There is **conflict** between Paul (and the message he brings to the Gentiles), and the Jewish believers. And the two groups (Circumcision believers and Uncircumcision believers) are largely severed from one another.

The message proclaimed by Paul to the Gentiles is freedom apart from any elements from the law, and the Circumcision believers have difficulty accepting that God is doing something so different apart from the Jews who had been His chosen instrument in the past.

The law cannot justify

GALATIANS 2:15

As Paul made clear in Romans, the law cannot justify (Romans 3:20). Even the Jewish ecclesia should understand this. *We, who by nature are Jews, and not sinners of the nations, having perceived that a man is not being justified by works of law, if it should not be through the faith of Christ Jesus, we also believe in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by the faith of Christ and not by works of law, seeing that by works of law shall no flesh at all be justified.* (2:15)

Crucified with Christ

GALATIANS 2:19

Paul has died to law, just as Christ has died. With Christ he has been figuratively crucified, and that which now lives is not Paul but Christ living in Paul. *For I, through law, died to law, that I should be living to God. With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ.* (2:19)

And as Paul is living in flesh, he points out, *I am living in faith that is of the Son of God.* (2:20) Justification is a gracious gift from God, provided on the basis of Jesus Christ's faith as he died for our sins. It is not "faith in Christ" that justifies us ... it is the "faith of Christ" (2:16). We come to a recognition of what God has accomplished when we believe and have faith "in" Christ. But justification is a gracious gift from God. One day *all* will believe ... some thru faith and others by empirical evidence (sight) ... but when God's gracious gift is perceived by all, every knee will bow and proclaim Him Lord.

Do not repudiate grace

GALATIANS 2:21

Adding legal requirements is rejecting grace. If righteousness can be gained thru works of law, then Christ would have died for no purpose. Expressing a freedom from the law, Paul is adamant that, *I am not repudiating the grace of God, for if righteousness is through law, consequently Christ died gratuitously.* (2:21) His inference is that those wanting to add requirements from the law (like circumcision) to become righteous are repudiating God's grace, and nullifying what Christ has accomplished thru His death.

The Galatians had been deceived, and were repudiating grace to fall back on the law once again. *O foolish Galatians! Who bewitches you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was graphically crucified?* (3:1)

The believers had the spirit of Christ. Paul asks them to remember how they received that spirit. *Did you get the spirit by works of law or by the hearing of faith? So foolish are you? Undertaking in spirit, are you now being completed in flesh?* (3:2)

Example: Abraham

GALATIANS 3:5

The example of Abraham is here presented. *Abraham believes God, and it is reckoned to him for righteousness.* (3:6)

Those of faith are also sons of Abraham (3:7) ... *those of faith are being blessed together with believing Abraham.* (3:9) Just as Abraham's fleshly

descendants were sons of Abraham in the flesh, those of faith are sons of Abraham (3:8) irrespective of their fleshly heritage. So apart from any works of law, and strictly through God's grace ... based upon the faith of Christ ... man is justified. Those who believe God, as did Abraham, are reckoned righteous. God's gracious gift of justification will one day reconcile all mankind, at which point God will become All in all (1 Corinthians 15:28). Some will *believe* and be reckoned righteous in this present age, while others will doubt until they can see with their eyes, like Thomas (John 20:26-29).

A question to consider ... **do we choose to believe** based on exercising our free will? Or does God select out of humanity a group to which He grants the *ability* to believe in this present age ... to accomplish His purposes? Consider Philippians 1:29 ... *for to you it is graciously granted, for Christ's sake, not only to be believing on Him, but to be suffering for His sake also...* And consider 2 Corinthians 4:4 ... *in whom the god of this eon blinds the apprehensions of the unbelieving so that the illumination of the evangel of the glory of Christ, Who is the Image of the invisible God, does not irradiate them.* If all eyes are blinded, causing mankind to be unable to believe, could it be that God chooses a small group of humanity (the ecclesia ... called-out-ones) who are given the gracious gift of belief ... to be God's ambassadors in this present age, and to serve a specific purpose in the age to come as determined by God?

