

GALATIANS

by
Dr Jeffrey Khoo

Lecture Notes



FAR EASTERN BIBLE COLLEGE
SINGAPORE

No part of this syllabus may be reproduced in any manner for distribution without the written permission of Far Eastern Bible College, 9A Gilstead Road, Singapore 309063.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

An Exposition by Jeffrey Khoo

la. FIRST WORDS (1:1-5)

lb. The Writer (1:1)

“Paul an apostle not from men, neither through man but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who has raised Him out of the dead.” Right at the very outset, Paul defends his apostleship. The apostles were a special group of God’s servants in the New Testament who infallibly and inerrantly spoke (1 Thess 2:13), wrote (2 Pet 1:20-21), and practised (1 Cor 1 1:1) God’s Word. There were just twelve of them (Paul replaced Judas).

False teachers in the Galatian church were questioning the authenticity of Paul’s apostleship. Paul had to meet the challenge not because of personal pride, but for the sake of the Gospel. If his apostleship was questionable, then the gospel he had preached was suspect too. Paul in no uncertain terms clarified that his apostleship did not come directly (*apo*) from men, neither was it through an intermediary (*dia*) that he received it (against the notion that though God may be the One who had appointed him apostle, yet it was through the hands of the other apostles that he was ordained, thereby rendering him a lesser apostle than what he has made himself out to be), but (*alla*—a strong adversative) directly from (*dia*) Christ Himself as did all the other apostles. There was no need for Paul to use the preposition for ultimate source (ie *apo*) because there is no authority higher than Christ.

Paul said that it was the risen Lord that had conferred on him the office of apostleship. This is significant because to qualify as an apostle one must, among other things, have personally seen Jesus Christ after His resurrection. In 1 Cor 9:1, Paul challenged those who were against his apostleship to examine his credentials, “Am I not an apostle? ... have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? (see also 1 Cor 15:7-8).

2b. His Associates (1:2a)

“And all the brothers with me ...” They were not co-writers of the Epistle, but co-workers. That Paul was solely responsible for the composition of this Epistle is clearly seen in verse 6 when he used the personal pronoun “I.” Why then did he mention “the brethren?” Some say it is a matter of courtesy. But Machen said that Paul in mentioning the fellow believers who were with him, forwarded such who could testify to the genuineness of his apostleship. In effect Paul was saying to the Galatians, “All the brethren who are with me join in what I am saying to you; will you, then, agree with me any less than they?” (19).

3b. The Readers (1:2b)

“to all the churches of Galatia, ...”

These were the churches Paul planted during his first missionary journey (Acts 13, 14) viz Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, Lystra (South Galatian cities), and his second missionary journey when he went north to Phrygia and “the region of Galatia, to Mysia and Bithynia after visiting Lystra, Derbe and Iconium (Acts 16:1, 2, 6, 7). He paid another visit to the North Galatian churches in his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23).

There is some debate over the destination of the Epistle. There are basically two

views: (1) North Galatian view, and (2) South Galatian view. Arguments for either view must take into consideration the fact that Paul had visited the churches of Galatia twice already. Galatians 4:13 states, “Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first (*proteron*).” The word *proteron* could be taken to mean “first of two.”

Let us attempt to find out when the Epistle was written in the light of these two visits.

1c. North Galatian view

- 1d. First visit: Acts 16:6-7 (2nd missionary journey).
- 2d. Second visit: Acts 18:23 (3rd missionary journey).
- 3d. Place and date of writing: Ephesus? (Acts 19), c AD 53- 5.

2c. South Galatian view I

- 1d. First visit: Acts 13 (1st missionary journey).
- 2d. Second visit: Acts 16 (2nd missionary journey).
- 3d. Place and date of writing: Ephesus/Corinth? (Acts 18), c AD 51-2.

3c. South Galatian view II

- 1d. First visit: Acts 13 (1st missionary journey).
- 2d. Second visit: Acts 14:21,24 (return journey).
- 3d. Place and date of writing: Syrian Antioch (Acts 14:26), c AD 49 prior to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).

4d. According to Machen, “the early dating of Galatians, with identification of the event of Gal. 2:1-10 with the famine visit of Acts 11:30; 12:25, constitutes one possible, ... way of exhibiting the harmony between Acts and Galatians. It must be treated, therefore, at least with respect, and unquestionably it would serve to solve some of the problems” (25).

4b. The Blessing (1:3-5)

1c. The content of blessing

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Instead of the usual secular greeting *chairein* meaning, “be joyful,” “be happy,” (perhaps equivalent to the modern Greek greeting *chairete* meaning “hello!”), Paul adopts the more meaningful Christian wish of *charis* which means “grace.” It refers to the undeserved favour of God. He also adopts the Hebrew *shalom* (ie “peace”), which is *eirene* in Greek. This blessing of peace is given in full in Phil 4:7, “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall

keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Both grace and peace come from God the Father and God the Son. Although a chiasmus (ie inverted parallelism—ABBA) may be seen here implying that grace is from Christ, and peace is from the Father, it should not be forced to mean that grace only can come from Christ, or peace is only from the Father. There are instances in the NT where Christ is said to give peace (John 14:27, Acts 10:36), and where the Father is the bestower of grace (Luke 2:40).

2c. The source of blessing

“who has given Himself in behalf of our sins, so that he might rescue us out of the present evil age according to the will of God even our Father, ...”

Why did Paul include this clause here? In his other Epistles this blessing of grace and peace is simply stated without an adjectival clause (see 1 Cor 1:3, 2 Cor 1:2, Phil 1:2, Col 1:2). What is the reason for this addition here? “The answer is perfectly clear. Paul is adding these words in reply to the propaganda of the Judaizing teachers who were making the cross of Christ of none effect. ‘Christ died to set you free,’ says Paul in substance; ‘yet now you are returning into bondage; by your effort to earn a part of your salvation by your own good works you are returning into that very bondage from which you were released at such enormous cost; you are trying to undo the effects of Christ’s unspeakable gift.’ That is the central thought of the Epistle to the Galatians” (Machen, 28).

Christ died “in behalf of” or “for the benefit of” (*huper*) our sins. In other words, Christ in his substitutionary atonement died for our advantage so that our sins might be forgiven.

Christ has rescued (*exeletoi*) us from “this present evil age.” The word “rescue” here is used five other times in the NT to mean “rescue from disaster or destruction” (Acts 7:10, 34; 12:11; 23:27; 26:17).

“This present evil age” refers to the time between the fall of Adam to the second coming of Christ. This present age is characterised by evil because of the curse of sin, and of the rule of the prince of this world – Satan himself (John 12:31). Christ has effectively delivered us from the bondage of the sin, Satan, and the world. It is utter foolishness for us to return to our old, cruel master. Which criminal once set free desires to go back to jail? Since every aspect of our salvation is of God, all glory belongs to Him, and none else—“to him the glory for ever and ever, amen.” This is exactly the point in Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” The right to boast is solely the Lord’s.

2a. Heresy in the Church (1:6-9)

lb. Nature of the Heresy (1:6-7)

“I am amazed that so quickly you have removed yourselves from the one who has called you in the grace of Christ to another gospel, which is not another, except certain ones are those who are disturbing you and are willing to overturn the gospel of Christ.”

The Galatian Christians’ rejection of the gospel surprised Paul in no small way. They have been set free from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the world when they received the gospel of Christ preached by him. Yet they are now so ready to reject it to return to their former state of enslavement! A freed slave now wanting to go back to his

chains?!

This departure “so quickly” (*houtos tacheos*) made, makes the whole affair even more incredulous. The “so quickly” here could either refer to (1) the recentness of their Christian conversion, or (2) the recentness of the heretical intrusion.

The believers are said to be in the process of departing from the gospel of Christ. The verb *metatithesite* (“you are transferring yourselves”) is descriptive of the state the Galatians were in: (1) Present tense: They are being persuaded by the false teachers, and are in the process of renouncing the gospel of liberty, but the defection is not total yet. (2) Middle voice: They themselves were to be blamed for this defection from the faith. Although there was an external element of heretical teachers, they were chiefly at fault because they were allowing themselves to be deceived by such. They ought to be like the noble Bereans who wasted no time in searching the Scriptures to ascertain the truth of the things taught (Acts 17:11).

The Galatians were about to accept “another gospel” (*heteron euaggelion*) which was not “another” (*allo*). In the Greek, “two different words are used here for ‘another.’ The word which is used in the former place is *heteros*; the word which is used in the latter place is *allos*. The former word, *heteros*, often, though not always, has in it the notion of difference in kind between one thing and another. Thus it is said in the Gospel according to Luke, in connection with the transfiguration, that ‘the fashion of His countenance became other.’ Here the word *heteros* is used for ‘other,’ and the plain implication is that the fashion of His countenance was different from what it had been before.

“The other word, *allos*, on the other hand, designates merely numerical distinctness of one thing from another. If I gave a man an apple, and he asks me whether I have ‘another,’ the word that he will naturally use is not *heteros* but *allos*.

“... Paul says that the Galatians are turning unto a different gospel, but that different gospel is not really a second gospel to be put alongside of the gospel already preached, as though it could be a companion with it in a series. ‘No,’ says Paul, ‘it is not really a gospel at all; there is only one gospel, and that is the gospel already preached to you. This other teaching, though it purports to be a gospel, is not really a gospel at all. It is not really another gospel, but only a perversion of the one true gospel’ (Machen, 36-7).

2b. The Curse on the Heresy (1:8-9)

“But even if we or an angel out of heaven shall preach to you contrary to that which we have preached to you, anathema let him be. As I have said before, and now again I say, If any preaches to you contrary to that which you have received, *anathema* let him be.”

The word *anathema* literally means “a placed up object” (*ana* = “up,” and *thema* = “to place”). It came to refer to something handed over to God for judgement. *Anathema* has the OT idea of a *cherem*, “a ban” (Num 21:3, Josh 6:17, 7:12, Judg 1:17, Zech 14:11), the heathen nations of Canaan, for example, were specially set aside by God for destruction or annihilation. In the NT it refers to an object of God’s hatred—a thing cursed—that must not be allowed to remain and must be utterly destroyed. “Paul uses *anathema* in the same sense in Gal. 1:8, 9. He who preaches a false gospel is delivered to destruction by God. Again it is not a matter of an act of church discipline in the sense of excommunication. The curse exposes the culprits to the judicial wrath of God” (NIDNTT, s.v. “Curse,” by H Aust, and D Muller).

Machen: “Upon what sort of error does the Apostle Paul pronounce this tremendous condemnation? It was not an error which the modern Church, according to its present tendency, would be inclined to take very seriously. The Judaizers agreed with Paul about many things: they believed that Jesus was the Messiah; they seem to have had

no quarrel with Paul's lofty view of Jesus' person; they believed in His resurrection from the dead. Moreover, they believed that a man must have faith in Christ if he is to be saved. They differed from the Apostle only in thinking that a man must also contribute something of his own if he is to be saved—namely the keeping of the law of God.

