

Primitive Baptist Commentary on Galatians

Commentary notes by Joshua Winslett

Galatians Introduction

Authorship: Paul the Apostle is stated to be the author in Galatians 1:1-2,5:2. Pauline authorship has also been overwhelmingly accepted throughout church history.

Date and Setting: The date of this book is debated and ultimately unknown. Some correspond Galatians 2:1-10 with Paul's Jerusalem visit in Acts 11:30. It is more probable that Galatians 2:1-10 describes the events of the Jerusalem counsel in Acts 15, which occurred around AD 49. This would make the date of Galatians somewhere between AD 49-53. It is unknown exactly where Paul is writing from but some subscriptions locate the apostle as writing from Rome.

This epistle is addressed to "the churches of Galatia" (1:2). From that description we see that Paul is not writing a single church, but a group of church in a larger area. The churches to whom Paul writes could either be from northern Galatia or southern Galatia. Northern Galatia was ethnic Gauls. Northern Galatia included cities such as Ancyra, Pesusus, and Tavium. Paul did enter into northern Galatia at least two times on his evangelistic journeys (Acts 16:6, 18:23). Southern Galatia was a territory in the Roman province that was not part of the ethnic Galatian region. This area included cities visited by Paul on his first evangelistic journey, such as Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Because of the intimate nature of the language in this epistle, it is likely that Paul knew his readers very well (1:8, 4:11-15,19). Paul visited this southern region twice in Acts while founding churches (Acts 16:6, 18:23). There is no record of Paul founding churches in northern Galatia.

Theme and Purpose: The epistle can be broken into a primary and secondary theme. The primary theme is that salvation is by the free grace of God and experienced by faith which comes from Christ apart from works of the law. The secondary theme would be Paul's defense of his apostolic authority over the Judaizing false teaching. Paul is then writing to reestablish the Galatians in the true gospel of grace. To achieve the primary goal of saving the churches from false doctrine and back to free grace in Christ, Paul must first prove his authority over the false teachers. After which, Paul then directs his full attention

on justification in Christ without the works of the law, and the liberty of life that we have with our union in Christ.

Key Doctrines:

Justification by faith: Justification before God is by the righteousness of Christ alone. Justification by faith is the experience of Christ's righteousness in the courtroom of our own conscience. Justification before God by Christ precedes justification by faith. Faith is then the means through which we see and experience Christ's righteousness. Faith sees the preexisting truth that all the elect are justified by Christ on the cross. Ref: Romans 3:21-5:2.

The law: The law cannot save and was only given to impute sin on the conscience. The law teaches every person that they are a sinner before God. The law is brutal and unforgiving. Through Christ, and only through his righteousness, we are freed from the bondage of the law. Ref: Romans 5:12-17.

Outline:

- I. Introduction and Greeting (1:1-5)
- II. Paul defends his Apostolic Authority (1:11-24)
 - A. Paul's certified gospel (1:6-10)
 - B. Paul begins his defense of his apostleship. (1:11-2:10)
 - C. Paul's Confrontation with Peter (2:11-21)
- III. Salvation and Assurance (3:1-4:31)
 - A. The Experience of the Galatians (3:1-6)
 - B. Justification by Faith (3:7-29)
 - C. Adoption (4:1-7)
 - D. Bondage of Law or Freedom in Faith (4:8-31)
- IV. Liberty in Living (5:1-6:10)
 - A. Standing in Liberty (5:1-12)
 - B. Walking in the Spirit (5:13-26)
 - C. Liberty to Serve (6:1-10)
- V. Closing (6:11-18)

Galatians 1

Chapter Summary: Paul begins by giving his typical introductory statements while connecting it with the true gospel. After which, Paul moves directly into the problem. There were Judaizers preaching a false gospel and questioning Paul's apostolic authority. Paul addresses both.

INTRODUCTION AND GREETING (1:1-5)

1:1 ¶ Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) -These are opening statements normal to Paul. He gives his name, office, and under what authority he gets his office (by Jesus Christ). This implicitly relays his authority in writing his letters. He possibly gives the "raised him from the dead" description to draw attention to the fact that he has indeed seen the risen savior even though it was after his earthly ministry and crucifixion. Paul is already implicitly defending his apostleship against those that claimed that he had less authority than other apostles. Ref: Ephesians 1:1-2

1:2 And all the brethren which are with me, -Probably Barnabas and Titus, see Galatians 2:1 and Acts 15:22. **unto the churches of Galatia:** -Paul is addressing multiple churches in one large area. This shows both how prevalent Christianity was growing and how quick error was equally spreading throughout the region of Galatia. Ref: Acts 16:6

1:3 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, -This is a normal Pauline greeting. Paul desired grace and peace for the churches. Notice the chronology, peace only comes from grace. Both only come from God through Jesus Christ. If there is grace and peace in this life, it comes from God through Christ. Ref: Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:2

1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, -The who is Christ. Christ gave himself as a substitute for a specific people to whom Paul names himself to be among. Christ's atoning sacrifice is not impersonal, but very intimate to the believer. **that he might deliver us from this present evil world,** -The purpose of salvation is not to make us comfortable in the world or to make this present age our best life now. The purpose of salvation is deliverance. **according to the will of God and our Father:** -Salvation is according to God's sovereign will, not by the will of man. Ref: John 16:33, John 1:13

1:5 To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. -Doctrine should always lead to doxology. Likewise, doctrine is a matter of the heart, as well as the head.

PAUL DEFENDS HIS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY (1:11-24) Paul's certified gospel (1:6-10)

1:6 ¶ I marvel that ye are so soon removed -Paul is amazed that they are so quickly led astray after their

conversion. **from him that called you into the grace of Christ** -The person that called them is either God, who calls all of the quickened from death to life, or the minister through which they were converted. **unto another gospel:** Another gospel has reference to a teaching that is not the actual gospel. It simply held the name gospel but was another. Ref: 2 Corinthians 11:4

1:7 Which is not another; -What they claimed was the gospel was incompatible with the truth in Christ. Grace and works do not and cannot mix, see Romans 11:6. **but there be some that trouble you,** -False gospels and false doctrine does nothing else but trouble the church and believers. **and would pervert the gospel of Christ.** - "Would pervert" means that they wish to negatively change the gospel. Any change from the biblical gospel is a negative change.

1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, -Paul uses two weighty groups to use as examples, apostles and angels. **preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you,** -They should be cut off if they were to preach any other gospel than the biblical one. This is not saying to stay in unbiblical traditions or beliefs that were taught as truth. It is saying to stay close to the biblical definition of the gospel. The Galatians just happened to be taught the true gospel the first time around. **let him be accursed.** -Let the individual that teaches a false gospel be cut off, literally castrated. Ref: 1 Corinthians 16:22, 2 Corinthians 11:14

1:9 As we said before, so say I now again, -This is either referring to verse 8 or something he said when he preached among them. **If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.** -Paul states this twice showing the gravity of the situation. Ref: Galatians 5:14

1:10 ¶ For do I now persuade men, or God? -The word persuade means to influence or teach. The idea here is that Paul was persuading men on behalf of God, not the other way around. **or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.** -The one who you seek to please is the person to whom you are a servant. Paul was seeking to please Christ, and not men.

Paul begins his defense of his apostleship. (1:11-2:10)

1:11 But I certify you, -To certify is to make known. **brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.** -Paul makes known to them that gospel he

preached was from God. If it is not after man, then it is after, or from, God. Paul begins to defend his apostleship and authority to preach. He calls them brethren to somewhat calm the tone.

1:12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, -Paul did not receive the gospel from human origin, neither did he learn it from men. **but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.** -Paul received the gospel in a special, non-ordinary manner. Paul was taught the gospel through direct revelation of God. Ref: 1 Corinthians 11:23

1:13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, -Paul's life before his conversion was well known among the Jews. He uses this to his advantage. Notice that he calls his former way of life (conversation) the Jews' religion and not the Mosaic law. The Jews had perverted the law so badly with their traditions that it was no longer considered the Mosaic law. The Jews even held their extra biblical commentaries to have the same weight as scripture. This should give us a warning as New Testament Christians. Tradition is good and needed, but traditionalism can destroy true faith and create a vain, dead form of Christianity. **how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:** -This account is well documented in Acts 7:58,8:1-3, and 9:1. Paul hated Christ and his church. Ref: John 15:21

1:14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. -Paul was a Jew of Jews. His resume was impeccable. Paul lists his resume as a Jew in Philippians 3:4-8.