Shortcomings of the law

GALATIANS 3:10

Those under the law must observe ALL of the law. *For whoever are of works of law are under a curse, for it is written that, Accursed is everyone who is not remaining in all things written in the scroll of the law to do them.* (3:10)

Justification is through faith, not law. *Now that in law no one is being justified with God is evident, for the just one by faith shall be living.* (3:11)

The promise of the spirit is through faith (3:14)

The promises to Abraham pre-dated the law. No one can repudiate or modify a ratified covenant, and the promises were declared to Abraham 430 years prior to the law. The law cannot nullify the promise. ... *a human covenant likewise having been ratified, no one is repudiating or modifying it.* (3:15) ... *a covenant having been ratified before by God, the law, having come four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not invalidate, so as to nullify the promise. For if the enjoyment of the allotment is of law, it is no longer of promise. Yet God has graciously granted it to Abraham through the promise.* (3:17)

The law served a temporary purpose. *On behalf of transgressions was it added, until the Seed should come to Whom He has promised...* (3:19)

The law was an “escort.” *Now before the coming of faith we were garrisoned under law, being locked up together for the faith about to be revealed. So that the law has become our escort to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.* (3:23)

The law was a guardian. *For as much time as the enjoyer of an allotment is a minor, in nothing is he of more consequence than a slave, being master of all, but is under guardians and administrators until the time purposed by the father.* (4:1)

We are now sons of God

GALATIANS 3:25

Having considered the temporary purpose of the law, Paul now points out that we are now **sons of God through faith**. *Now, at the coming of faith, we are no longer under an escort, for you are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus.* (3:25)

No fleshly distinctions ... *there is no Jew nor yet Greek, there is no slave nor yet free, there is no male and female, for you all are one in Christ Jesus.* (3:28) Always in the past, preference had been given to the Jew first. Not so now thru Paul's evangel.

Enjoyers of the allotment ... *Now if you are Christ's, consequently you are of Abraham's seed, enjoyers of the allotment according to the promise.* (3:29)

Once we were enslaved ... *Thus we also, when we were minors, were enslaved under the elements of the world.* (4:3)

Christ reclaimed those under law ... *Now, when the full time came, God delegates His Son, come of a woman, come under law, that He should be reclaiming those under law, that we may be getting the place of a son.* (4:4)

The spirit of His Son in our hearts ... *Now, seeing that you are sons, God delegates the spirit of His Son into our hearts...* (4:6) And as a result, Paul again states that, *you are no longer a slave, but a son ... if a son, an enjoyer also of an allotment from God, through Christ* (4:7)

Why turn back?

GALATIANS 4:8

Why return to the infirm and poor elements? ... *knowing God, yet rather being known by God, how are you turning back again to the infirm and poor elements for which you want to slave again anew?* (4:9)

Days are you scrutinizing, and months and seasons and years. (4:10) Paul seems to be referring to a dependence upon the recognizing of certain days as was required by the law, and which sons of God had been freed from ... sabbaths, and required feast days.

Returning to the law has taken away your happiness. Paul had previously brought the evangel to the Galatians, and he was received as a messenger of God. But now he asks, *Where is your happiness?* (4:15)

The Galatians were giving up their freedom and placing themselves once again under the law. **The motive of the false teachers was jealousy.** *They are jealous over you, not ideally, but they want to debar you that you may be jealous over them.* (4:17) In other words ... they want to debar you from enjoying your freedom in Christ, making you jealous of their outward observance of the elemental things ... their religiosity.