“Paul also held that the Christian man must do what the law commands. The Apostle did differ from the Judaizers, it is true, with regard to the meaning of the law; he did hold that certain ceremonial requirements of the Old Testament, though entirely divine and authoritative, were intended by God only for the old dispensation and not for the new dispensation that had been ushered in by the redeeming work of Christ. But that difference is not really the main point in the Epistle to the Galatians. The central point at issue between Paul and the Judaizers concerned merely the logical—not even the temporal—order of three steps. Paul said: (1) ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) at that moment you are saved; and (3) immediately proceed to keep the law of God,’ The Judaizers said: (1) ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and (2) keep the law of God the best you can; and then (3) you are saved.’

“To the men that dominate the life of the modern Church it would seem to be a subtle, hair-splitting distinction at the most. Surely, they would say, Paul ought to have made common cause with those Judaizers who had such a zeal for righteousness and furthermore exalted the Lord Jesus Christ so high!

“As a matter of fact the Apostle did nothing of the kind. What he actually said with respect to the Judaizers was: ‘Let him be anathema.’ He seemed to have none of the modern virtue of tolerance at this point [and rightly so]” (48-9, parenthesis mine).

In verse 8, Paul anathematised a perverted evangel (another gospel); in verse 9, he anathematised a heretical evangelist (another gospeller). Both message and messenger were equally condemned. Martin Luther has this admonition: “For the overthrowing of this their wicked and blasphemous doctrine, thou hast here a plain text like a thunderbolt, wherein Paul subjecteth both himself and an angel from heaven, and all others, doctors, teachers, and masters whatsoever, to be under the authority of the Scriptures: for they ought not to be masters, judges, or arbiters, but only witnesses, disciples, and confessors of the Church, whether it be the Pope, or Luther, or Augustine, or Paul, or an angel from heaven. Neither ought any doctrine to be taught or heard in the Church, besides the pure word of God, that is to say, the holy Scripture; otherwise accused be both the teachers and hearers, together with their doctrine” (27).

3a. PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP DEFENDED (1:10-2:21)

lb. Paul's Apostleship not Sourced in Man (1:10-17)

1c. Paul's ministry was not men-pleasing (1:10)

“For now am I persuading men or God? Or am I seeking to please men? If yet men I was trying to please, then a slave of Christ I would not be.”

The Judaizers might have accused Paul of having double standards. They possibly accused Paul of speaking well of circumcision when he was among Jews (e.g. Acts 16:3—the circumcision of Timothy), but if he was in the company of Gentiles, he would not tell them to be circumcised because he desired their favour. This allegation had to be refuted.

Paul had no problems with the Mosaic laws. They were given to Jews. There was nothing wrong if Jews after becoming Christians wanted to continue keeping those ceremonial laws. But in keeping them they must understand that the observance of them did not in any way contribute to their salvation.

Justification is solely by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, not by works (Eph 2:8-9). Paul himself took a Nazarite vow when he shaved his head at Cenchræ (Acts 18:18 cf Num 6:18). This he did in order to be “all things to all men, that I might by all means save some”(1 Cor 9:22).

The Gentiles should not be required to keep the OT ceremonies and rituals because they, in the first place, were outside of the Jewish economy. Secondly, the New Covenant instituted and fulfilled by Christ has replaced the Old Covenant ceremonies which were but images of the Messiah who had already come (Heb 8-10).

What Paul was really against was the inclusion of the Mosaic laws as a requirement for salvation. In so doing they had changed the gospel message from that of pure grace, to that which includes human effort. A faith plus works gospel is no gospel at all. It is a gospel that does not save!

So Paul dismissed the charge that he spoke only things that people wanted to hear so as to be popular. If that was the case, then he would not be pronouncing such a severe sentence of judgment against those who were preaching another gospel. The word *arti* (“now”) was placed at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis. He proved that he is no men-pleaser by what he has just done, viz to anathematise a false gospel, and all false gossellers (verses 8-9). The things that he did, Paul said, were done to please God, to get His approval, not man’s. The second class condition—*ei ... an* clause (a contrary to fact condition)— indicates that the allegation that Paul sought the approval of man was absolutely untrue. Paul was absolutely loyal to Christ and His gospel as a bonds slave.

2c. Paul’s gospel was received directly from Christ (1:11-12)

“For I am making known to you, brothers, the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man, for neither I from men received this, nor was taught but through the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Paul now made it clear that his gospel “was not to be measured or accounted for by human standards, either as to its origin or its development” (Kent, 41). Paul stressed that he (1) was not a second hand recipient (*parelabon*), of the gospel message, and (2) did not receive the gospel by being taught (*edidachthen*) in a Bible College.

He received the gospel “through the revelation of Jesus Christ.” The genitive (ie “of”) phrase here can either be (1) an objective genitive (ie Jesus Christ is the object of the revelation: Christ is the content of revelation), or (2) a subjective genitive (ie Jesus Christ is the subject of the revelation: Christ is the revealer).

Is this a subjective or objective genitive? “In our passage, it is clear from the context that the genitive ‘of Jesus Christ’ is subjective genitive and not objective genitive. Paul means that he received the gospel by a revelation which Jesus Christ gave him, not that he received it by the fact that God revealed Jesus Christ to him. The objective genitive would indeed, in itself yield a perfectly good sense; it is perfectly true that Paul received the gospel through the fact that God revealed Jesus Christ to him, and indeed he says practically that just below, in verse 16, when he says that God revealed His Son to him. But here the point plainly is concerned not with the content of the revelation but with the source of it. ‘I received the gospel,’ Paul says, ‘not from man but from Jesus Christ.’” (Machen, 58-9).

3c. Paul's life before and after conversion is proof of genuine apostleship (1:13-17)

4d. Paul's rebellion against Christ in the past (1:13-14)

“For you heard my manner of life at one time in the Jewish faith that in excess I persecuted the church of God and laid her waste. And I progressed in the Jewish faith above many contemporaries among my people, being all the more a zealot of the tradition of my forefathers.”

Paul never intended to be a Christian in the first place. In fact he was a Jewish fanatic, utterly opposed to the Christian religion. He persecuted the church fiercely thinking that He was doing Jehovah a favour (Acts 8-9). He was thoroughly entrenched in his Judaism which at that time had already been modified by extra-biblical laws from non-inspired books like the Mishnah (commentary on the Torah) and Talmud (commentary on the Mishnah)—the rabbinical traditions (Phil 3:5-6). That he became a Christian was something he did not plan to do. He would be the last person to ever turn to Christ if he could help it.

Not only that, the Apostles would certainly not have him as an Apostle considering his notoriety. The Apostles themselves had their initial doubts when they heard that he had been converted (Acts 9:21). That he had received his apostleship from the Apostles was something humanly inconceivable and impossible.

5d. Paul's subsequent conversion to Christ (1:15-17)

“But then God was pleased, the one who separated me from my mother's womb and called (me) through His grace. To reveal His Son to me, in order that I may preach him among the nations. I did not consult with flesh and blood (any man) immediately. Neither went I up to Jerusalem towards the apostles before me, but went away to Arabia and again went back to Jerusalem.”

It was not Paul's will that (1) he became a Christian, and (2) an Apostle, but God's will entirely. God had in eternity past elected Paul to be saved and to be Apostle (cf Jer 1:5).

It was firstly God's will to save Paul. This happened when God revealed Christ to Paul inwardly (*en emoi*). Although the Damascus experience of Paul (Acts 9:15) was an external one—Christ appeared to him (1 Cor 5:8), yet the spiritual appreciation of Christ's visitation and revelation may only be understood by Paul when the Holy Spirit does an inner work of regeneration because spiritual things must be spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:10-14). Some say that the statement means God is revealing His Son through Paul.” This is unlikely because it is not *dia emou* but *en emoi* that is used.

Secondly, it was God's will that Paul should be an Apostle to the gentiles (cf Acts 9:15, Gal 2:8-9). The *hina* plus subjunctive introduces a purpose clause. God elected Paul to be saved, and to be a preacher to the gentiles. This is an exposition of verse 1 when Paul said that He was an Apostle (1) not from man (not sourced in himself), (2) neither through man (not derived from the Eleven). His salvation and apostleship came

directly and solely from God.

To underscore that his apostleship was divinely conferred without human intervention, Paul declared that (1) he did not enter St Peter's Theological Seminary for training, neither (2) did he go to the Jerusalem Church for ordination. Just like Peter, "flesh and blood" was not responsible for his conversion and apostleship (cf Matt 16:17). The fact that Paul went to Arabia instead of Jerusalem shows that he had no desire to seek the approval of the Apostles or the Jerusalem Church. He did not scheme or manipulate his way into a position of power. Instead of going to Jerusalem where the mother church was, he went to a most unlikely place—Arabia—probably the country of the Nabateans (near Damascus) ruled by Aretas IV at that time (cf 2 Cor 11:32-33). We do not know how long he had been there, but an intelligent guess would be about 2-3 years (cf Acts 9:20-23). What was he doing there? Probably, meditating on the Old Testament Scripture, and receiving special instruction from the Lord Himself.

2b. Paul's Apostleship not sourced in the Apostles (1:18-2:21)

1c. Paul's experience in Jerusalem (1:18-20)

"Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter and stayed with him for 15 days. And another of the apostles I saw not except James the brother of the Lord. And that which I am writing to you, see before God that I lie not."

In verse 16, we read Paul saying that after his conversion he did not immediately (*eutheos*) go up to Jerusalem. Instead of going to Jerusalem, he went away from Jerusalem, to Arabia before returning to Damascus. And there he was for about three years. The problem here is: Should the three years be calculated (1) from the time of his conversion or (2) from the time of his return to Damascus? Machen and Kent take view #1 without any discussion. Robert T Boyd in his book, *Paul The Apostle* (USA: World Publishing, 1995), takes view #2 (73). It is probable that his conversion rather than his return to Damascus was the point of reference. His conversion was the highlight of his testimony, and probably uppermost in his mind.

The "three years" could be seen as (1) a full three years, or (2) in the third year. This interval of time is not reflected in Acts but may be inserted either (1) between Acts 9:21 and 22 (so Boyd, 72), or (2) between Acts 9:22 and 23 (so Kent, 44). While in Damascus, Paul preached powerfully the gospel of Christ. So much so that the Jews hated him and planned to kill him. He was saved by some of the believers who lowered him down from the city wall in a basket (Acts 9:23-25, 2 Cor 11:32-33).

Paul then went up to Jerusalem and visited Peter—the number one Apostle. This visit lasted only 15 days. Paul called Peter "Cephas" here using his Aramaic name. Acts 9:26 tells us that the disciples in Jerusalem were initially afraid and reluctant to see Paul. The Apostles did not have a martyr-syndrome. The fact that Paul used the word *epemeina* (literally "to remain over") may indicate that Paul had to *prolong* his stay in order to see Peter (Kent, 47). He was not able to see Peter immediately. He had to wait for Peter to be sure that there would be no threat or danger to his life. So this visit could have been slightly over 15 days.