1:15 But when it pleased God, -A man is saved only when God is so pleased to save him. It never happens one moment before or after God's appointed time. **who separated me from my mother's womb,** -God knows us before we are born and we are separated for his purpose even from infancy. Ultimately, we are separated in his mind before time began. **and called me by his grace,** -Paul's salvation experience is plainly shown to be by the complete sovereignty of God alone. Paul hated Christ and his church. It was not until Acts 9:3 when God took him prisoner and delivered him from his depraved state. Likewise, Paul is called a pattern of all who are equally called by God's grace, see 1 Timothy 1:16. Ref: Titus 3:5, Jeremiah 1:5, Ephesians 1:3-4, John 5:25, Ephesians 2:1-8.

1:16 To reveal his Son in me, -We are saved for a purpose. That purpose is first to know the son of God. This is equally

made evident in Christ's prayer before his crucifixion, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). **that I might preach him among the heathen;** -Not only are we all called in regeneration to know Christ, we are also called to service. We are not called to the same service as Paul, being that he was an apostle, but we are called to our own ministry. God calls individuals by his grace in regeneration and ordinarily calls individuals to repentance and service in conversion through the gospel. **immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:** -Paul relates that he did not immediately consult with the other apostles after his conversion. He does this to prove his apostleship and to show that his gospel did come directly from Christ, not man. With that said, we must remember two things. First, Paul is not showing disrespect to the other apostles and their office. He is simply showing his own apostolic authority. Second, Paul's case is unique. No person today should claim this type of autonomous authority. Ordinarily, ministers are taught under other elders and raised up under the consent of a local church, see Titus 1:5.

1:17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; -Paul not only did not consult with the apostles, but he did not even go to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was where the apostles were located and where the most gospel action was taking place when he was converted. **but I went into Arabia,** -Arabia is in the Sinai Peninsula. It is curious that he went to Arabia. It may be possible, though not stated in the text, that he either went like Moses into the wilderness to learn or that he went to Mt. Sinai where it all started for Israel. **and returned again unto Damascus.** -Paul then went to where he was originally converted, a place to which he was originally commissioned to slaughter Christians (Acts 9:2). These events probably happened during Acts 9:22. Saul seemingly increased in knowledge in Arabia and then went to Damascus to start his ministry preaching where he once desired to stop the preaching of the gospel.

1:18 Then after three years -These 3 years are the many days mentioned in Acts 9:23. **I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.** -After receiving the gospel directly from Christ and preaching at Damascus, Paul now goes to Jerusalem and meets Peter and James. This visit is probably the one recorded in Acts 9:26.

1:19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. -Paul further emphasizes that he did not see many apostles and therefore does not derive his authority from them. One possible reason he only saw Peter and James was because the other apostles were busy fulfilling their commission of preaching the gospel. This would be a sobering testimony to the duty of the ministry and all Christians to be about God's service. If you are called, then get busy fulfilling your calling!

1:20 Now the things which I write unto you, -The things written in defense of his apostleship. **behold, before God, I lie not.** -Paul further shows how serious he is in this matter by calling God himself as a witness to his testimony. Do notice that though Paul's experience marks autonomy, he still shows agreement with the apostles with his visit to Jerusalem. Paul was not a reckless maverick.

1:21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; This area is basically home to Paul who was from Tarsus. He went to his own house and practiced relational evangelism. Evangelism starts with those we know best. Ref: Acts 9:30

1:22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: -The apostle to the gentiles was not recognizable to the churches of Judaea. Paul's humble attitude of preaching without celebrity status is a wonderful example for all believers.

1:23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. The only thing that they knew of Paul was that the chief of sinners was now preaching the gospel of Christ. His reputation went before him. Ref: 1 Timothy 1:12-16

1:24 And they glorified God in me. -Sinners turned saint should make all believers praise God for his grace. Ref: Luke 15

Galatians 2

Chapter Summary: The second chapter is a transitional chapter. This section continues Paul's defense of his apostleship but ends with a rebuking of the apostle Peter. The rebuke works to manifest Paul as equal with the other apostles and as a linchpin to move into the doctrine of salvation by grace in chapter 3.

2:1 ¶ Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, -This account is described in Acts 15 during the Jerusalem counsel. **and took Titus with me also.** -Titus is the "and certain other of them" recorded in Acts 15:2.

2:2 And I went up by revelation, -It was revealed to Paul but also determined by the church for them to go to Jerusalem (Acts 15:2). Paul was accountable to the church body and the church body was accountable to listen to their ministerial leadership. **and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles,** -One of Paul's purposes in going to Jerusalem was to tell of his ministry and gospel. **but privately to them which were of reputation,** -This has reference to the apostles who had a strong reputation of biblical authority. **lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.** Paul went privately to the apostles probably because he did not want any possible disagreements to cause strife in the congregation. Fighting and wars of rhetoric often cause division, halts progress, and makes prior labors vain.

2:3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, -Little is really known of Titus. This is one of the few indicators. **was compelled to be circumcised:** -Titus seemingly had no Jewish ancestry and was not compelled to be circumcised. Unlike Timothy, who had a Jewish mother and maternal grandmother, was circumcised due to cultural considerations in Acts 16:3.

2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily - These are Judaizers posing as genuine believers that came in secret. **to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus,** -These false brethren came to see if they were breaking the law of Moses. New Testament Christians have liberty to not follow ceremonial, dietary, and civil laws given to Moses. However, God's moral standard as revealed in the 10 commandments has not changed. **that they might bring us into bondage:** -They wanted to forcibly bring them back under the law in a hegemonous fashion, or through domination of the mind. Ref: 2 Peter 2:1

2:5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; -They gave no place at all for their false teaching, not even for a moment. **that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.** -They withstood them so that the gospel would continue. The gospel must be contended for or false teachers will certainly pervert it. Ref: Jude 3

2:6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, -The apostles. **(whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:)** -Paul was not star struck because God views each ministry by itself and each is judged on faithfulness to their commission, not on how the world would judge importance or influence. **for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:** -The apostles at Jerusalem added nothing to Paul's gospel. He is not being irreverent, he is simply showing how his ministry was already furnished by Christ before he met with the apostles at Jerusalem in Acts 15.

2:7 But contrariwise, -On the contrary. **when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;** -The counsel saw the full evidence of Paul's gospel. If a man has a calling to preach, all he needs to do is preach. "A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men" (Proverbs 18:16). Also, each field of labor may be different, but each is equally important. Ref: Acts 9:15

2:8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) -God is the ultimate source of ministerial gifts. It takes God effectually working a gift in a person for them to preach the gospel. There should be no "Momma called, Daddy sent" ministries. False ministries are a curse on the church and a harmful disservice to the man put where he should not be.

2:9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, -These were the chief apostles at Jerusalem. James is believed to be the pastor at Jerusalem. Peter was the apostle to the Jews. John was the beloved disciple. All three are typically called Christ's inner circle. **perceived the grace that was given unto me,** -They were made fully aware of his calling. **they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship;** -This is not some type of formal or informal church handshake. A common gesture showing approval and acceptance. **that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.** -This was a full acknowledgement of the avenues for ministry given. Ref: Acts 12:17, 1 Corinthians 1:12, Revelation 3:12

2:10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; -The poor primarily have reference to the poor saints at Jerusalem (Romans 15:26). However, there is a connected theme of caring for the poor that is consistently connected to the gospel. **the same which I also was**

forward to do. -Paul was happy and eager to help those in need, as also we should be. Ref: Romans 12:13, Acts 24:17

Paul's Confrontation with Peter (2:11-21)

2:11 ¶ But when Peter was come to Antioch, -The exact time of this trip is unknown but it is evidentially after the Acts 15 Jerusalem counsel. **I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.** -Paul address the issue directly to Peter himself because it was his fault. This implicitly shows that Peter was not some type of vicar of Christ or pope. Peter was not infallible, and the scriptures show that he was blamed for error.