Allegory of Abraham's two sons

GALATIANS 4:21

Abraham had two sons ... one out of the maid (Ishmael) and one out of the free woman (Isaac). One is begotten according to the flesh (Ishmael) and the other thru the promise (Isaac). This represents two covenants. One is from mount Sinai, generating into slavery (the law). But, *you, brethren, as Isaac, are **children of promise.***

Even as then, the one generated according to flesh persecuted the one according to spirit. But as the scripture says, *Cast out this maid and her son, for by no means shall the son of the maid be enjoying the allotment with the son of the free woman.* (4:30)

Christ frees us

GALATIANS 5:1

*For freedom Christ frees us! Stand firm, then, and **be not again enthralled with the yoke of slavery.*** (5:1)

If one circumcises, Christ will be of no benefit, for that one is a debtor to do the whole law. ... *if you should be circumcising, Christ will benefit you nothing.* (5:2) ... *Now I am attesting again to every man who is circumcising,*

that he is a debtor to do the whole law. (5:3) ... Exempted from Christ were you who are being justified in law. You fall out of grace. (5:4)

Faith, operating thru love

GALATIANS 5:5

While the believer is reckoned righteous, still **we await the full experience of righteousness**. *For we, in spirit, are awaiting the expectation of righteousness by faith. (5:5)* As we believe God it is *reckoned* to us as righteousness, as was the case with Abraham. But here we see that righteousness is also an *expectation* and something we are *awaiting*. And as we await this expectation, we live by faith and are *reckoned* righteous as we believe God.

Circumcision or uncircumcision mean nothing. *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is availing anything, nor uncircumcision... (5:6)* If neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matter, what does matter? ... *faith, operating through love. (5:6)* As we live by faith, love is in operation. It is love that guides us. It is love that will be manifest in us as we live by faith.

Why are you not persuaded?

GALATIANS 5:7

You raced ideally! Who hinders you not to be persuaded by the truth? (5:7) The Galatians were persuaded and **led away** from the truth by those who were not of God. *This persuasion is not of Him Who is calling you. (5:8)* They are *leaven*, and they are leavening the entire loaf (5:9). They will bear their judgment (5:10).

Paul is not heralding circumcision

GALATIANS 5:11

Those disturbing the Galatians must have been announcing that Paul was including the requirement of circumcision in his evangel, but Paul **makes it clear that there is no mixture of law in his evangel**. ... *if I am still heralding circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? Consequently the snare of the cross of Christ has been nullified. (5:11)* If Paul was insisting upon circumcision, the *snare of the cross* would have been eliminated and Paul would not be persecuted.

What is the “snare of the cross?” We may think it is simply the proclamation of Christ crucified ... but Paul implies that if the law were simply added to the proclamation of Christ the snare would be removed. This, then, is the snare of the cross for believing Jews ... the elimination of all requirements from the law. For Paul it is imperative that no law be mixed with the grace he proclaims in the evangel that had been revealed to him.

Freedom is not a license

GALATIANS 5:13

For you were called for freedom, brethren, only use not the freedom for an incentive to the flesh, but through love be slaving for one another. (5:13)

Some still think there is a need for legal requirements. Many today are afraid to remove legal requirements from the gospel (sabbath, tithing, Sermon on the Mount requirements, drinking, smoking ... the list goes on) because they fear that believers will live however they please, guided only by satisfying their fleshly desires. But Paul does not respond to this challenge by adding legal requirements to his message of grace. The law has nothing to do with one's position with God.

But without adding legal requirements to his evangel, Paul does insist that our freedom is not to be abused.

Love fulfills the law. *The entire law is fulfilled in one word, in this: You shall love your associate as yourself (5:14).* Living to the flesh is to have selfish motivations. **Living by love** is to have selfless motivations ... to be guided by a concern for one's associate. If we are guided by the flesh, *biting and devouring one another* we will be *consumed by one another* (5:15).

Walk in spirit

GALATIANS 5:16

The believer has freedom and is not bound by the law, but Paul urges the Galatians, *Walk in spirit, and you should under no circumstances be consummating the lust of the flesh. (5:16)* Walking in the spirit (or not) has no bearing on our justification or our being reckoned righteous, which is dependent only upon belief (faith). But Paul admonishes the ecclesia to walk in spirit.