Does not Paul's visit of Peter contradict what Paul said in Galatians 1:1

that it was not from man or through man that he received his apostleship, and Galatians 1:12 where he said that he was not “taught” by any of the Apostles? Answer: “When Paul speaks, as he does in Galatians, of his apostolic independence, of the fact that he has not received his gospel from the original apostles or from any other mere men, he does not mean that he was indifferent to factual information which came to him by ordinary word of mouth from those who had been with Jesus when He was on earth. Much of such information had already come to him before his conversion; for the public ministry of Jesus was not a thing done in a corner, and Paul was intensely interested in it, though only as an enemy. But after the conversion the fund of such information would be enormously increased, not only through Paul’s contact with humble Christians in Damascus, but also, and particularly, when he came into personal contact with the chief of Jesus’ intimate disciples. The incidental way in which Paul writes in his Epistles here and there about events in the life of Jesus or elements of His teaching shows clearly not only that such incidental references proceed from a far larger store of knowledge which he possessed himself, but also that they are parts, chosen as need arose, of a store of information which he had given to the churches in his initial teaching. ...

“Surely it is a mere caricature of New Testament exegesis if we represent Paul as saying to Peter during those fifteen days which he spent with him three years after the conversion, when Peter quite naturally started to tell him something about his intercourse in Galilee with the Lord: ‘Stop, Peter; you must not tell me anything that you heard Jesus say or saw Jesus do while He was with you on earth, because if you do you will impair my apostolic independence.’ On the contrary, the two men of course spoke of those wonderful events of which Peter was the best possible eyewitness; ... Certainly it did not at all make Paul a disciple of Peter, as the Judaizers apparently said he was; it did not impair the slightest his independent apostolic authority or overthrow the thesis, which he is establishing in this first great division of his Epistle, that he was an apostle not from men nor through a man but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead” (Machen, 75-6).

That Peter himself saw Paul as his equal can be seen in Peter’s remarks on Paul’s Epistles, “even as our beloved Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written to you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Pet 3:15-16). Note that Peter here equated Paul’s Epistles with the “other scriptures.” In other words, Peter acknowledged that Paul wrote the Word of God—inerrant and infallible. Only an Apostle could be described like this (cf Eph 2:20).

During this visit, Paul said that he saw only Peter and one other person, namely, James the Lord’s brother. The question is raised, “Was James an Apostle?” since Paul said, “another of the apostles he did not see except James.” This implies that James was one of the Apostles. The context clearly speaks to the contrary identifying him only as the Lord’s brother. The word “except” here may simply be translated “but.” In other words, Paul was really saying that he saw only the Apostle Peter, no other Apostles were present, but he did see James, the Lord’s brother. It is not surprising that Paul mentioned James because he was one of the outstanding elders of the Jerusalem Church (cf Acts 15:13). This usage of the *ei me* (“except”), indicating contrast rather than exception, is found in Matthew 12:4, and Luke 4:26,27.

Paul takes an oath, “Behold, before God I am not lying,” because of the opposition he was facing. He was giving his testimony which proved his apostleship. And in the court of law, such testimonies must be solemnly given under oath.

2c. Paul’s experience in Syria and Cilicia (1:21-24)

“Then I went to the districts of Syria and Cilicia. And I was not known by fact to all the churches in Judea which are in Christ. And only when they heard, “The one who persecuted us then is preaching now the faith which he at that time laid waste. And they glorified God in me.”

Paul preached powerfully the Lord Jesus Christ to the Greek-speaking Jews while he was in Jerusalem at that time. These Grecians were planning to kill him for what he had said. The Christians rescued him by taking him to Caesarea where he probably caught a ship to Cilicia where his home town Tarsus is (Acts 9:29-30). From there he went to Syria, to his home church—Antioch (Acts 11:25-26).

Paul was in Tarsus and Antioch for about 11 years. He paid no more visits to the Jerusalem Church since the last time, and he was gradually becoming unknown by face to the churches in Judea. Though the Judean Christians did not know how Paul looked like physically (during his brief visit the first time, he saw only Peter and James and was not formally introduced to the churches), they had heard the wonderful news of him: the persecutor turned preacher. The very fact that the Christians glorified God reveals their Christlikeness. There was no bitterness against the one who had put so many of them to death, especially Stephen who was so loved by the Church. They saw beyond the immediate and the temporary to that which is future and eternal. Stephen and those who died in those terrible days of persecution are in heaven. The Christians rejoice over this. But they rejoice even more over a sinner and a persecutor who has been rescued from the fires of an eternal hell.

3c. Paul’s second experience in Jerusalem (2:1-10)

1d. Paul’s visit after 14 years was by revelation (2:1-2)

Then after 14 years again I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas when I took along also Titus. And I went up by revelation and laid before them the gospel which I was preaching among the gentiles, and privately to the ones well thought of, lest I was running or had run in vain.”

In order to dispel all thoughts that Paul was subordinate to the Apostles, Paul detailed every contact he had with Jerusalem. This he did to show that he was really independent of the Apostles. As a matter of fact, it was only 14 years later (not necessarily from his first visit, but from his conversion) that he went to Jerusalem again. If Paul was relying on the Apostles, he would be there surely more frequently than that.

This second visit to Jerusalem was the famine visit of Acts 11:29-30 and 12:25. Two other persons accompanied Paul in this trip to bring relief to the poor saints in Jerusalem—Barnabas and Titus. Barnabas went with Paul as an associate, while Titus as a subordinate. This seems to be the idea given by the word *sumparalabon* (“to take along with”). Moreover, only the names of Paul and Barnabas—official representatives of the

Antioch Church—were mentioned in Acts. Titus was not mentioned in Acts 11, but is now mentioned because Paul wanted to use him as an example of how he had absolute authority to act on his own and need not get the approval of the Eleven for his actions.

This visit Paul said was “according to revelation.” This invariably points to Agabus’ prophecy in Acts 11:27-28 that God was sending a famine to Judea and the believers there will go through a difficult time. In response to this, Paul and Barnabas went to the aid of the Jerusalem Church with funds from the Antioch Church.

Since he was in Jerusalem, Paul felt that he might as well settle this issue over the necessity of circumcision in the Christian religion. The word *anethemen* (literally “to place up”) does not mean to communicate in order to get approval, but “to communicate with a view to consultation” (Bruce, 109). It is to “lay before someone for consideration” (Kent, 55). Paul had been ministering to the gentiles. There could be some in Jerusalem that were not happy with what Paul was doing (Peter for example received the same antagonism from Jerusalem in Acts 11:1-18). The Judaizers were questioning Paul’s gospel and actions. The question of whether the Gentiles were required to be circumcised had to be clarified. Paul desired the Apostles’ help in stopping the malicious attacks against his apostleship and his gospel by these Jews from Jerusalem.

The case was brought up to “the ones well thought of,” or “the ones which were of reputation.” This expression occurs 4 times in Galatians 2 (verses 2, 6 [2x], and 9). In Galatians 2:9, it is identified for us that these men included James, Peter and John. The problem with this expression is the word “seem” (*dokeo*) which has a possible implication that the Apostles’ reputation so highly spoken of may not be true. It would seem that Paul was attacking the position of these men. Could Paul be doing this? “Certainly the use of the phrase cannot mean that Paul was casting despite upon the Jerusalem leaders; he cannot possibly mean that they were only *reputed* to be something, or only reputed themselves to be something, whereas in reality they were of no great importance at all. Any such view as that is refuted in the clearest possible way by other passages in which Paul speaks of these men with the utmost respect—particularly by 1 Cor. 15:3-11, where he appeals to their witness to the risen Christ and says that it was the same gospel that was preached both by them and by him. Why then does he use this unusual phrase?

“Possibly he does so because he is taking the phrase from the lips of the Judaizing opponents. The phrase sometimes designates in Greek “the notables”; far from being derogatory to the persons to whom it is applied, it is in such passages used as an honourable title. Possibly the Judaizers used it in such a way in their attempt to cast discredit upon Paul; possibly they said that the real men of repute, the real men of reputation, were Peter and the other apostles in Jerusalem and not the upstart Paul. If so, it is possible that Paul is here saying to them in effect: ‘You say that the real men of reputation are Peter and the other original apostles: well, if they are, why do you not listen to their acceptance of me as an apostle whose authority is independent of, and equal to, their own?’” (Machen, 96-7).

“The reason why Paul approached these leaders regarding his message is explained as ‘lest by any means I should run, or had run, in

vain.” This clause may be understood in several ways. One way is to regard it as an object clause after the verb of fearing understood: “[fearing] lest I may be running, or did run, in vain.’ Of course, Paul was not fearful that his gospel was wrong, for he has just stated that he got it by direct revelation from Christ. His fear may have been that if he were undercut by those at Jerusalem, his ministry among Gentiles would be greatly hampered, and churches already established among Gentiles might even be wrecked by Judaizing influences. Another possibility is to treat the clause as an indirect question: ‘[asking them] whether I am running, or did run, in vain.’ Such a question would not necessarily express a doubt on Paul’s part, but would merely be asking the Jerusalem leaders to confirm his own position publicly in the face of Judaizing detractors who had first raised the question. The answer Paul expected to such a question was an emphatic ‘No, you are not running in vain.’” (Kent, 56-7).

2d. Paul’s presentation of Titus on circumcision (2:3-5)

“But neither Titus who was with me, being Greek, was compelled to be circumcised; and even on account of false brothers brought in unawares, such ones who intruded to spy on our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, in order that they might enslave us, to whom not for a moment we yielded in submission in order that the truth of the gospel might endure with you.”

This incident over Titus was not mentioned in Acts, but it nevertheless happened, and Paul thought it most significant to bring it up here. This he did to prove to the Judaizers that Titus though a Gentile was not required to be circumcised even by those in Jerusalem. If circumcision was indeed necessary for salvation as the Judaizers claimed, then Peter and the other Apostles would most certainly have insisted on it, but they did not.

The word “compelled” (from Gk *anagkazo*) here is a strong word for force or coercion. It is used in several ways (1) to force by external violence (Acts 26:11, Gal 6:12), or (2) to force by authoritative command (Matt 14:22, Mark 6:45) (Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary of NT*, 145). The question is: Does the word “compell” here refer to the Apostles or to the Judaizers? It definitely does not directly refer to the Apostles because they had given him the right hand of fellowship (v 9). They saw no reason why Titus had to be circumcised and were in full agreement with Paul’s action. It was the Judaizers who had compelled Titus to be circumcised. If the Apostles, pillars of the Church, did not require Titus to be circumcised, what right had the Judaizers to do so?