2:12 For before that certain came from James, -They were not sent from James personally, but came from James geographically, **from Jerusalem. he did eat with the Gentiles:** -Peter had treated Gentiles as equals. This speaks of eating after services in fellowship and not during communion. Principles of worship were already handled in Acts 15. **but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself,** -After some Judaizers came from Jerusalem he stopped associating with Gentiles outside of worship. **fearing them which were of the circumcision.** - He succumbed to peer pressure.

2:13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; - Peter was a leader in the church and others followed his example. **insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.** -It had gotten so bad that Paul's own right-hand man began to follow Peter in his hypocrisy. Dissimulation means hypocrisy and comes from the Greek word hupokrisis.

2:14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, -Peter walked not on the correct footing. **I said unto Peter before them all,** - Paul rebukes Peter before everyone so that all would see it and so that others would equally see their error (1 Timothy 5:20). This rebuke possibly goes through the rest of the chapter. **If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles,** -Peter had been shown in Acts 10 a vision of a mighty feast that included food that the Mosaic dietary laws considered unclean. This was meant to relay to Peter that God had cleansed Gentiles for receiving the gospel. Yet, it appears that after that narrative Peter no longer strictly followed those dietary laws and lived after the manner of the Gentiles. **and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?** - Peter did not live as a Jew and yet compelled the Gentiles to live as such. This is why Paul called is hypocrisy.

2:15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, -Paul draws Peter's attention to the fact that they are Jews and know something about the law. The Gentiles do not have the experiential knowledge that Jews did concerning the law. At this time the Jews had experienced with the law for roughly 1,400 years. Simply stated, Israel as a nation and every individual Jew should have known better than to think that righteousness could come by the law. Ref: Ephesians 2:12

2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, -Peter knew through experience and the Jews knew through roughly 1,400 years of having the law that justification could not come through by works of the law. Justify is a forensic word that means to declare to be righteous. It does not mean to make righteous. Think of this in terms of a court room setting. A judge neither makes a person innocent or guilty. The judge simply declares what the individual is based on objective facts. Connecting this with the Mosaic law, the law is a brutally honest mirror illuminating our sins and errors. Works of the law cannot declare a person to be righteous before God. **but by the faith of Jesus Christ,** -The word *of* means *from*. This phrase then is described as faith whose origin is God, and object is Christ. **even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ,** - Both Paul and Peter (we) had both believed in Christ by faith. Faith is given as a gift so that we may see and apprehend the beauties of Christ (Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 3:9). Faith is to the soul what the eyes and ears are to the body. Faith subjectively sees the objective fact of justification in Christ. The justification that is found through faith is a justification in the courtroom of our own mind, or conscience. We are justified by the blood of Christ in the courtroom of God prior to faith. Through faith we are justified in the courtroom of our mind. Justification by faith is then the experience of our justification and not the actualization of it. Consider this in the same light as 2 Peter 1:10. Peter exhorts his readers to make their calling and election sure. Their election happened before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4-5). Yet, they were to make it sure in their mind and have a surer assurance of their election. Likewise, we have the assurance of our justification before God by the blood of Christ through faith. **and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.** -Paul juxtaposes works of the law and faith in Christ as two opposite avenues for personal assurance. Works being the avenue through which assurance can never be found. With that

said, Paul did not have faith in his faith. That would again be relying on a habit in, or practice by man. Paul directed people not to find assurance in the fact they had faith, but directed them to find assurance in Christ by faith. Ref: Romans 3:22-5:2

2:17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, -Again, notice the expression *seek*. This is speaking of experiential justification. **we ourselves also are found sinners,** -Our new liberty seems to have us breaking the Mosaic law. **is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.** -Is Christ making us sin in abandoning the Mosaic law? Paul says in the strongest of terms, no! Christians are not sinners for not following after the old covenant.

2:18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, - If I go back to the law. Paul moves from the plural word *we* to using the singular pronoun *I*. **I make myself a transgressor.** -If the Judaizers are correct then Paul would have been a sinner either way. He, as well as Peter, left the law for Christ, and if Paul was correct then he would be a transgressor of the gospel for going back to the law.

2:19 For I through the law am dead to the law, -This is an ironic paradox in our minds. Through Christ keeping the law we are dead to what condemns us. The means of our condemnation has been used by Christ to bring salvation. Verse 20 gives a full exposition and explanation of this verse. Ref: Romans 6:11, 7:1-6,

2:20 I am crucified with Christ: -All of the elect were represented by Christ on the cross. When he died, we died. When he was buried, it was as if we were also buried. The elect are so closely connected with Christ that his actions of redemption are seen as our actions. **nevertheless I live;** -Even though we died with Christ, we still live. Before the New Birth we were living but dead. Now we are dead but living. **yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:** -Our life is no longer our own. We are so closely connected to Christ that that our identity is forever changed. We live not, but Christ lives in us. **and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God,** -Our present life is now guided and directed by faith. **who loved me, and gave himself for me.** -Our motivation to serve and follow Christ is not greed or fear, but gratitude. We live a life of faith because of what Christ has done. Christ's love and sacrifice motivates believers. "The believer is a mere paradox, he is dead to the law, and 'yet lives' to God; he is crucified with Christ, and yet lives

by him; yea, a crucified Christ lives in him” (Gill, n.d.). Ref: Romans 6:6

2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: -If Paul sought salvation by works then he would be neutralizing, or disannulling Christ’s sacrifice. **for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.** -Salvation is exclusively by grace through Christ. It cannot be any mix of works and grace. Both are mutually exclusive. Ref: Romans 11:6

Galatians 3

Chapter Summary: Paul moves into a full rebuke of the Galatians. He starts very harsh by calling them foolish but slowly tempers his language to show his love for these churches. To prove that salvation is by grace, the chapter discusses the Galatian’s experience of grace, the bondage and true purpose of the law, and the doctrine of justification by faith.

SALVATION AND ASSURANCE (3:1-4:31)

The Experience of the Galatians (3:1-6)

Paul begins his defense of his apostleship. (1:11-2:10)3:1 ¶ O foolish Galatians, -He is not calling them fools in the Psalms 14 sense. He is simply saying that their actions have been foolish as of late. This is the opening address of a rhetorical line of questions. **who hath bewitched you,** - Paul uses the imagery of being bewitched to insinuate that someone had cast a spell on the Galatians. **that ye should not obey the truth,** -The direct effect of this bewitching was that they no longer obeyed the gospel. This also teaches us that believer can be bewitched and have their faith overturned. **before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?** -Here is the reason that Paul felt that someone had in a hegemonous fashion bewitched them. Christ had been crucified before them. Not literally because they were not present at the cross, but figuratively. The cross of Christ was so vividly preached among them through the power of the Spirit of God that they must have had a spell cast on them to now leave the gospel message behind. This is equivalent to leaving the table of a king to eat as a beggar in a dumpster. Ref: 2 Timothy 2:18

3:2 This only would I learn of you, -This denotes that Paul bases his entire argument on this one rhetorical question. He wants them to answer this one question. **Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?** -Paul uses their own experience to prove that

salvation is by grace. Experience does not establish truth, but probably understood, experience can be used as a tool to teach and reinforce principles of truth. The phrase “received ye the Spirit” refers to the second distinct function of the Holy Spirit as comforter. Some think this is referring to regeneration. Regeneration is certainly by grace and not works. However, they received the Spirit in this sense by the hearing of faith. Hearing of faith is simply hearing which coming from faith. Faith is the direct immediate result of the new birth. To receive the Spirit by hearing which comes from faith would chronologically place this as being after regeneration. The argument of Paul is then that they had originally received the Holy Comforter through hearing the gospel and not by works of the law. Therefore, that hearing is a direct result of the grace of God begetting faith in the heart. Paul also identifies this as being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, see Ephesians 1:13. Ref: John 14:16-18