The flesh and spirit oppose one another. *For the flesh is lusting against the spirit, yet the spirit against the flesh. Now these are opposing one another, lest you should be doing whatever you may want. (5:17)*

If the believer is not under the law, what prevents him from doing whatever he wants ... using his freedom as a license to sin? ... *lest you should be doing whatever you may want* (5:17) The holy spirit is given to the believer. When the believer allows himself to be led by the flesh, the opposition of the spirit is felt. If the spirit did not oppose the flesh through this inner struggle, we could be guided by the flesh with no reservations. But it is the struggle that holds us in check ... the **conscience**. Those who walk in spirit fulfill the demands of the law without compulsion. The *spirit* of the law is fulfilled without any need for its *form*.

Led by spirit ... not under law. *Now, if you are led by spirit, you are not still under law.* (5:18) It is a FACT that the believer is **led by spirit** and is therefore not under law. In response, Paul prompts the ecclesia to **walk in spirit**.

The works of the flesh are apparent (5:19) ... *adultery, prostitution, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, enchantment, enmities, strife, jealousies, furies, factions, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkennesses, revelries, and the like...* (5:20) ... *those committing such things shall **not be enjoying the allotment** of the kingdom of God.* (5:21)

Are good works needed, then, to gain the kingdom allotment? On the surface this seems to nullify the believer's salvation by faith. If one exhibits the works of the flesh they will not enjoy the allotment of the kingdom of God. This seems to imply works righteousness, and not faith.

As Jesus proclaimed the kingdom evangel (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) he called for repentance, and living in accord with kingdom requirements (Sermon on the Mount). This was proclaimed to the sheep of Israel in preparation for the kingdom to be restored upon the earth. But Jesus was crucified. The Jews, who had been God's instrument were calloused and locked up in stubbornness (see Romans 11:25-32). God is now working thru Paul's evangel of the Uncircumcision, where faith is the basis for righteousness; not legal requirements. And when the Body of Christ is snatched away (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) and God once again turns to Israel to be His instrument upon the earth (Revelation), works will once again be the basis for God's judgment.

Two possibilities exist for the present passage.

First, since Paul is speaking to some extent to Jewish believers who are being enticed to return to the law, he may be pointing out that when the kingdom comes upon the earth God will be judging based upon the works of the flesh ... and one would lose his allotment within the kingdom if committing such things. Not that those within the Body of Christ would lose their allotment (since that is determined by faith, and not by works) ... but Paul may be simply pointing out God's expectations for those within the kingdom when it comes upon the earth, as he admonishes them to be guided by the spirit and not the flesh.

Second, Paul could be referring to the kingdom in the broader sense ... not just the aspect of the kingdom to come upon the earth, but the larger kingdom of God which is over the entire universe, and already in place in the heavens. All believers will stand before the dais of Christ to receive payment for his works, whether good or bad (see 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10). This payment has nothing to do with salvation, which is determined by belief

(faith) alone. But there could be some loss of one's allotment within the kingdom.

Now the **fruit of the spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control: against such things there is no law. (5:22)

How does the believer put away the works of the flesh, and exhibit the fruit of the spirit? *Those of Christ Jesus **crucify the flesh** together with its passions and lusts* (5:24).

Observing the elements in spirit

GALATIANS 5:25

One may choose to observe “the elements.” *If we may be living in spirit, in spirit we may be observing the elements also.* One who chooses to set aside certain days, even though not required to do so, may choose to do so as guided by the spirit.

Paul also spoke to this point in Romans. *One, indeed, is deciding for one day rather than another day, yet one is deciding for every day. Let each one be fully assured in his own mind.* (Romans 14:5) ... *The faith which you have, have for yourself in God's sight. Happy is he who is not judging himself in that which he is attesting. Now he who is doubting if he should be eating is condemned, seeing that it is not out of faith. Now everything which is not out of faith is sin.* (Romans 14:22)

But we must not challenge others as to their observation of the elemental things. *We may not become vainglorious, challenging one another, envying one another.* (5:26) Decisions as to the “elemental things” are to be made individually, for ourselves, based on the faith granted to us. We are not to judge others on these issues. And as for ourselves, we are guided by conscience.