Paul then called these people “false brothers.” They claimed to be Christians but really did not know what it meant to be one. They have totally misunderstood and misrepresented the gospel message. So much so that they were in effect preaching “another gospel” which is no gospel at all. These people had quietly infiltrated the Church in order to cause confusion, to lead Christians back into bondage.

The phrase, “on account of even the brought in unawares false brothers,” presents some syntactical difficulties (for a thorough discussion, read Machen, 101-6). Machen prefers to see it as an anacoluthon (ie a new sentence which is broken off half way thereby

making no grammatical sense). Kent suggests that the syntactical difficulties of 2:4 would “be eased by ignoring the editors’ punctuation at the close of 2:3, and attaching 2:4 to what precedes. The postpositive *de* is understood here as the intensive ‘even.’ Thus, ‘But not even Titus ... was compelled to be circumcised, even on account of the false brethren. ...’” (58).

“For these false Christians to have succeeded would have meant that all true Christians would be enslaved. Gentile converts would have been forced to observe Mosaic ceremonies against their will, and Jewish Christians also would have been given the false impression that righteousness is obtained by works of law. Therefore, Paul, Barnabas, and Titus would not yield, ‘not even for a moment.’ To have done so might have eased the pressure for a moment, but would have been disastrous for the future. It would have undermined the ‘truth of the gospel’ which had been so carefully and courageously presented to the Galatians on the recent journey, Paul was not unmindful of the need to protect the sensitivities of weaker brethren, and he was always willing to forego his personal liberties in order to win others (Rom. 14:21; 15:1; 1 Cor. 8:13; 9:19-20). It would not help anyone, however, if momentary expediency were allowed to violate principle, and cause the very heart of the gospel of God’s grace to be lost in the process. Paul could draw fine distinctions. On another occasion he approved the circumcision of Timothy because he was partly Jewish, and the operation served to regularize his status and make possible a ministry for him in Jewish synagogues (Acts 16:3). There the principle of salvation was not at stake, for it was not done to placate Jewish Christians but to gain access to unsaved Jews in their synagogues. The issue in Jerusalem, however, was the theological one of the nature of the gospel. Paul knew that the truth of the gospel is the proclamation that salvation is available to all men solely on the merits of Christ, and this message would be shattered by the restrictions that the Judaizers were proposing.

“Paul’s dramatic battle for the truth should remind all Christians of the constant threat which faces the gospel. Man has always tried to devise schemes whereby human efforts make some contribution to win the favorable verdict of God. The truth of the gospel declares that man is powerless to save himself. Man’s best efforts at righteousness fall short of the perfection which God requires (Jas. 2:10). Salvation must be recognized as the free and loving gift of God, granted to men who will accept it solely on the merits of Christ who died for sinners” (Kent, 58-9).

3d. The Apostles accepted Paul’s apostleship and ministry (2:6-10)

“And from those who were reputed to be something, of what sort they were then, it matters not to me, God is no respecter of persons—for to me the ones who are well thought of made no addition to me. But on the contrary after they saw that I have been entrusted with the gospel of uncircumcision even as Peter of the circumcision, for the one who worked in Peter to be an apostle of the circumcision, he worked also in me to the nations. And after they knew the grace which was given to me, James and Peter and John who were considered to be pillars, a right hand of fellowship they gave to me and Barnabas, so that we to the nations,

and they to the circumcision. Only the poor ones in order that we might remember which also I spared no effort this thing itself to do.”

The reference to the “reputed ones” (*hoi dokountes*) points us back to verse 2. By saying that he is not intimidated by the reputation of these great leaders of the Jerusalem Church, Paul is in effect telling the Judaizers that he stands on an equal footing with them. The Judaizers may have threatened Paul with James (probably the Apostle rather than the Lord’s brother because he is named with the following two, and James was only killed in Acts 12:1), Peter, and John—the three who belonged to the inner circle of the Lord’s disciples—but Paul reminds them that God does not judge a man by the outward appearance. Peter, James, and John may have had an extremely close association with the Lord, but that does not make their apostleship any better than Paul’s. The point is: From where did one’s apostolic ministry come from? For the three pillars, it was from the Lord Jesus. But Paul received his from the Lord too.

That the Jerusalem Apostles accepted Paul’s Apostleship and ministry as genuine may be seen in the word *prosanethento* (“to make an addition”). This word has the idea of “expounding something to someone for consideration and decision” (Kent, 61). Peter, James, and John did no such thing to Paul. They did not pull him aside to explain things to him more accurately like what Priscilla and Aquilla did for Apollos (Acts 18:26). Paul said that they made no addition to his gospel. They agreed that his gospel was thoroughly accurate and true. Any addition would have made it “another gospel” (Gal 1:8-9).

The Apostles agreed that to Paul was entrusted the gospel to the uncircumcised, in the same way Peter was to the circumcised. They acknowledged Paul’s Damascus experience where the Lord said, “he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles” (Acts 9:15). Paul had a particularly successful Gentile ministry (Acts 15:12). “By speaking of ‘the gospel of the uncircumcision’ and (by implication) of ‘the gospel of the circumcision,’ Paul does not mean to say that there were two different gospels, one to be preached to Gentiles and the other to be preached to Jews. Such an interpretation is excluded by the ‘right hand of fellowship’ which, according to verse 9, the Jerusalem pillars gave to Paul and Barnabas; it is also expressly excluded by I Cor. 15:11, where Paul says, ‘Whether it were I or they, so we preached and so ye believed.’ What Paul means, and what the Jerusalem leaders recognized, is that it was the same gospel that was everywhere proclaimed, but that to Paul had been entrusted the special duty of preaching that gospel to Gentiles, and to them the special duty of preaching it to Jews” (Machen, 128). Thus the genitive “of the uncircumcision,” and “of the circumcision” should not be understood adjectivally to mean the uncircumcised gospel, or the circumcised gospel as if there were two gospels. It is better to see them as objective genitives meaning the “the *same gospel* is preached to or is received by *two groups* of people—the circumcised and the uncircumcised.”

“These spheres of ministry were not ironclad separations, for Paul regularly preached first in synagogues whenever he visited new areas (both Gentiles and Jews were named in his commission, Acts 9:15), and Peter preached to Gentiles as well as Jews (e.g., Cornelius, Acts 10). Nor

should it be supposed that these areas were arbitrarily assigned at some apostolic meeting. Paul makes it clear that ‘he who effectually worked for Peter ... effectually worked for me also ...’, and the reference is obviously to God. It was God who had appointed both Peter and Paul to the apostleship, and had made them effective in these general areas. They were not rivals, nor was one subordinate to the other. Both spheres of ministry were God-given and were recognized as such by Paul and those at Jerusalem” (Kent 61-2).

The very fact that the Apostles fully understood the genuine call to Apostleship Paul received from God is seen in the words *idontes* (v 7) and *gnontes* (v 9). These two participles indicate that the verses 7 and 9 are parallel clauses. The former means “having seen,” and the latter “having known.” Outwardly, Paul’s apostolic ministry to the Gentiles are clearly seen by the Apostles, and inwardly the Apostles had no reservations or doubts whatsoever that Paul was truly a full- fledged Apostle of the same rank.

They had no qualms extending their “right hands of fellowship.” The extension of the right hand is a sign of acceptance, and recognition. These “right hands” are “hands of fellowship.” Paul has been received into the Apostolic band.

Although Paul’s ministry would be mainly to the Gentiles, he is here reminded that he should remember “the poor” (ie the poor Christians in Jerusalem). Would not this statement of the Apostles to Paul contradict what Paul said in verse 6 that “they added nothing” to him? There is no contradiction because nothing was added to the gospel Paul preached. This exhortation had nothing to do with the gospel message. It was a sincere appeal to think of the poor Jerusalem Church. Jerusalem needs the financial help of the Gentile churches who may not be facing as much persecution as the Jerusalem churches were then facing.

4c. Paul’s Confrontation of Peter at Antioch (2:11-21)

1d. The Mistake of Peter (2:11-14)

“But when Cephas came to Antioch, against his face I opposed, because he was to be condemned. For before certain ones came, with the gentiles he was eating; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself fearing the ones of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews joined him in a pretence, so that even Barnabas was led away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not walking uprightly to the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before all of them, If you being a Jew like gentiles and not like Jews live, why do you compell the gentiles to live as a Jew?”

By mentioning this episode, not recorded in Acts, Paul proves that he is no way inferior or subordinate to the Jerusalem Apostles. He and Peter are of the same rank. If Paul had the choice, he probably would never have brought this unpleasant incident up. But because the truth of the gospel was at stake, he cannot but cite this case in an attempt to dismiss the heresy of the Judaizers as having the approval of Jerusalem.

This incident must have happened sometime after Paul’s famine visit of Acts 11 and most certainly before the Jerusalem Council of Acts

15. Paul did not hesitate to oppose Peter's action when he was at Antioch. The word *antesten* literally means "to stand against" (from *anti*, "against," and *histemi*, "to stand"). The words "to the face" tell us that it was not an indirect confrontation by way of a letter or through a third party, but a direct, face-to-face admonition.

Paul did what he did because Peter was to be condemned. The word "condemned," is *kataginosko*, literally "to know against" (*kata*, "against," and *ginosko*, "to know"). By whom was Peter condemned? We do not have to say that it was Paul who condemned Peter. *Kategnosmenos* (Perf M/P Ptc) is perhaps better taken as a Middle; Peter condemned himself (ie his own erroneous behaviour condemned him).

What did Peter really do to deserve such a reprimand by Paul? Well, "certain ones from James" came to Antioch. Who were these men from James? This James probably refers to James the Lord's brother (1:19) rather than James the Apostle (2:9) because it happened after the famine visit of Acts 11. The Apostle died in Acts 12. The Lord's brother was a leading elder of the Jerusalem Church. Tradition has it that he was the bishop of Jerusalem. The phrase "from James" may be taken in two ways: (1) Adverbially, ie "certain ones *came* from James" meaning they were sent by James, or (2) adjectivally, ie "certain ones from James' Church" meaning simply that they were members of the Jerusalem Church. Taking it adverbially may give the wrong impression that it was James who authorised these men to create trouble in the Antioch Church. It is preferable to take it adjectivally. The phrase "from James" merely identified their origin—they were from Jerusalem, and they went to Antioch out of their own accord. It has been suggested by some that these men were the same as the "certain men which came down from Judea" (Acts 15:1). Whether they were or not we cannot be sure. In any case, they definitely did not receive any commission from any of the Apostles and were not specially sent by the Jerusalem Church. It is clear from Acts 15:24 that the Jerusalem Church disapproves of so called believing Jews who insist on circumcision as a requirement for salvation.