3:3 Are ye so foolish? -He moves from saying they are acting foolish to then asking them if they are foolish. **having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?** -Paul moves past their initial conversion experience to their continuing growth in grace, ie, there practical sanctification. Ongoing assurance is in one sense dependent on obedience. However, it is not that we have assurance based on our obedience. Our assurance is always Christ. Our obedience is important because as we walk in the light, we have a better view of our savior. We are not gaining assurance by viewing our walk, but our walk gives us a better view of Christ, which is our assurance. Ref:1 John 2:3

3:4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? -The word suffered can mean *to experience*. Paul may be speaking of their Christian experience of grace before mentioned in verses 1-3. It is better understood as Paul insinuating that it was pointless that they had endured persecution for their faith if the gospel is compatible with the Judaizers message. **if it be yet in vain.** -Paul holds out hope that it was not in vain. Ref: Hebrews 10:32,35

3:5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, -This could have reference to God, Paul or other ministers of the gospel. It is God who is the source of all ministering grace. However, God uses men in the conversion of sinners and in our daily sanctification. Furthermore, this language denotes the idea of ongoing ministry. It blends both their initial conversion and ongoing Christian growth together. This then seems to be discussing the ongoing

work of ministers of the gospel. **and worketh miracles among you**, -Miracles were an apostolic sign given in the first century alone to verify the gospel. **doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?** -Ministers serve needs in the congregation through the enabling of God by faith and not by works of the law. Ref: 1 Corinthians 2:1, 2 Corinthians 4:7,12:10

3:6 ¶ Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. -Paul moves from experience to scripture by quoting Genesis 15:6. God imputed righteousness on Abraham's conscience when he believed the promise. Accounted, imputed, and reckoned are all terms used by Paul to describe the same transaction. These are accounting terms that denote the idea of taking inventory. In that sense, faith (the 'it' in verse 6) was accounted for righteousness. This is not that righteousness was imputed on his account before God. We are only justified, or declared righteous in God's heavenly courtroom by the blood of Christ. Christ's righteousness was put on our records on the cross and that is how we are justified in God's heavenly courtroom. This was also not when he realized that his belief was a sign of his righteous state before God. Belief is used in that sense in 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5, but not in this context. Genesis 15:6 explicitly states that it was God doing the accounting, not Abraham. Abraham's faith is accounted for righteousness in the sense that it apprehends the object of righteousness, Jesus Christ. For example, this is like unto a poor man realizing he has actually inherited a fortune. His faith receives the information and takes inventory of preexisting reality. Simply stated, this is to be understood as our subjective understanding of our objective standing before God.

Justification by Faith (3:1-4:31)

3:7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, -They who are of faith are those that trust the promises of God instead of their own ability. We trust in Christ alone for salvation. **the same are the children of Abraham.** -All those that against hope believe in hope are children of Abraham by imitation. Ref: Romans 4:16-25

3:8 And the scripture, -That is the Old Testament. **foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith**, -God knowing the end from the beginning orchestrated an event in the Old Testament for an example of what he would be doing in the future. Personal assurance for gentiles would not come through

conversion to the Mosaic law, but through faith in Christ. **preached before the gospel unto Abraham**, -The pre-orchestrated event was God preaching the gospel to Abraham before the gospel age. **saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.** -All nations would benefit from Abraham. The sense of this benefit is that all nations have individuals to whom have salvation bestowed on them through Abraham's seed, Jesus Christ. Ref: Romans 3:30

3:9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. -Believers are equally blessed with the same benefits to which Abraham was blessed. They are blessed with peace built on a strong confidence in God.

3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: -All are under the curse of the law in one sense because all people are sinners. However, this seems to be more focused on those that actively look to the law to justify them. **for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.** -This Old Testament quote is from Deuteronomy 27:26. This quote gives the reason why those that look to the law for justification are under a curse. No man can keep all the laws. Therefore, we are cursed because we cannot possibly continue in them. Ref: Romans 4:15

3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: -It is made obvious from the following scripture that no one is justified by the law, but are justified in their mind by faith. **for, The just shall live by faith.** -This is a quotation from Habakkuk 2:4. Those justified live by faith. Notice that justification comes before faith. Yet, the sense of the text is that those who are just do not live by the works of the law or human ability, but by faith. Ref: Romans 1:17, Hebrews 10:38

3:12 And the law is not of faith: -Works of the law and faith in Christ are mutually exclusive. One looks to works and the other to Christ. **but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.** -This is a quotation from Leviticus 18:5. The sense is that a person either lives in the works of the law or by faith in Christ.

3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, -Christ has rescued us from our just punishment. **being made a curse for us:** -He rescues us by taking on our curse. His righteousness is imputed to us because our sin is imputed to Him. **for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:** -Before there was crucifixion, the Old Testament prophesied of the curse our savior would

endure for us. It is ironic that the object of punishment became the vehicle of salvation. People viewed those crucified as being cursed of God. On the cross, Christ was made sin so that we might be made righteous. Ref: Deuteronomy 21:23, Acts 5:30, 1 Corinthians 5:21

3:14 That -For this purpose. **the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ;** -This describes a twofold blessing. First, this gives reference to individuals in all nations being blessed with salvation through the seed of Abraham. Second, this describes the blessing of the promise of the Spirit described in the preceding clause. **that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.** -The blessing of being justified by faith in our conscience and having subjective peace with God. Ref: Acts 2:33

3:15 Brethren, -Again, he is addressing believers, not false professors. Yet, there is a change of tone from earlier. **I speak after the manner of men;** -Speaking in everyday common, or vulgar speech/phraseology. **Though it be but a man's covenant,** -A man's covenant which is far less important than the eternal covenant of election and redemption. **yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.** -If a human covenant is made officially valid by ratification, no individual can change the contract by addition or subtraction. Ref: Hebrews 6:17-18, Isaiah 14:24.

3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. -Paul is making use of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 13:15; 15:5; 17:7. **He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one,** - The Hebrew word (Zera) for seed used in Genesis can be plural or singular. Within the text in Galatians, seed and seeds come from variations of the Greek word Sperma. Paul clarifies that the greater meaning of the Old Testament promise was in reference to one seed, and not many seeds. **And to thy seed, which is Christ.** -This one seed is actually Christ and the promise given to Abraham was truly given to him to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Through Christ all nations of the earth are blessed. However, this singular seed does embody the plural collective of God's elect children from all nations. All who obey God, whether Jew or Gentile, are blessed with the subjective assurance of this promise like faithful Abraham, see Genesis 22:18. Ref: Romans 4:16, 11:28

3:17 And this I say, that the covenant, -This is the covenant given to Abraham in Genesis 15. **that was confirmed before of God in Christ,** -This covenant was

manifestly, or visibly established to Abraham, yet it existed prior to Genesis 15. God the Father made a unilateral covenant within the Godhead, or Trinity before time, and Abraham was the bilateral beneficiary through which the covenant would be ratified in time. **the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.** -The Law of Moses came some 430 years after the original promise to Abraham. Therefore, the law does not add to, nor take away from the original promise. Ref: Genesis 15:8-21, Exodus 12:40-41, Hebrews 13-18

3:18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: -Inheritance is freely given from a benefactor without being merited by works. If inheritance is founded on works than it is no longer a true inheritance. **but God gave it to Abraham by promise.** -Abraham performed no works to obtain this promise from God. Abraham was simply the passive recipient of the gracious favor of God.