Paul will conclude the Galatian letter with an additional note on this subject: *And whoever shall observe the elements by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, also on the Israel of God.* (6:16)

Bear one another's burdens

GALATIANS 6:1

“Adjusting” others. If one stumbles and commits an offense, the spiritual one should “adjust” him in a spirit of meekness. *Brethren, if a man should be precipitated, also, in some offense, you, who are spiritual, be attuning such a one, in a spirit of meekness, noting yourself, that you, also, may not be tried.* (6:1)

Bear one another's burdens, and thus fill up the law of Christ. (6:2)
Exercising love, the believer must always seek the welfare of others.

Bearing our own load. As for managing ourselves, we are to have a proper opinion of ourselves, and seek to bear our own load. *For if anyone is supposing himself to be anything, being nothing, he is imposing on himself. Now let each one be testing his own work, and then he shall be having his boast for himself alone, and not for another, for each one shall be bearing his own load.* (6:3)

Contribute to the one who is instructing. *Now let him who is being instructed in the word be contributing to him who is instructing, in all good things.* (6:6) We remember that despite this comment, Paul did not enlist support for himself, but gave up this right to proclaim the evangel for free.

Reaping what is sown

GALATIANS 6:7

Be not deceived, God is not to be sneered at, for whatsoever a man may be sowing, this shall he be reaping also... (6:7) ... he who is sowing for his own flesh, from the flesh shall be reaping corruption, yet he who is sowing for the spirit, from the spirit shall be reaping life eonian. (6:8) Reference is again made to our appearing before the dais of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10) where we will receive payment for works, good or bad. Walking in the spirit and sowing for the spirit may not see reward in the present age. The reaping will occur at the dais of Christ ... and the one sowing for his own flesh will reap corruption.

Working for the good of all

GALATIANS 6:10

*Consequently, then, as we have occasion, we are working for the good of all, yet **specially for the family of faith**.* (6:10) Believers may be under persecution, and may be in need of works of goodness from others even more so than non-believers. But we work for the good of all, not just fellow believers.

Let us digress for a short word study. **Specially** in this passage comes from the Greek *malista*. We see in this context that we are to work not *exclusively* for the good of believers. We are to work for the good of all ... in a *special* way for believers, but for the good of *all*. The same Greek word is found in 1 Timothy 4:10 where we read that God is *the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers*. Most within the church today would say that God will save only those who believe in this lifetime, but this passage tells us that God is the Saviour of *all*. Salvation pertains to the believer in a *special* way, for he

enjoys the expectation thru faith, and will have a special function in the age to come. But God is not the Saviour exclusively of believers ... He is the Saviour of all.

Those compelling circumcision

GALATIANS 6:11

As for those compelling circumcision, they are only **trying to avoid persecution** for the cross of Christ (6:12). By adding the law to faith and distorting the evangel (1:7) they seek to remove the sting from the message of the cross. Judaism remains Judaism, since the law is observed.

But those compelling circumcision are **not maintaining the law themselves**, and they seek only to boast in the flesh of those agreeing to be circumcised (6:14). They could claim “converts” for every believer circumcised and thus brought in line with the law. This is not much different from those evangelists of our own day boasting in the number they have converted to Christ.

A New Creation

GALATIANS 6:15

The elemental things mean nothing. *In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation (6:15).* The fleshly, elemental things have no bearing on anything ... because we have been crucified with Christ and are now figuratively a new creation. (6:15)

Some may choose to observe the elements. If some choose to observe the elements “by this rule” ... peace be on them. The fleshly, elemental things have no bearing. And as new creations, those choosing to observe certain elemental things as led by the spirit, let each one be assured in his own mind ... not judging others in this regard (see Romans 14:5).

OUTLINE.