Before these men from Jerusalem came, Peter was enjoying a meal with the Gentile Christians. The imperfect *sunesthien* ("was eating") may be taken as an iterative imperfect telling us that Peter was *in the habit* of having his meals with them while he was there. But this changed when those Jews came. These Jews probably had strong views against eating with Gentiles because doing so would make them unclean. In a moment of weakness, Peter withdrew himself from the Gentile table. In so doing, he gave the impression that such a Jewish regard against Gentiles was acceptable even though Jesus had already said that the Gentiles are clean; three times he told Peter to kill and eat the unclean animals in a vision, "What God has cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:15). This Jewish separation from Gentiles may also give the wrong impression that if the Gentiles did not circumcise themselves, even though they were Christians, they were at best second-class ones. They were only half-way to heaven, and have not gained full entrance yet because of their uncircumcised state. Peter's separation however was not immediate. The words *hupestellen* ("withdraw") and *aphorizēn* ("separate") is in the imperfect tense. This intimates that Peter removed himself from their company *gradually*. He was probably struggling within his heart whether

he should withdraw and separate himself or not to, knowing that it would be wrong for him to do so. It is unfortunate that Peter yielded to temptation and sinned.

Paul could not spare Peter for his actions. Peter was a highly respected Apostle. His actions carried tremendous weight. If word went out that Peter withdrew himself from the Gentiles, it would give credence to the teaching of the Judaizers, viz that Gentile Christians must be circumcised. So a public exposure of Peter's hypocrisy (*sunupokritheisan*) was in order. Peter was hypocritical because (1) he was fully aware that Jewish ceremonies should not be imposed on Gentiles, and that they in no way add to their faith. As a matter of fact, Peter defended this truth at the Jerusalem Council of Acts 11:1-18. Was he not hypocritical for acting in such a way at Antioch? (2) He had been eating with the Gentile Christians. He had accepted them fully, but when these Jews from Jerusalem came, he stopped having his meals with them to please his fellow Jews. In so doing, he gave the Jews the impression that their thoughts against the Gentiles were valid. Paul was correct to say that this was hypocrisy. Peter was behaving like a Pharisee.

Verse 14 is a difficult verse. What did Paul mean by accusing Peter of living "like a Gentile" and "like a Jew?" Kent (71) answers, "When Paul saw that the shift in conduct on the part of Peter and the others was not straightforward in regard to the truth of the gospel which says that all believers in Christ are constituted a spiritual unity without such earthly distinctions (3:28), he addressed Peter publicly on the subject. If it is thought that Peter should have been more diplomatic and have talked privately to Peter, it should be remembered that Peter's duplicity had been done in public and having public consequences. Apparently Paul felt the issue needed prompt and public clarification lest whispering campaigns begin and confusion reign. The question he put left the answer up to Peter. He was allowing the circumstances to speak for themselves. The question may be paraphrased as follows: If you, Peter, while being a Jew by descent, normally live like the Christian Gentiles here at Antioch and have not been scrupulously observing all the kosher practices of Jewish tradition until the visitors from Jerusalem arrived, how can you defend your action of compelling the Gentile Christians to live according to Jewish customs? Peter, of course, had not at all been teaching the Gentiles to adopt Jewish regulations, but his action in changing groups was a clear proclamation that Jewish practices were preferable. Hence those who looked to Peter for leadership as an apostle could not avoid feeling the compulsion of his example. Apparently the Jewish Christians followed at once (2:13). The Gentile Christians must certainly have been thrown into consternation."

2d. The Freeness of the Gospel (2:15-21)

"We (are) by nature Jews and not out of the Gentiles sinners. But having known that a man is not justified out of the works of the law except (ie but only) through the faith of Jesus Christ, and we in Christ Jesus have believed, in order that we might be justified out of the faith of Christ and not out of the works of the law, because out of the works of the law every flesh shall not be justified. And if we are seeking to be

justified in Christ we have been found also ourselves sinners, do you mean to say that Christ (is) a servant of sin? Might it never be! For if I destroyed these things which again I build, I show myself a transgressor. For I through the law died by the law in order that I might live to God. With Christ I have been crucified; And I live, yet no longer I, but in me Christ lives; and that which I now live in the flesh, by faith I live in the Son of God who has loved me and has given himself for me. I am not rendering null and void the grace of God; for if through the law righteousness, then Christ died for no reason.”

Paul continues to explain why Peter’s act of separating from the Gentile Christians at Antioch was to be abhorred. Although, in the puritanical Jewish mindset, there were only two classes of people, (1) Jews, and (2) Sinners (ie whoever is not a Jew, or is a Gentile is a sinner), yet it is agreed by all that whether one is a Jew or a Gentile, salvation comes only by faith in Christ (*pisteos Iesou Christou* is taken as an objective genitive, ie Christ is the object of one’s faith) and not by the works of the law. Paul reminds Peter that they (ie Paul and Peter being Jews) were saved simply because they believed, not because they believed and kept the law, for no one can ever be justified by the works of the law; everyone being dead in sin and under the curse of the law (v 16 cf Rom 3:19-20). Gentiles likewise were saved on the same basis of faith in Christ.

The whole doctrine of justification by faith must be accurately understood. Paul reminds Peter of Soteriology 101. The word “justified” (*dikaiontai*) can either mean (1) “to make righteous,” or (2) “to declare righteous.” Protestant theology in the light of Holy Scripture (especially Paul’s Epistles) sees “justification” as having the forensic idea of “to pronounce righteous.” It is a term used by the judge when he acquits the sinner of all guilt. It is righteousness imputed (Rom 4:6, 11, 22), not infused.

But what does the question, “But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ. we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin?” really mean? There are three main interpretations (taken from William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Galatians* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968], 100-1):

(1) “If, in seeking to be justified in Christ, *our sins are laid bare*, so that it becomes evident that not only the Gentiles but also we, Jews, are great sinners before God, is Christ then a sin-promoter?”

Objection. The expression “turn out to be sinners” (literally “are found to be sinners” is not the same as “must submit to having our sins laid bare.” Besides, in such a connection, the question, “Is Christ then a sin-promoter?” does not make good sense, for how would the laying bare of sin, so that it is seen in its true character, make Christ a sin-promoter, an encourager (literally “a servant”) or abettor of sin? By itself it is true that Christ, by his Spirit, lays bare or reveals the seriousness of sin. However, he does this in order to bring the sinner to repentance, and so to the joyful assurance of having been forgiven, and to gradual victory over sin. Christ, in all this, proves himself a Deliverer from—and not an Encourager of—sin.

(2) “If, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews, *law-respecters*, turn out to be sinners just like the Gentiles, *law-rejecters*, then why should we not all live as if there were no law? Moreover, if this doctrine of justification is of Christ, must we then conclude that he encourages sin (lawlessness)?” Cf. Rom.

6:1, 15.

Objection. The introduction, at this point, of a kind of antinomian distortion of the doctrine of grace seems rather unnatural. Nothing in the preceding context has prepared us for it, and nothing in the succeeding context links with it. Contrast Gal. 5:13, where the danger of turning liberty into license is clearly stated and condemned.

(3) “If the Judaizers are correct in maintaining that we, in seeking to be justified solely in Christ, and thus neglecting law, turn out to be gross sinners like the Gentiles, then would you say that Christ, who taught us this doctrine, is a sin-promoter?”

In favor of this interpretation note the following:

(a) *It obviously suits the preceding context.* In substance Paul is saying, “Peter and all of you who have followed his example, consider what you are doing! By your action you are really saying that Christ was wrong when he taught you: that it is not what enters a man from without that defiles him but rather what proceeds out of his heart (Matt. 15:1-20); that all meats are clean (Mark 7:9); and that men are saved by simply coming to him and trusting in him (Matt. 11:25-30; John 3:16). Is it really true, then that Christ is a sin-promoter, that is, that he—by his teaching, example, death on the cross – makes you a greater sinner than you were already?”

(b) *It also establishes a smooth connection with the words which immediately follow,* for Paul continues:

17b, 18. **By no means!** A thousand times *NO* to the suggestion that Christ encourages sin, making you a greater transgressor than you were previously, for not by tearing down the ceremonial law and believing in salvation solely by grace, as you, Peter, etc., started out to do, do you show yourselves transgressors, but you very definitely prove yourselves transgressors by doing the very opposite, ...”.

The doctrine of grace is not a license for sin, nor a call to antinomianism. Properly understood, it is a call to an accurate perspective of (1) our total depravity and utter helplessness to save ourselves (Rom 3:23), and (2) the purpose of the law which is to reveal sin and to condemn sinners (Gal 3:10).

Paul now uses the first singular “I.” He was really referring to Peter in what he said in verse 18. Peter’s action undid all that he had done for the gospel. When he preached the gospel to Cornelius, he saw how Cornelius and his household were gloriously saved without keeping any of the Jewish ceremonial laws. Salvation came purely by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter had destroyed that ceremonial barrier between Jews and Gentiles. He had given a clear signal to all that eating kosher food does not in any way aid one’s salvation. But this barrier which he had previously torn down, is being erected by him here. In so doing he was in effect giving the Gentile Christians the impression that observing Jewish kosher laws was necessary for salvation. Peter has become a transgressor in eating kosher food under such circumstances.

In verse 19, Paul says that he is dead to the law. No man can enter heaven by keeping the law. Man is too low, the law is too high. It is impossible for sinful man to attain to the purity that is required by the law. The paradox is this: man must be dead in sin, and dead to sin in order to live in God, and live to God.” There is death in the law, but life in Christ. To be saved, a man must totally place his trust on the salvific work of Christ in His life, and in His death—His active and passive obedience. Christ kept the law in His life on earth to satisfy its demands

as our Representative. Christ shed His blood on the cross to pay the penalty of sin as our Substitute.

To live one must first die. That is why Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ.” The words “crucified with” is a literal translation of *sunestauromai* which has been used to refer to the thieves who were crucified beside Jesus (Matt 27:44, Mark 15:32, John 19:32). Paul uses this term in Romans 6:5 and Galatians 2:20 figuratively to describe how a believer is identified with Jesus in His crucifixion. The perfect tense of the verb is attempting to explain the completion of a past action which has enduring results. In other words, Paul is saying, “I am crucified with Christ, and still am.” “I have identified myself with Christ in His death, and the benefits of this identification when I accepted Him as my Saviour continue until now.”

The law has no hold on the believer because the effects of the Lord’s death on the cross has been applied to him and he no longer comes under its condemnation. Some may argue against the effectiveness of the cross-work of Christ by saying that believers are still sinful and sinning. But this objection is refuted by Paul in verses 20b and 21. Machen explained, “‘The life which I now live in the flesh’”—there is an admission which the Apostle makes. ‘I admit,’ says Paul in effect, ‘that I am still living under the same old conditions of life in this world, and that I am still struggling against the old temptations that are found also in a humanity untouched by the grace of God; yes, I am still living a life ‘in the flesh.’ But that life in the flesh is lived by faith: completion has not yet come; I am still struggling on in this world: but I have faith to believe that completion will surely come. And the ground of my faith regarding the future is found in what Christ has already done for me; I am confident that the One who loved me and gave Himself for me on the cross will bring to completion the work that He there began; I am confident that faith will one day give place to sight, that the utter newness of the life of believers, now partly hidden, will one day be plain for all to see.’