3:19 ¶ Wherefore then serveth the law? -A rhetorical question. **It was added because of transgressions,** -The law was added to give the knowledge of sin. **till the seed should come to whom the promise was made;** -The law was a temporary instrument used to lead and prepare for the coming of Christ. **and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.** -According to Acts 7:38,53, the law was appointed by angels through the mediator Moses. Ref: Psalms 68:17

3:20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. - Moses mediated between two parties, God and man. However, God is one and gave a promise that was not mediated through Moses and is not contingent on the law. The promise directly given to Abraham from God is not superseded by the later mediation of the law and cannot be obtained through it. Likewise, the promise is superior because a promise is unconditional, whereas, the Mosaic Law was mediated with stipulations for both parties. With that said, this verse has a large variety of interpretations as well noted by almost all commentaries. Ref: 1 Timothy 2:5

3:21 Is the law then against the promises of God? -Is the law against God's promise because it was added after the fact and seems contradictory in nature? **God forbid:** -In the strongest terms, no. **for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.** -The law is not against the promise of God because the law was never meant for the same

purpose. The law was never meant to give life, therefore, the law and God's covenant promise are not at odds with each other. Ref: Romans 3:21,31

3:22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, -The Old Testament scriptures, specifically the law, show us that we are all "shut up" or closed under sin. **that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.** -Scripture shows us that we are caged by sin to prove that we experience salvific spiritual blessings by faith, and not the law. Ref: Romans 3:9

3:23 But before faith came, -Faith is here used as the object of faith, Jesus Christ, and the full mystery of the gospel revealed at his coming. **we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.** -In the narrative of redemptive history, the darkness of the Mosaic law existed until the light of Christ shined on the shores of time. Primarily true of Israel to whom the Mosaic law was given, yet it is true to all humanity.

3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, -The law was our tutor and caregiver to watch us in adolescence. The law was the caregiver bringing Israel to Christ in a chronological sense until his coming, and it was a teacher in an experiential sense showing Israel its need of a savior. **that we might be justified by faith.** -The law shows us our inability to save ourselves so that we would look toward Christ for our only source of salvation. Ref: Matthew 5:17

3:25 But after that faith is come, -After Christ, the object of faith, comes and the mystery of the salvation is revealed in him. The full body of the gospel equally was made known at the appearing of Jesus Christ. **we are no longer under a schoolmaster.** -The law pointed to Christ. Now that Christ is come the law waxes old and is obsolete. Ref: Hebrews 1:11, Matthew 9:17

3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. -Belief is the greatest evidence of our gracious saved state. Belief does not make us children, but we understand that we are God's children by faith in Christ. Spiritual action is proof of spiritual life. Apart from faith, there is no true assurance of salvation. There may be evidences in an individual that gives us sweet hope them. However, there is no assurance given to an individual apart from faith in Christ. Ref: 1 John 5:1, John 1:12-13, Galatians 4:6

3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized -Either regeneration, the gift of the Holy Ghost after regeneration, or water baptism. Water baptism seems to best fit because the prior verse mentions belief. Gospel belief should immediately lead to baptism. **into Christ have put on Christ.** -Baptism puts a person in the visible church and also sanctifies the believer for a life of service to God. Simply stated, Baptism is the action whereby a person actively consecrates their life for Christ and in that sense have put on their savior. Ref: Romans 6:1-11

3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: -The effect of justification in Christ is equality for all believers. No person is better or worse in Christ. **for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.** -Paul takes all believers and places them in an elevated position. The poor are elevated in Christ, and the rich are elevated through equalizing humility. Ref: Colossians 3:11

3:29 And if ye be Christ's, -If you are a believer in Jesus Christ then you have assurance that you are Christ's. Belief being the evidence of our position in Christ and the manifestation of justification. **then are ye Abraham's seed,** -It is not those who are physical Jews who are the real children of Abraham. All those who believe in Christ are the true children of Abraham because they are connected to the seed of promise. **and heirs according to the promise.** -The true heirs are those in Christ, not just physical Jews. All who believe, Jews and Gentiles, have free right to the blessing that exist in Christ Jesus. Ref: Romans 9:7, John 8:33-47

Galatians 4

Chapter Summary: This chapter focuses on the dichotomy of law and grace. Paul begins with reminding the Galatians of their sonship and how faith testified of their adoption by election in Christ. Paul shows his fear for their continuing in the truth and finishes this chapter with an allegorical illustration to provoke them to pursue Christ by faith and cast out the law.

Adoption (4:1-7)

4:1 ¶ Now I say, -Paul begins to build on the former illustration of a schoolmaster in Galatians 3:24. **That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant,** -A child, though rightful heir of the parent's estate, has no more control of the estate than a household

servant. **though he be lord of all;** -The child has the relational standing of lord over all the proper due to him but a working relationship no different than non-heirs.

4:2 But is under tutors and governors -They are under stewards who are guardians of the heir and the estate. **until the time appointed of the father.** -The appointed time under the law, or time chosen from the head of the estate to receive the benefits of his inheritance.

4:3 Even so we, -Here Paul begins to apply the analogy. **when we were children,** -The time period prior to the coming of Christ. **were in bondage under the elements of the world:** -They were slaves to the Mosaic law, but especially the traditions of the Rabbinic teachers and their traditions. Again, traditions are not bad, but traditionalism is bondage. Ref: Colossians 3:8,20

4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, -This is connecting the analogy from verse 2, "time appointed of the father." **God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,** -The fulness of time was come when Christ took on human flesh. There are a few interesting assertions made in this passage. First, God's Son was sent forth, not made. He preexisted His incarnation and is the eternal Son of God. Second, Christ was not made of any man, but was made of a woman. This describes the virgin birth. The virgin birth was necessary so that Jesus would not be born with and in sin. Third, Christ was also made under the law. This references his Jewish origin. In this one verse we are told that God's eternal Son would take on human flesh of Abrahamic origin through a virgin birth. This was necessary for Christ to redeem His people. It took a man to pay the penalty of the law. Yet, only God is perfectly righteous. Therefore, God took on human flesh and was born of a virgin under the law to redeem His children. Ref: John 16:28, Genesis 3:15

4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, -Christ redeemed, or bought back, all of his elect from the law. They were all under the curse of the law. That was His purpose for taking on a human body. **that we might receive the adoption of sons.** -Christ rescued us from the law so that we might receive full adoption. Our adoption started before the foundation of the world. Christ legally secured our adoption on the cross. The end of our adoption will be the redemption of our bodies; i.e., glorification. Ref: Ephesians 1:5, Romans 8:23

4:6 And because ye are sons, -Sonship is shown to be the cause, not the consequence of the following graces. We

are saved because we are sons. **God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts,** -We are already children before we are given the Spirit in the new birth. The reason we are born again is because we are his adopted children. **crying, Abba, Father.** The necessary effect of the new birth is a contrite heart that cries out to God. *Abba* connect with *Father* seems to show a personal cry mixed with a knowledgeable mind. It would be like an infant who knows to whom to cry for food. Infants cannot articulate their cry, but they know where to look for help. Crying *Abba, Father* seems to show that it is the involuntary response of the heart to the Spirit on the soul. Ref: Romans 8:15

4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, -You are no longer a slave to the law. **but a son;** -You are now in possession of your sonship. All of God's elect are covenant children from eternity, but they come into a living possession of their sonship at the new birth. **and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.** If you are a son, or daughter then you have the full benefits that come from your inheritance. Ref: Romans 8:17

Bondage of Law or Freedom in Faith (4:8-31)

4:8 ¶ Howbeit then, -However. **when ye knew not God,** -When you were dead in sins. **ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.** -They served false gods while in their depravity. When it says, "by nature are no gods," Paul is referencing the fact that they had no divine attributes and were only the dead imaginations of men. Their nature was not that of the true living God. Ref: 1 Corinthians 8:4

4:9 But now, -Now referring to the present time where they are delivered from the previously mentioned false gods. **after that ye have known God,** -All of God's children are made to know God and Christ in the new birth. **or rather are known of God,** -The new birth brings a person into a vital, or living relationship with Christ. Not only do we know him, but we are known of him. **how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements,** -Why would you turn back to inadequate principles that are without strength and which cannot satisfy your conscience? **whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?** -These weak principles could not bring assurance, but they were an instrument of spiritual slavery. This begs the question, why would they want to leave the freedom of the gospel and go back under religious, spiritual slavery. Ref: Ephesians 2:12, Hebrews 8:11, John 17:3, 1 Corinthians 8:3

4:10 Ye observe -You keep. **days, and months, and times, and years.** -They kept Jewish ceremonies and feast. Ref: Leviticus 23:25, Romans 14:5, Colossians 2:16

4:11 I am afraid of you, -Paul had fears concerning them. **lest** -Unless by some means. **I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.** -Paul fears that he his labors among them were pointless and had no lasting effect.