Introduction (1:1)

From Paul, to the ecclesias of Galatia (1:1)

Beware of a different evangel (1:6)

A distortion

Paul's evangel came through revelation, not from man (1:10)

The evangel of the Uncircumcision (2:7)

The law cannot justify – justified by the faith of Christ (2:15)

Paul died to law; is living to God (2:19)

Do not repudiate grace (2:26)

If righteousness thru law, Christ died for no reason (2:21)

Justification thru faith, not law (3:11)

The promise of the spirit is thru faith (3:14)

The promise to Abraham pre-dated the law (3:17)

The law served a temporary purpose (3:19); escort (3:23); guardian (4:1)

Now sons of God thru faith (3:25)

No fleshly distinctions (3:28)

Enjoyers of the allotment (3:29)

The spirit of His Son in our hearts (4:7)

Why turn back? (4:8)

Christ frees us (5:1)

If one circumcises, Christ is of no benefit (5:2)

Faith operating thru love (5:6)

Why are you not persuaded? (5:7)

Paul is not heralding circumcision (5:11)

Freedom is not a license (5:13)

Love fulfills the law (5:14)

Walk in spirit (5:16)

Led by spirit – not under law (5:18)

Fruit of the spirit (5:22), not the flesh (5:19)

Crucify the flesh (5:24)

If living in spirit, we may be observing the elements (5:25)

Not challenging or envying one another (5:26)

Bear one another's burdens (6:2)

Each should be bearing his own load (6:3)

Whatever one sows, he will reap (6:7)

Work for the good of all (6:10)

A new creation (6:15)

Those compelling circumcision not maintaining the law themselves (6:14)

Circumcision or uncircumcision mean nothing (6:15)

EPILOGUE.

Like 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, Galatians was written to bring clarification and adjustment to the teachings presented in Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul warns the Galatians against those who are distorting the evangel by adding legal requirements, such as circumcision. The Judaists were attempting to fuse together Paul's gospel and the law, but Paul insists that this fusion is not proper and actually results in a *different ... a distorted* gospel.

The gospel entrusted to Paul was being challenged, and even his apostleship was being challenged. Paul reminds the Galatians that his evangel was not taught to him by men following his conversion ... it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ (1:12). Whereas Peter was entrusted with the evangel of the Circumcision, Paul was entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision (2:7). The differences in these evangels leads to misunderstandings, disagreements, and friction between the Jewish and Gentile believers.

The law cannot justify, yet the Galatians are being enticed by certain deceivers to return to the law ... adding legal requirements to the grace given by God thru Christ. The law was given as an escort or guardian, until the promise made to Abraham had come. And now that God has delegated His Son to reclaim those under the law, making them sons and enjoyers of an allotment, why do they want to return to the law? Christ frees us! (5:1)

But we are not to use the freedom for an incentive to the flesh. The entire law is fulfilled in one word: You shall love your associate as yourself (5:14). Walk in the spirit, not consummating the lust of the flesh (5:16). Work for the good of all (6:10). Circumcision or uncircumcision have no bearing ... you are a new creation (6:15).

Galatians is a very important letter, largely ignored by the church today! Many in the church indiscriminately mix the evangel of Paul with the evangel of Peter and the Twelve, which was intended for the Jewish ecclesia (called-out-ones) who looked for the restoration of the kingdom upon the earth. Many impose requirements upon the believer ... water baptism, tithing, church attendance, church membership, consenting to a list of doctrinal beliefs based on the church's interpretation of Scripture. Paul vehemently opposed any additions to the justification and righteousness gratuitously given by God, through Christ Jesus. He warned against anyone preaching an evangel different from the one he preached ... yet today's pulpits proclaim a different evangel (the Circumcision evangel) instead of Paul's evangel.

Note also the importance of correct doctrine within the church. When others attempt to teach the need for elements of the law to be added to the gospel, Paul does not dodge the issue. Nor does he compromise for the sake of unity and love. Love is the most important thing (1 Corinthians 14),

but doctrine is also important. Whereas the two letters to the Corinthians were concerned more with practical matters, Galatians is focused on addressing doctrinal error.

If ever we also, or a messenger out of heaven, should be bringing an evangel to you BESIDE THAT WHICH WE BRING TO YOU, let him be anathema!
(1:8)

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