“I do not make void the grace of God,’ says Paul in concluding the report of his speech to Peter; ‘for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died in vain.’ The ‘for’ here gives a reason for the use of the harsh word ‘make void’—‘make void,’ I say; for that is just the right word, since if, as the Judaizers say, justification comes even in part through our obedience to the law, then Christ died in vain.’

“This verse is the key verse of the Epistle to the Galatians; it expresses the central thought of the Epistle. The Judaizers attempted to supplement the saving work of Christ by the merit of their own obedience to the law. ‘That,’ says Paul, ‘is impossible; Christ will do everything or nothing: earn your salvation if your obedience to the law is perfect, or else trust wholly to Christ’s completed work; you cannot do both; you cannot combine merit and grace; if justification even in slightest measure is through human merit, then Christ died in vain’” (161).

Now a question somewhat outside the text: How did Peter respond to Paul’s correction? Did Paul and Peter become perpetual enemies after this incident? The answer is no. We say this because (1) Paul refers to Peter long after this incident with utmost respect (1 Cor 3:22, 9:5, 15:5); (2) Paul in no uncertain terms told the Church that his

gospel and that of the other Apostles (including Peter) was the same; and
(3) Peter spoke very highly of Paul in 2 Peter 3:15-16 calling him
“beloved brother Paul.”

4a. PAUL’S GOSPEL EXPLAINED (3:1-4:31)

1b. A Reminder to Galatians of How They Received Salvation (3:1-14)

Paul being the founder of the Galatian churches was a personal witness of the power of the gospel which transformed the lives of the Galatians. The gospel which he preached – of pure grace and no works – was used by the Holy Spirit to cause the miracle of spiritual birth in their lives. The Galatians have experienced this in a very real way. And this perhaps was the most powerful argument against the Judaizing gospel of faith plus works.

1c. They Received Salvation by Faith (3:1-5)

“O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you in the truth not to be persuaded (TR: *te aletheia me peithesthai*), to whom for the eyes Jesus has been exhibited among you (TR: *en humin*), as crucified? This only I wish to learn from you; out of the works of the law the spirit you have received or out of the hearing of faith? Thus you are foolish, having begun in the spirit now in the flesh are you now being completed? Have you experienced so many things in vain? If indeed it has been in vain. Therefore, the one who supplies to you the spirit and the one who works miracles in you, out of the works of the law or out of the hearing of faith?”

Paul called the Galatians “foolish” for being swayed to a gospel of works. The word *anoetos* literally means “without the mind.” Simply put, they did things without thinking. They had been extremely gullible, and totally undiscerning. The vocative here may express exasperation on the part of Paul (cf Luke 24:25). Such a basic issue on salvation they should already understand fully, yet they acted as if they had never been taught.

“Who has bewitched / hypnotised you?” may be taken in two ways: (1) literally, someone has put a hex or spell on the Galatians. This is quite impossible because Christians—indwelt by the Holy Spirit—a cannot be demonised. Not only that, but the Judaizers were not known to practise sorcery or witchcraft. The term “bewitched” should thus be understood (2) figuratively to mean that the Galatians were acting as if they were bewitched. No one has put a spell on them. It was thus not something beyond their control. Their minds were not held captive. The word “foolish” really explains their condition of being “bewitched.” Their mental capabilities and capacities remained intact and fully functional. They were simply just too lazy to use them. They have not been alert to the error of the doctrine taught by false teachers. They, unlike the noble Bereans, failed to search the Scriptures to examine whether the things said were true or not.

The Galatians could not act as if they did not know or were not aware of the true nature of the gospel of Christ. Paul says that “Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth.” The word *proe-graphē* (lit. “to write before”) has the sense of “to notify publicly.” Christ “had been clearly presented to them like a posted proclamation” (Kent, 82).

Not only had they received the gospel of Christ crucified proclaimed so clearly and carefully by Paul, they had also received the Holy Spirit when they

believed on the Lord Jesus Christ after hearing the gospel. The word “spirit” here has to refer to the person of the Spirit, and *not the gifts* of the Spirit because of the *definite article* that goes with it. This is also seen in the verb “you have received” (*elabete* which is in the aorist tense) which refers to the regenerating work of the Spirit at the point of conversion (ie during the time Paul preached to them in his first visit). The continuing work of the Spirit, though true of the Galatians, is not being stressed here. Paul was concerned at this point only to emphasise the means through which they received the Holy Spirit, viz, through the “hearing of faith,” (“faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” [Rom 11:17]), and not the works of the law. The Holy Spirit is also our inward witness testifying to the veracity of the Gospel (John 16:13-14). No doubt the Holy Spirit has prompted them against the false gospel of the Judaizers. Yet they have not listened to Him. It is no wonder Paul was so angry with the Galatian Christians.

In verse 3 Paul again calls the Galatians foolish. They had already experienced how by the gospel alone, by faith alone, and by the Spirit alone they had received salvation. Their sins have already been forgiven and they already possess eternal life. They lack nothing spiritually in Christ. Paul then chides them for being illogical, thinking that they were able complete their spiritual transformation by their own merits. Paul makes it clear that “by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (2:16). What is really needed is to live by faith in Christ, continually dependent on the Spirit, “the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (2:20).

In verse 4 Paul presents another argument based on their spiritual journey. The Galatians have gone through quite a bit after they had become Christians. But what is it that Paul said they had gone through? The word used is *epathete* which can mean either (1) to suffer, or (2) to experience. If it is the former, then Paul was referring to the persecutions they had *suffered* as Christians. Just as Paul and Barnabas were persecuted when they preached the gospel in Galatia by the unbelieving Jews, the Church no doubt received the same after Paul and Barnabas had left (see Acts 13:50; 14:5, 19, 22). If they now yield to the Judaizers and agree that it is necessary to keep the law in order to be saved, are they not rejecting what they had originally believed and received through the Apostle? On account of their faith, they had been persecuted. Have they gone through all those hardships for nothing? Kent comments, “Whatever suffering they had experienced, doubtless much had come from Jewish persecutors, ... If these converts had not fully trusted in Christ for a complete salvation, then they were mixing grace and law and were not really trusting Christ alone to save them. Or if they should now revert to a system of law-keeping, in order to satisfy God’s righteousness, they would be repudiating their former position which claimed that they looked to Christ alone. Either way the sufferings they had experienced would have been for nothing” (84). The fact that Paul was quick to add “if it be indeed in vain” tells us that he doubts that those trials were experienced in vain. Paul believed that the Galatians were truly saved. The sufferings they had gone through were evidences of God’s grace in them (cf Jas 1:2-12).

If it is the latter, then Paul is saying that they had *experienced* the power of the gospel through the Spirit in vain. This seems to fit the context better. Paul had just spoken on the good experiences the Galatians had gone through in the Spirit on account of their faith in Christ (vv 2, 3). In other words, Paul is questioning how the Galatians could shift allegiance so quickly—from faith to works—after having experienced the Spirit’s power and goodness, seeing that all

these were attained only by grace through faith? Have they gone through all these happy results of the gospel in vain? Have they not learned these precious lessons of the gospel in their Christian experience that confirmed the truth that salvation is by faith alone and not by works? Machen said, “we are inclined to think that indication is here plainly enough given in what precedes and follows. If the word means ‘suffer’ here—if, thus, there is a reference to persecutions—that reference is entirely isolated in this Epistle. If, on the other hand, the word means ‘experience,’ then this verse is in perfect accord with what precedes and what follows; Paul would simply be continuing his appeal to the glorious manifestations of the Spirit’s presence. He would be insisting that these manifestations would seem to be all in vain if the Galatian converts should now turn to some gospel different from that on the basis of which they had been so richly blessed by God” (170).

Which is the right view? “The matter is, ... by no means certain. It cannot be denied that the verb is usually employed in the bad sense ‘suffer’ ...; the possibility cannot be excluded, therefore, that there is, after all, in this verse an isolated reference to persecution. The verse involves an exegetical problem which may never be solved” (Machen, 170).

In verse 5, Paul asked another rhetorical question in an attempt to prove that salvation came by way of faith through the hearing of the gospel and not by merits through the works of the law. The question is twofold: (1) “He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, ... doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” Obviously it was by the hearing of faith. The word “ministereth” is the Greek *epichoregon* which can also be translated “supplieth.” It is a combination of the preposition *epi*, “upon,” and the noun *choregos*, where we get the English word “chorus,” or “choir.” In those days, the *choregos* was someone responsible for supplying all the members of a dance or singing team with all the props and equipment necessary for their performance. Jesus Christ is the one who has supplied the Holy Spirit to them (John 15:26, 16:7-15). They knew very well that the Holy Spirit was given to them at the point of belief and faith in Christ. They did not have to spend a certain period of time to earn it. They simply heard the gospel preached by Paul, believed it, and by so believing received the Spirit.

This reception of the Spirit is proven by the spiritual power that they have experienced in their lives. This leads us to the second question: (2) “He ... that ... worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” The word “miracles” here is the Greek *dunameis*, literally “powers” or “works of power.” The word *dunameis* is often used together with the words for signs and wonders (Acts 2:22, 8:13, 19: 1 1, Rom 15:19, 2 Cor 12:12). It is commonly rendered “miracles,” with especial reference to the spiritual gift of working miracles that are performed by the Apostles. It is the external, visible manifestations of the Spirit’s power.

Dunamis is also used of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:16). The Gospel of Christ has the power to transform lives. It is the power of the Gospel to break the slavish hold of sin, the devil, and the world in our lives. In other words, it is the miracle of the second or spiritual birth. It is the internal, invisible work of the Spirit.

Since *dunamis* is used in the plural here, it is preferable to see it as referring to the Apostolic powers of signs and wonders which had been performed by Paul and Barnabas in their midst during their ministry there (Acts 14:8-10, 15:12). Paul was reminding them of the miracles which he had done, and

they had seen. All these testify to the genuineness and truthfulness of his Gospel over against that of the Judaizers (Mark 16:20). The salvific benefits of the gospel of Paul is received by hearing, and not by doing. And God showed His approval of Paul's gospel by enabling him to perform miracles in the presence of the Galatians.

2c. They had Received Salvation Like Abraham (3:6-9)

“Just as Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. You know then that the ones out of faith, these are sons of Abraham. And the scripture having seen ahead of time that out of faith God justifies the Gentiles, has given the good news beforehand to Abraham, ‘In you shall the nations be blessed,’ so that the ones out of faith are being blessed with the faithful Abraham.”