4:12 ¶ Brethren, -Again, Paul is address brethren, not the unsaved. **I beseech you,** -Paul earnestly begs them. **be as I am; for I am as ye are:** -Paul says that they also should leave Judaism, because he had left that bondage. **ye have not injured me at all.** -Paul uses this language to show them that he was not personally offended. He was exhorting them to return to truth for their own sakes and for the sake of God's glory.

4:13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. -Paul begins to recount under what circumstance they had originally received the gospel. This was to provoke them to reconsider their recent departure. Ref: 1 Corinthians 2:3.

4:14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; -Paul's trials and adversities would have made many reject him. In spite of these adversities, the Galatians freely received him and his gospel. **but received me as an angel of God,** -They had previously received Paul with honor and respect even in his adversity. **even as Christ Jesus.** -Their respect was so great for Paul that they received his message as if it were being delivered from Christ himself. Notice that Jesus is observed to be of greater authority than ministers and angels. Ref: 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Matthew 10:40

4:15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? Where has your happy privilege gone? **for I bear you record,** -I testify to you. **that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.** They had so received the gospel that they would have done anything Paul asked of them. Paul uses a hyperbolic example of self-mutualization. This is an interesting contrast to the fact that they were now led astray by actual self-mutualizers, the circumcision.

4:16 Am I therefore become your enemy, -This phrase contrasts with the prior verse. They once considered Paul a dear teacher but now treat his exhortation as if he was an enemy. **because I tell you the truth?** -The reason for their recent attitude toward Paul was directly connected

to his teaching against the errors they believed. We should note that this is a question that works as a statement to prove a point. Paul asks this question to show that they only now oppose him because he does tell them the truth.

4:17 ¶ They zealously affect you, -The Judaizers are jealous over them to be their followers and work to influence them because of it. **but not well;** -Their influence is not good and their motivation is dishonest. **yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.** -They want to seclude them from the truth of the gospel and church of God so that they would now be their proselytes.

4:18 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, -Being zealous is not a bad thing so long as it is directed in the proper object and for the right reason. **and not only when I am present with you.** Zeal should not be determined by present company.

4:19 ¶ My little children, -Paul softens his tone so that they understand that his strong words are from a heart of love. This is the true pastoral attitude toward converts and congregations. **of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,** -The Galatians were already born again children of God (Galatians 3:15). This then refers to a begetting, or bringing forth in conversion. Paul was toiling in hard, painful labor a second time to convince them of the truth. This was because they had turned back to where they had been delivered from. Ref: 1 Corinthians 4:15, Philemon 1:10

4:20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; -Paul's preference was to see them face to face without a written medium. **for I stand in doubt of you.** -I am perplexed by you.

4:21 ¶ Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, -Paul desires an answer from those who are pursuing salvation by the law. **do ye not hear the law?** -Paul's question, do you really understand what you are desiring? Do you actually hear the demands of the law?

4:22 For it is written, -Genesis 16:3-16, 21:2. **that Abraham had two sons,** -Ishmael and Isaac. **the one by a bondmaid,** -Hagar was the mother of Ishmael. **the other by a freewoman.** -Sarah was the mother of Isaac.

4:23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; -Ishmael was born from man's ability of procreation. **but he of the freewoman was by promise.** -Sarah could not conceive because she was past the age of

child bearing and her womb was barren. Therefore, her child was from God's own ability and not her own. Ref: Genesis 17:17, Romans 9:7, 4:19.

4:24 Which things are an allegory: -This is the only explicitly named allegory in the Bible. This allegory primarily deals with assurance and how we approach God. It is not categories for elect and non-elect, but categories of how individuals pursue God and his righteousness. We either pursue God by faith (Isaac) or by works (Ishmael). One brings peace, and the other bondage. **for these are the two covenants;** -The two covenants are the Old Testament and the New Testament. Both are system of worship. **the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.** - Sinai is where Moses was given the law. Paul makes Agar to be the allegorical type for Sinai, or the law given on Sinai.

4:25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, -Agar and Sinai correspond to (answereth to) Jerusalem. Jerusalem has become like Mount Sinai and is only filled with fear and trembling. **and is in bondage with her children.** -There is no freedom in Agar or looking toward Jerusalem for salvation. There is only unmerciful servitude found in the law.

4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, -Only from the ultimate Jerusalem, Heaven, comes freedom and deliverance from sin, sorrow, death, hell and the bondage of the law. **which is the mother of us all.** -Heaven is the comfort of all God's children, both Jew and Gentile. Ref: Hebrews 12:22, Revelation 3:12, 21:2-10

4:27 For it is written, -In Isaiah 54:1. Jesus quotes from Isaiah 54:13 in John 6:45. **Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.** -Sarah, the barren, is told to rejoice. She who is barren has more children than that of the Agar. Agar only has those under the Mosaic law, the nation of Israel. Sarah has children of promise from both Israel and Gentile nations.

4:28 Now we, brethren, -All believers, both Jew and Gentile. **as Isaac was,** -We are born from God's ability and not from the ability of man. **are the children of promise.** - All believers are children of promise, meaning that all believers are saved by the sovereign grace of God and not by their own actions. Ref: John 1:12-13

4:29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, -Ishmael mocked the birth of Isaac in Genesis 21:9. **even so it is now.** -The present Judaizers were no different than Ishmael. Both mocked and persecuted those who wholly trust in Christ for salvation.

4:30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Quote from Genesis 21:10,12. Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. -This is a vivid exhortation to all who trust in Christ alone for salvation. No Believer should trust in his works, actions, religious activity, charity, or even belief for salvation. We should cast out that way of thinking and not even suffer those who do teach salvation by works into the congregation of believers.

4:31 So then, brethren, -Believers in Christ. **we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.** -Believers in Jesus Christ are the true heirs of Abraham and Sarah, not those who trust in their own actions for salvation.

Galatians 5

Chapter Summary: This chapter begins the practical exhortations built on the preceding gospel truth of salvation by grace. Paul commands them to stand fast in liberty and walk in the Spirit whereby they already live.

LIBERTY IN LIVING (5:1-6:10)

Standing in Liberty (5:1-12)

5:1 ¶ Stand fast therefore -Therefore builds on prior context. The following exhortation stems from being the true heir of Abraham. All practice and godly living comes from truth and doctrine. **in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,** -There is freedom from the bondage of the law in Jesus Christ. **and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.** -The Galatians are exhorted to not be wrapped up with the bondage of the law. They are free in Christ, now they are exhorted to stay unwavering in their present liberty. Consider this as physically living in a free constitutional republic but acting as if you are living in an authoritarian dictatorship. Ref: John 8:32,36, Romans 6:18,8:2, 2 Corinthians 3:17

5:2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, -Paul tells them to take a special note on what he says to them. **that if ye be circumcised,** -This is referring to physical circumcision.

Christ shall profit you nothing. -Salvation in Christ is of no gain to anyone trusting in ceremonies to save them.

5:3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, - Paul repeats what he has already written throughout this epistle. **that he is a debtor to do the whole law.** -A person that tries keeping part of the law needs to remember that they are indebted to keep all of it. Furthermore, even a minor infraction of the law makes one guilty before God. Ref: Romans 2:25

5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, -Paul tells them that Christ's sacrifice is made void to them. **whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.** -Every person who seeks justification by the law is no longer standing steadfast in the grace of God. They are still preserved in Christ; however, they have fallen from experientially standing in grace. This language has an interesting contrast. We do not stand in the works of the law, but instead, are falling. We can only stand in the grace of God. Any movement toward works of the law if a step back represented by falling. We stand in grace. We are laid out flat when fallen back into the law.