As father of the Jewish nation, Abraham's testimony of salvation would be a most effective argument against the Judaizers. Paul quoted Genesis 15:6 to prove that Abraham was saved because he “believed.” It was through faith not works; “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom 10:1). Abraham heard the Word of God, “Fear not Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. ... he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir” (Gen 15:1, 4). “And the Lord brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen 15:5, 6). God declared Abraham righteous, not on account of Abraham's good deeds, but on the fact that he trusted in what He had promised. Romans 4 gives a full exposition of this verse. Abraham received salvation before he was circumcised, not after. This proves that circumcision was just a sign of, and not a means to salvation; “not through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Rom 4:13). In the same way the Galatians had received the Holy Spirit and hence salvation which is by grace through faith (vv 2-5), so did Abraham.

Who are the genuine sons of Abraham? Those born Jew, or those born from above? Paul says that those who have experienced the spiritual birth which comes only by means of faith are true children of Abraham. It is not physical circumcision, but spiritual circumcision that counts. Abraham had the gospel preached (*proeuangelisato*) to him (v 8). And he believed in that salvific promise of God, and was saved; no different from how NT saints are saved. “The Old Testament saints were saved in just the same way as that in which the New Testament saints are saved—namely, by the death of Christ—and the means by which the Spirit of God applied to them the benefits of Christ's death was exactly the same as the means by which the same Spirit applies those benefits to Christians today—namely, faith. The Old Testament saints, like Christians today, received the gospel of the grace of God; and, like the New Testament saints, they received it by faith. The only difference is that the gospel was proclaimed to the Old Testament saints by way of promise, while to us it is proclaimed by way of narrative of what has already been done. Immediately after the Fall of man, the plan of God for salvation began to be executed—with the promise contained in Gen 3:15—and the men ... are saved in accordance with that plan ...” (Machen, 175).

3c. They had been Under the Curse of the Law (3:10-14)

“For as many as are out of the works of the law, under a curse they are; for it is written, ‘Accursed is everyone who does not remain in all which has been written in the book of the law in order to do them.’ And that in the law no one is being justified before God (is) clear, because ‘The righteous out of faith shall live.’ And the law is not out of faith, but ‘The one who does them shall live by them.’ Christ has ransomed us from the curse of the law becoming for us a curse, because it stands written, ‘Accursed is everyone who is being hung upon a tree,’ in order that to the gentiles the blessing of Abraham might be in Christ Jesus, in order that the promise of the spirit we might receive through faith.”

Paul now contrasts grace with law. The law had brought a curse. Grace on the other hand had brought salvation. Not that the law itself is bad, but that we as sinners are bad. The law is holy and good, but we are sinful and wicked. The light of the holy law shines against the darkness of our sinfulness so that all stand guilty before God. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23).

In verse 10, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 to prove his point that the law pronounces a curse to those who want to gain salvation by it. It is not enough just to keep most of the law. One must keep all of the law—every jot and tittle—if one wants to be justified before God. Can anyone achieve this? The Apostle James agrees with Paul when he wrote, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas 2:10).

In verse 11, Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 to prove that OT taught salvation by faith, and not salvation by works—“The just shall live by faith.” Paul also quoted this very important verse in Romans 1:17 and Hebrews 10:38.

In verse 12, Paul argues that “the law is not of faith” or “the law *is not part* of faith.” He then quotes Leviticus 18:5, “The man that doeth them shall live in them.” The key word here is the word “do.” The law is concerned with “doing.” Faith is quite the opposite; it is concerned with “believing.” Many people think that there is only one way to salvation. The Bible teaches that there “are two conceivable ways of salvation. One way is to keep the law perfectly, to do the things which the law requires. No mere man since the fall has accomplished that. The other way is to receive something, to receive something that is freely given by God’s grace. That way is followed when a man has faith. But you cannot possibly mingle the two. You might conceivably be saved by works or you might be saved by faith; but you cannot be saved by both. It is ‘either or’ here not ‘both and’. But which shall it be, works or faith? The Scripture gives the answer. The Scripture says it is faith. Therefore it is *not* works” (Machen, 178).

There are two ways of salvation, but both cannot coexist or be valid at the same time. Covenant theology expresses this very clearly, “The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience. Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe” (WCF VII.2-3). The first—the way of works—was valid for a while until sin came in. When that happened the second—the way of faith—took its place.

In verse 13, Paul quotes another OT verse to prove that it is not through

personal work, but solely through Christ's cross-work that we are saved; "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Deut 21:23). Christ became a curse on our behalf when he died on the cross. The sense of *substitution* is clearly indicated by the use of the preposition *hyper* ("made a curse *for us*") which commonly means "for, in behalf of, for the sake of someone or something" (BAGD, 838). What was gained by Christ when He died on the cross? He gained the right and power to "redeem" us from the curse of the law. The word *exagorasen* is significant. It comes from two words: *ex*, "out of," and *agora*, "market" and its verb form *agorazo*, "to buy." Literally it means "to buy out of the market." Machen commented that the word "redeem" here means "'to buy off,' 'to set free by the payment of a price.' Truly Christ did pay a price to set us free, the price of His own precious blood. On this subject the reader is referred to the splendid articles of B.B. Warfield, 'The New Testament Terminology of Redemption,' and 'Redeemer and Redemption,' in *Biblical Doctrines*, 1929, pp. 325- 398). These articles should forever dispose of the habit of depriving these wonderful Biblical words of their true, rich meaning. We are not saved by the Lord Jesus Christ by some method that cost Him nothing. No, we were bought with a price; in the fullest sense of the word we were 'redeemed'" (180).

2b. An Explanation to the Galatians that the Law does not cancel the promise of God (3:15-22)

1c. The Law which came after the Promise cannot add to or subtract from it (3:15-18)

"Brothers, according to man I speak, even of a man the covenant has been ratified, no one is annulling or adding to (it). And to Abraham the promises has been made and to his seed. And he did not say, "And to the seeds," as to many but as to one, "And to your seed," who is Christ. But this I say, the covenant having been ratified beforehand by God the law having come after 430 years does not annul in order to cancel the promise. For if out of the law the inheritance, no longer out of promise (it is), but to Abraham through promise God has freely given."

When Paul says that he is now speaking "according to man" (v 15), he is not saying that he is now giving a personal opinion, and is no longer speaking under divine inspiration. He is saying that he is now bringing in a common activity in human life to illustrate his point that the law does not cancel a covenant already made. The word "covenant" (*diatheke*) must be explained. *Diatheke* is a Greek term which was used in two ways: (1) last will or testament, and (2) a treaty or contract. There is another word for "covenant" viz *suntheke* which usually refers to agreements made between two equal parties possessing the same negotiating or bargaining powers. The term *diatheke* on the other hand was used in the Septuagint (The Greek translation of the Old Testament) to translated the Hebrew *berit* (covenant) to reflect the onesidedness of God's covenant with man [an excellent picture of this may be found in Gen 15:9, 10, 17]. In this instance, Paul is using the term to mean a contract signed by men in daily business dealings.

"Confirmed" (*kekuromenen*) means ratified or validated. 'Disannulment' (*athetei*) means to invalidate a matter, set it aside, or make it void. 'Addeth thereto' (*epidiatassetai*) means to add a codicil, as to a will. Human practice in such matters is that once a legal agreement has been drawn up and properly ratified or

validated (such as a will which has been probated), no one is able to make any changes in it unilaterally. In a will this is particularly obvious because one of the principals has died, and thus can no longer be a party to new negotiations. The same is true more generally of other covenants. Once the agreement has been duly recognized as valid, ordinarily neither party can void it nor make changes in it. The application Paul would make of this analogy is clear: "The Mosaic Law cannot have affected the basic provisions of the covenant with Abraham" (Kent, 92).

When the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, it was not only made with him, but also to his posterity ("and his seed"). The plural promises in v 16 does not mean that God made more than one promise to Abraham but that He made the same promise to him repeatedly, many times, as if to remind Abraham that He has not forgotten what He had said (see Gen 13:15, 15:5, 17:8, 18:18, 22:18).

Paul emphasised that the word "seed" is in the singular, not plural. The question often asked is, "Did not Paul know that the word "seed" may be seen collectively?" The answer is yes. Paul used it in its collective sense in Galatians 3:29. But, here Paul provides the inspired exegesis by stating the fact that the seed promised to Abraham pointed to a single special individual, namely, Jesus Christ ("to thy seed, which is Christ"). In the light of Galatians 3:16 and 29, we conclude that the word "seed" in Genesis 13:15-16 is used in two ways: (1) Singularly to mean Christ – the Seed (Gen 13:15), and (2) plurally to mean the sons of Abraham by faith (Gen 13:16).

The covenant God made with Abraham was made in about 2000 BC, long before the law came into existence. The law was introduced in the time of Moses in about 1400 BC. The law was not necessary for the ratification of the promise. The promise stood even without the law. God made an unconditional promise to Abraham that He would send a Saviour, and that many people would be blessed through Him.

The historical difficulty over the "430 years" need to be explained. The problem is that in Exodus 12:40, Israel is said to have dwelled in Egypt for 430 years. Now this does not seem to square with the 430 years in Galatians 3:17. The period of time between the promise (Gen 15) and the law (Exod 20) was definitely more than 430 years. How do we reconcile this apparent discrepancy over the number of years involved? Kent answers, "The view most plausible to me regards the 430 as covering the time from the *ratification* of the covenant to Jacob just before he went to Egypt (Gen. 46:1-4) until the giving of the law at Sinai a few months after the exodus. ... This view agrees with the 430 years in the Hebrew text of Exodus 12:40; it understands the 400 years of Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6 as the bondage portion of the Egyptian sojourn (the first years under Joseph was prosperous, Exod. 1:7-9), and regards Acts 13:19, 20 as making a round number in its computation. If it is objected that the ratification of the covenant of Jacob was not that prominent an event, it should be noted that Galatians refers specifically to the ratification, not the original granting, and Psalm 105:9-10 gives due recognition to the importance of this event" (96).

The Judaizers in attempting to impose the law to the promise of God was in effect trying to change the covenant that God had originally made with Abraham. That covenant was an unconditional one, but now they wanted to attach conditions to it. If such conditions were necessary for one to receive the promise of God, then it would no longer be free. If one needs to be circumcised in order to be saved, as the Judaizers insist, then the covenant would be based on

personal merits, which was never the case—not then, and not now. The word “gave” (*kecharistai*) proves this point. *Kecharistai* has the idea of something freely given to a person who does not deserve it in the first place. The perfect tense of the verb tells us that although this act was accomplished in the past, it still holds true until now. Whether the law was present or absent, the promise remained valid. The promise was truly an unconditional one. God would fulfill all the requirements for man to receive the promise. Man need not do a single thing, but to simply trust in the Lord’s Word and Work.

2c. The Law was Given to Reveal our Transgressions (3:19-22)

“What therefore (is) the law (for)? It was added because of transgressions, until which time the seed should come to whom it has been promised, having been ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator. And the mediator is not of one but God is one. (Is) the law therefore against the promises of God? May it never happen. For if the law has been given which is able to make alive, (then) indeed by the law righteousness would be. But the Scripture has concluded that all are under sin, in order that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to the ones who believe.”