5:5 For we through the Spirit wait -We, believers, are continuing in the Spirit, and its comforting promise and not by works of the law. **for the hope of righteousness by faith.** -The hope of righteousness is the hope of final salvation and fully being clothed in the righteousness of Christ. We wait for that hope by faith, and not by external actions performed in religious ceremonies. Ref: 2 Timothy 4:8, Romans 8:23,25

5:6 For in Jesus Christ -"In Jesus Christ" can be taken either vitally or experientially. The following affirmation applies to both. **neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision;** -Neither circumcision or uncircumcision are of consequence either positively or negatively. **but faith which worketh by love.** -Faith stems from a love for God, not a fear of divine justice of the law. Ref: 1 Corinthians 7:19, Colossians 3:11, James 2:18-22

5:7 Ye did run well; -Their Christian course, or race was previously running as it should. **who did hinder you** -Who impeded your Christian running? **that ye should not obey the truth?** -The exact hinderance was a deflection from the gospel of free grace. Ref: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Hebrews 12:1

5:8 This persuasion -This persuasion was the false version of the gospel. **cometh not of him that calleth you.** -This

false gospel originates from a individual, party, or group other than Jesus Christ.

5:9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. -A small amount of error affects both the whole body of the church and other systematic truths. Ref: Matthew 16:6,11-12, 1 Corinthians 5:6

5:10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, -Paul had confidence in them that was rooted and grounded in assurance from God. **that ye will be none otherwise minded:** -He is confident that they will not be removed from his doctrine. **but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.** -Though Paul has confidence that the Galatians will not turn back from the true gospel, he also has confidence that the false teacher will be judged by God. The false teacher(s) are left nameless. Ref: Romans 15:14, 2 Thessalonians 3:4

5:11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? -Some might claim that their doctrine was no different than Paul or that he also preached circumcision. Paul declares through a question that this is false because he suffers persecution from these false teachers for what he actually does preach. **then is the offence of the cross ceased.** -If there was no difference between what was being taught then there would be no offense on either side. Ref: 1 Corinthians 1:23

5:12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you. - Paul desires the immediate exclusion and excommunication of them that preached a false gospel among the churches of Galatia.

Walking in the Spirit (5:13-26)

5:13 ¶ For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; - They had been effectually called to freedom from the penalty of the law, the ordinances that were against them. **only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh,** -Freedom does not equate to lawlessness. We are not to use our freedom from the law to serve our own lusts. **by love serve one another.** -We are to now serve others with the motivation of love, and not from a slavish fear of the punishment. Ref: 1 Corinthians 8:9, 1 Peter 2:16

5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, -The full substance of the law is summed up into one expression. **even in this;** -Quote from Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 7:12, 22:39-40. **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** -We should all treat others with the same affection, charity, forgiveness, and protection to which you treat yourself.

5:15 But if ye bite and devour one another, -If you do not love each other as you love yourself then you will fight and do harm to each other. **take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.** -There is almost no quicker way to destroy a church or denomination than infighting between believers. Loving others as we love ourselves helps to stop the infighting among the churches of God.

5:16 This I say then, -Paul is going to give them the way in which they are to accomplish loving each other and avoid fighting. **Walk in the Spirit,** -Live, or actively abide in the Spirit. Consider this like driving in one's proper lane of traffic. We must drive in the correct lane to get to the correct location of not fulfilling carnal works. **and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.** If we walk the proper path then we will certainly miss the issues in the more dangerous road. Ref: Romans 8:1,4, Matthew 7:13-14

5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: The saved person lives in a constant battle of two contradictory natures. *Lusting against* denotes that each desire is contrary to the other's desire. **and these are contrary the one to the other:** -There is no blending of the two or peace between them. The flesh and the Spirit are diametrically opposed to each other. **so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.** -The affect of these competing desires is that believers are not able to fully pursue their governing desires of the Spirit. Ref: Romans 7:15,19,33

5:18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, -Being led of the Spirit is the work of the Holy Ghost which begins at regeneration. We are changed from having only a full proclivity to sin to having a primary inclination toward God and righteousness. What we once loved, we now hate. Though we are in a daily battle against the flesh, a battle we often lose, we are governed by the Holy Spirit. This battle will continue until glory. **ye are not under the law.** -Being governed by the Holy Ghost proves that we have been freed from the law. Ref: Romans 8:1-14

5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, -The inward wicked desires of the flesh are well known and fully evidenced to everyone. **which are these; Adultery,** -Sexual violation of holy matrimony. **fornication,** -Sexual immorality. Fornication comes from the Greek word, *Porneia* and is that also where we get the English word Porn. **uncleanness,** -Unbridled, impure and unnatural lusts of thought, word, and action. Some commentators consider this to be equivalent to sodomy and bestiality.

lasciviousness, -Lack of restraint and immoral aptitude. Ref: Exodus 20:14, 1 Corinthians 6:12-18, Romans 1:24, Romans 13:13, 1 Peter 4:3, Colossians 3:5

5:20 Idolatry, -Worship of idols. **witchcraft,** -Sorcery, whether true or false, is associating one's with Satan. **hatred,** -Both inward and external hate. **variance,** -Fighting or even endless debating. **emulations,** -Zealous jealousy. **wrath,** -Emotionally violent with outburst. **strife,** -Contentious. **seditions,** -Factious. **heresies,** -Schismatic. Ref: Exodus 20:4-6, Deuteronomy 18:10, 1 Corinthians 3:3, James 3:13-16, Ephesians 4:31, Philippians 2:3-4, 1 Corinthians 3:4, Acts 24:14, 2 Peter 2:1

5:21 Envyings, -Covetousness. **murders,** -A human slaughterer. **drunkenness,** -Intoxication. A drunk or someone who drinks alcohol to excess. This would also condemn any kind of mind-altering substance that affected sobriety. **revellings,** -Rioting in a way of life, or going to excess in all parts of life. **and such like:** -Anything that also resembles the above-mentioned desires. **of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past,** -This is probably describing his past visits. **that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.** -Those left in their sinful condition and not changed by divine grace will never experience God's kingdom in this life or the next. We should equally take note from this principle that believers cannot experience the kingdom of God now when walking after the flesh. Paul is using the state of the wicked to solicit action from believers. Ref: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 5:5-6, Colossians 3:6

5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit -That which is produced by the Holy Spirit and also attributes of God's nature. These are called fruit of the Spirit and not works we do. Simply stated, the works of the flesh are attributed to us and these fruit are attributed to the Spirit. These should be worked out in our lives, but they are ultimately character traits that stem from the Spirit's working in our hearts. There are nine virtues mentioned but fruit is singular. This denotes the idea that all are of the same source and essentially the same kind even though there are multiple. **is love,** -Benevolent affection. **joy,** -Cheerfulness. **peace,** -Calm tranquility. **longsuffering,** -Patient forbearance. **gentleness,** -Kindness. **goodness,** -Beneficence. **faith,** -Trust and faithfulness to God. Ref: Ephesians 5:9, Colossians 3:12

5:23 Meekness, -Humility, or low view of one's self. **temperance:** -Self-control. **against such there is no law.** -

There is no condemnation against what the Spirit produces and prescribes. These are divine attributes and are therefore righteous. Likewise, we have freedom while pursuing these traits and there are no restrictions on that pursuit. Ref: 2 Timothy 2:25, 1 Corinthians 9:25, 1 Timothy 1:9

5:24 And they that are Christ's -This describes those for whom Christ died and the Spirit inhabits. **have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.** -Regenerate individuals, in consequence of being born again, hate sin and fight against the desires of the flesh. This battle is daily and often lost, but the hatred for sin and inward battle is never absent from those born again. A promised, or guaranteed progressive growth in discipleship is not found in scriptures or experience, yet ineffectualism (the idea that those born again are in practice no different than those dead in sins) is equally absent from the description God gives of his effectually called children. Ref: Romans 6:1-6

5:25 If we live in the Spirit, -Those who live in the Spirit are those that are born again and hate sin as stated in the prior verse. **let us also walk in the Spirit.** -Walking in discipleship is not a given. We must equally pursue our God in all diligence. All believers have life in Christ, but the full enjoyment of that life must be actively cultivated by the individuals through the Spirit of God. Consider this to be the difference between sonship and discipleship. We are his children and should diligently pursue being his students. Notice in the coming verses that walking in the Spirit is not seen in some charismatic ecstasy. Instead, walking in the Spirit will be seen in chapter 6 with how we utilize our time and resources. Truly, our hardest battles are usually found with those two issues. Ref: John 6:63, Romans 8:10, Colossians 3:5

5:26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, -Let us not seek empty adoration. **provoking one another,** -Provoke means to solicit or irritate another. **envying one another.** -Seeking vain glory provokes others to be envious and have jealous desires of the same empty adoration. It is a cruel circle. Ref: Philippians 2:3

Galatians 6

Chapter Summary: This last chapter contains a final exhortation to use liberty in Christ for serve to others and a closing summation of Paul's general message.

Liberty to Serve (6:1-10)

6:1 ¶ Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, - Overtaken in a fault is when a believer is taken captive by a sin. This section begins to describe how we should be utilizing our time. The believer should seek to utilize his time for the benefit of the church. **ye which are spiritual,** -You who are still walking in the Spirit. **restore such an one** -Return them to their previous walk. **in the spirit of meekness;** -In a disposition of humility without haughtiness or arrogance. **considering thyself,** -We should take special note of ourselves in both understanding our own ability to sin and safe guard ourselves from it. **lest thou also be tempted.** -Always keep in mind your own condition or you will likewise be tempted and overtaken in a fault.

6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, -This is a command to help carry the weight of life common to each believer. This may be sin, worry, or another common affliction. Consider this like picking someone up and helping them walk by taking their weight on yourself as a human crutch. **and so fulfil the law of Christ.** -Bearing another's burden fulfills, or accomplishes the command of Christ to love one another as is one way we walk in the Spirit. Ref: John 13:34, Romans 15:1

6:3 For if a man think himself to be something, -This connects with verse 1 of this chapter by addressing the person who thinks highly of themselves without considering others first. **when he is nothing,** -All apart from God's grace are no different than any other person. We should not be impressed with ourselves because we all deserve hell. **he deceiveth himself.** -That person that thinks highly of themselves is deluded. Ref: 1 Corinthians 8:3

6:4 But let every man prove his own work, -Let every individual examine and test their own actions and behavior. This is to be contrasted with examining the actions of others. **and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.** -The person who works with diligence on their own godliness without negatively examining others will be happy for his own progress without having to base it on the lacking growth in other people. Ref: 1 Corinthians 11:28, 2 Corinthians 13:5

6:5 For every man shall bear his own burden. -Every person should focus on their own frailties over that of others. This is contrasted with verse 2 of this chapter. We are to work to restore other believers and bear their

burdens without judgmental arrogance. We present sympathy to others and scrutiny to self. Ref: 14:12

6:6 Let him that is taught in the word -This begins the second way we walk in the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit is seen in how we utilize our resources. Those *taught* are any congregant being taught by a minister. The word communicate is referencing financial communication or giving. **unto him that teacheth in all good things.** -The congregant that is taught all the doctrines from the Bible should equally give sacrifice of their own temporal good things for the support of the ministry. Ref: 1 Corinthians 9:14, 2 Timothy 2:4-6

6:7 Be not deceived; -Do not be deluded or fooled. **God is not mocked:** -God will not be insulted or derided by someone turning up their nose to him, specifically in reference to mocking him in neglect of the ministry while expecting continued spiritual blessings. **for whatsoever a man soweth,** -Sowing is planting seed. Paul uses an analogy of planting and harvesting. **that shall he also reap.** -Whatever you plant, that also will you equally harvest. We should never expect to harvest spiritual benefits when we are not equally putting in the necessary effort. Ref: 2 Corinthians 9:6-14

6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; -A person that only sows, or invests in carnal activities will also reap of those activities. Specifically, carnal actions will only bring the end consequence of destruction. Sinful choices bring corruption and death. Those in Christ are saved from final death, but may still face the temporal consequence of their sinful actions. **but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.** -A person that invests themselves in the Spirit will reap of everlasting life. This is not saying that everlasting life is gained through the actions of man. Salvation is solely by the grace of God. This expression is describing the type of the blessing enjoyed, both in quality and quantity. In quality, you can presently enjoy in this life heavenly blessings that this world cannot give. In quantity, you enjoy heavenly substance that you soon will enjoy for forever. These blessings are from heaven and will one day be enjoyed eternally.

6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: -Knowing that whatever we sow we also reap, we should not get faint hearted in doing good. **for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.** -The reason we should not get weary is because we are motivated through knowing we will reap

in God's due season, whether in this life or the next. Ref: 2 Thessalonians 3:13, Hebrews 10:36, Psalms 126:5

6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, -Paul builds on the knowledge that we will sow where we reap to encourage giving. He makes mention concerning opportunity. Every person's opportunity varies and we should not compare ability. The main idea is to be open to whatever opportunity is afforded us both financially and circumstantially. With that said, from conversion to glory is an opportunity afforded to all believers. If we are alive in Christ then our life should be lived by the faith of the Son of God. Our new life is our opportunity. **let us do good unto all men,** -Believers should seek opportunities to help all people, both believer and unbeliever. **especially unto them who are of the household of faith.** -The specific realm of focus for the giving of alms should be directed first in the house of God, the church. Ref: 1 Thessalonians 5:15, 1 Timothy 6:18, Ephesians 2:19, 3 John 1:5

CLOSING (6:11-18)

6:11 ¶ Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. -Paul begins his closing statements. This opening of the close possibly describes the size of Paul's dictation and not the size of the actual letter. However, only Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Hebrews are longer letters written by him. No one really knows. Ref: 1 Corinthians 16:21

6:12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, - This describes all who want to display their own external works. **they constrain you to be circumcised;** -They compel the Gentiles to be circumcised. **only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.** -They follow the law to be popular and avoid persecution. Ref: 2 Corinthians 11:13

6:13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; -These false teachers are not truly keeping the law that they command others to keep. **but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.** -They only wish to have the Galatians be circumcised so that they may glory in having their own converts.

6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, -A real minister does not glory in personal converts or self-perceived success. **save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,** -The glory of the ministry is only in Christ. The desire to convert men stems directly from His glory. **by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.** -The world, its

riches, religious ceremonies, and bragging rights are all dead to Paul through Jesus Christ. Likewise, the world counts Paul as dead to it. However, the riches of Christ far outweigh the world and its glittering lights. Ref: Philippians 3:3,7,8, 1 Corinthians 1:29-31

6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, -Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision adds anything to a person's religion. **but a new creature.** -What avails much is Christ's own work of regeneration on the soul whereby we are made new creatures in him. Christ's work on our soul and subsequent fruit are the only thing that avail in religion. Ref: 1 Corinthians 7:9, 2 Corinthians 5:17

6:16 And as many as walk according to this rule, -He addresses all that follow the canon, or standard Paul has set out in this epistle. **peace be on them,** -He wishes for calm tranquility, or quietness to be upon them. **and mercy,** -Mercy is divine compassion to not receive what one deserves. **and upon the Israel of God.** -He wishes these blessings on the true Israel, all those circumcised in the heart. Ref: Philippians 3:16, Psalms 125:5

6:17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: -From this moment forward, and due to what he has written, no person should question the true gospel of grace or Paul's apostolic authority. **for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.** -The Judaizer's mouth was shut because his suffering proved that their message was not the same as Paul's gospel. Ref: 2 Corinthians 1:5, 11:23-25

6:18 Brethren, Paul's shows final compassion and grace by addressing them as his brethren. **the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.** -Paul hopes that the grace of Christ will be in them continually in a very evidenced fashion. This would include taking seriously and implementing everything he has stated in this letter to the Galatians. **Amen.** -A sign of finality signifying so let it be. Ref: 2 Timothy 4:22, Philemon 1:25

References:

Gill, J. (n.d.). Galatians 2:20 Commentary - John Gill's Exposition of the Bible.