If the law was not meant to alter the promise of God that salvation is by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, why then was it given? It was given because (*charin*) of transgressions (ie law breaking). The word *charin* may be taken in two ways: (1) Positively, “because of” (causal) transgressions (ie the law came to help us not to sin); or (2) negatively, “in order that” (purpose) sins might become transgressions (ie the law came in order *to condemn* us for our sins by making us law breakers). It is perhaps better to see it as a purpose clause (#2) because it agrees with Paul’s view of the purpose of the law in Romans 4:15, and Paul’s point here that we are under the curse of the law (Gal 2:16, 3:16, 21-22). Sin remains sin when there is no law, but when the law is given, it turns sin into transgression. The law makes sin exceedingly sinful because it proves that men are not just possessors of the sin nature, but actual practitioners of sin, going against the moral laws of God. The law thus does not save, but directs the sinner to the Saviour—the Seed, the Fulfiller of the Promise.

What does the clause “ordained by angels” mean? How was the law ordained through angels? Kent writes, “The angelic involvement in the giving of the law is not fully explained in Scripture, and yet it was apparently common knowledge among Jews of the first century. Stephen made the same assertion (Acts 7:53) and so does the Epistle to the Hebrews (2:2). In the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 33:2 states: ‘And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints [ie “holy ones”]; from his right hand went a fiery law for them.’ The Septuagint has for the last clause, ‘at his right hand were angels with him.’ Psalm 68:17 says, ‘The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place’” (99). The angels were perhaps just spectators of or witnesses to the giving of the Law.

In any case, one thing is for sure, Moses was appointed a mediator of the Mosaic Law. Moses stood in between God and Israel (Deut 5:5). Moses was called up by God to Mount Sinai to receive the decalogue, and to communicate it to the people on God’s behalf. On the other hand, the promise was given directly by God to Abraham without a middle party. In this way the promise was superior to the law because no mediator was required for the former. Verse 21 states,

“Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.” Hendriksen explained this difficult verse, “Instead of vexing the reader with the four hundred and thirty interpretations [sic] to which this passage has given rise, I shall immediately state the one which appears to me to be the most consistent with the context. It is this: Though a human intermediary may be ever so important, he is, after all, only a third party acting between two other parties. Moses served as a human link between God and the people. Such an intermediary lacks independent authority. God, however, is One. When he made his promise to Abraham – and through him to all believers, whether Jew or Gentile (Rom. 3:30!) – he did this on his own sovereign account, directly, personally” (143). Although Christ is said to be the Mediator of the promise (1 Tim 2:5); He is not a third party, being God Himself (2 Cor 5:19).

Verse 21 explains the role of the law. The conditional clause in verse 21 is one that is *contrary to fact*: “for if there had been a law given which could have given life (which situation is untrue and non-existent), verily righteousness should have been by the law (which is an impossible situation for sinful man).” The law was not meant to save but to condemn sinful man. In so doing, was the law against God’s promises? Both the law and the promise find their source in God. Did God contradict Himself? Of course not. The law was given for one purpose; the promise for another. The law is not contradictory to the promise of God, but rather complementary to it.

The Scripture is very clear on the fact that every man stands condemn before God as sinners. No matter how many good works are done, the law continues to mirror the fact that we fall far short of God’s holy demands, and are actually transgressors of His commandments; “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them” (Deut 27:26). See also Ps 143:2, Isa 1:5-6, Jer 17:9. The promise of salvation then becomes a true promise with no strings attached. Our salvation is not earned by us, but by Christ for us. “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).

3b. The Moral Law was not Abrogated when the Promise was Fulfilled (3:23-4:7)

1c. The Law Before Conversion (3:23-24)

“But before faith came, under the law we were guarded, being shut up to the faith which was about to be revealed, so that the law has become our tutor to Christ, in order that by faith we might be justified.”

Faith here refers to the faith of Christ (v 22) as opposed to the works of the law. When we were without faith in Christ, the law functioned in two ways: As (1) a jailer (v 23)—the justice that comes with the law convicted us of our sins and sentenced us to eternal damnation; and as (2) a tutor (v 24)—the judgments of the law directs the sinner to seek Christ for salvation. The term *paidagogos* translated “schoolmaster” in the KJV is significant. Edward R Roustio in his commentary on Galatians in the KJV Parallel Bible Commentary said that the *paidagogos* had no authority to punish (2388). Kent similarly argued that the *paidagogos* was not a schoolmaster (ie a teacher who had the authority to punish). He wrote that the *paidagogos* was a trusted servant who simply saw to it that the boy under his charge was dressed properly and escorted to school each day (105). The context however favours the view that the *paidagogos* does more than that. Throughout chapter 3, Paul stressed the fact that the law heightened and intensified the awareness of the severity of sin and its eternal consequences (vv

10, 19). The law was constantly being portrayed as a sword that slays, and now a rod that directs. It was not spoken in the terms of a slave who simply nurses and nurtures a child under his care. The law is not soft but hard. The harshness of the law drives one to seek refuge and deliverance which is found only in the Rock—the Lord Jesus Christ. Hendriksen has correctly observed the law as a *paidagogos* was “an *escort* or *attendant*, and also at the same time a *disciplinarian*. The discipline which he exercised was often of a severe character, so that those placed under his guardianship would yearn for the day of freedom ...” (148).

This speaks against primitive dispensationalism which sees an abrogation of the law when grace has come. Such a dispensational view is contradicted by Jesus’ words to the rich young ruler. As a matter of fact, “it should be easier for the Dispensationalists to understand why Jesus presented the exacting demands of the Ten Commandments to the rich young ruler, and not according to the soft-peddling in so much of evangelical preaching today. ... Therefore our Lord has used the law to good advantage, saying ‘But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery. ... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ Notice the effects of this lashing from the holy commandments. For the rich young ruler was brought immediately to his knees, beseeching, ‘All these things have I kept from my youth up: *what lack I yet?*’ It is only when he had seen his utter helplessness in conforming to the holy commandments of God that Jesus gave the invitation to ‘accept’ Him, ‘If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast ... *and come and follow me.*’ That the law is a ‘schoolmaster’ to bring us to Christ *also during the Gospel dispensation* is Christ’s evaluation, ...” (Timothy Tow, *The Law of Moses and of Jesus*, 112)

2c. The Law after Conversion (3:25-29)

“But when faith came, no longer under a tutor we are. For you are all the sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ. For as many as were baptised in Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you all are one in Christ Jesus. And if you (are) of Christ, then you are of the seed of Abraham, according to the promise inheritors.”

The law no longer functions as a sword or a rod when one becomes a Christian. When Paul said, “we are no longer under a schoolmaster,” it does not mean that the law has been abolished, or the law is no longer relevant to us. Hendriksen correctly wrote, “The time arrives when the boy is no longer a mere child. The grim discipline of his earlier days is not necessary any more. The rod can be laid aside, the custodian given a different assignment. Some parents seem to forget that little children grow up, and that there comes a time when from discipline of outward precepts they can advance to the free expression of inner principles” (148).

Those who have accepted Christ as Saviour are said to have been baptised into Christ (v 26). What is the baptism here referring to? It does not refer to water baptism as some would like to take it. The reasons are: (1) A person does not “put on Christ” at the point of water baptism; that would be baptismal regeneration (a heresy not unlike the Judaizing gospel of faith plus circumcision); and (2) There are those who have been mistakenly baptised. They may have made an outward profession of faith, but still unconverted. The words “as many of you as have been baptized into Christ” gives the impression that there are some who may have been baptised outwardly, but not baptised inwardly—into Christ.

Baptism in Christ refers to Spirit baptism. It is the act of the Holy Spirit indwelling a believer, making him part of the body of Christ. Baptism symbolises cleansing. A person who has been baptised into Christ has been cleansed of his sins, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and made a child of God.

As a member of the body of Christ, there are no racial (Jew/Greek), social (bond/free), gender (man/woman) distinctions. They do not determine the quality and validity of one's relationship with Christ—all are one in Christ Jesus. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13).

Verse 29 must be read in the light of verses 6-8, and 16-18. Those who have (1) faith in Christ Jesus (v 26), (2) baptised into Christ (v 27), and (3) put on Christ (v 27), are like Abraham—the father of faith, and are belonging to Christ. This is the fulfilment of the promise God made to Abraham in Genesis 13:16, "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." All Christians are Abraham's seed.

3c. The Law in Relation to Christ (4:1-7)

"But I say, upon such a time as the inheritor is a child, he is no different from a servant, being lord of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the appointed date of the father. Thus even we, when we were children, under the elements of the world we had been enslaved. But when the fulness of time came, God sent out His Son, having been made of a woman, having been made under the law, in order that the ones under the law He might redeem, that the adoption we might receive. And because you are sons, God sent has sent out the spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba Father. So that no longer a slave you are, but a son; and if a son, also an inheritor through God."

Galatians 4:1-3 elaborates on the idea of the inheritor or heir of 3:29. Before Christ came, the Old Testament saints were governed by the rituals and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law. These cultic practices pointed to the Messiah. They were simply types—visual aids to help the Old Testament saints understand the person and work of their Saviour. Although in principle they were heirs of the promise, in practice they were still under the bondage of the old economy because Christ had not come yet. They were still not freed from the rules and regulations of the ceremonial laws. Such obligations would be removed when Christ—the Antitype—comes to fulfil every requirement of the Mosaic Law.

Galatians 4:4-5 is the *crux interpretum* of the whole epistle. The sufficiency of Christ's salvific work on earth is a direct answer against the Judaizing doctrine of the need for one to do good works, Jesus' good works notwithstanding, if one wants to be saved. These two verses tell us that it is Christ that did all the work. Sinners need only to trust in what Christ has done for them in order to be saved.

The first advent of Christ did not happen by chance. Christ came at the Father's appointed time. When the right time or the opportune time came, God sent forth His Son to become a man so that He could be man's Representative and Substitute. Calvin said that "the fulness of time" is that season which "is the most fit, and that mode of acting is the most proper, which the providence of God directs" (Calvin, 118).

In what way was the New Testament period providentially conducive for

the ministry of Christ? It is significant to note that Christianity appeared in the world at the about the same time as the Roman empire. S Angus and A M Renwick observed, “Although on a superficial glance the Roman empire may seem the greatest enemy of early Christianity, it was in some ways a grand preparation for, and in some ways the best ally of, Christianity. It ushered in politically ‘the fulness of time’” (ISBE, s.v. “Roman Empire and Christianity”). The following are the reasons why the Roman period, prepared by God, was most conducive and convenient for the advent and mission of Christ:

- (1) The Pax Romana brought about universal peace. The empire united Greeks, and Romans, and Jews under one government. This blending of the nations prepared for Christianity.
- (2) The cosmopolitanism that resulted removed all national barriers. The empire became a melting pot of races, cultures, languages, philosophies, and religious ideas.
- (3) The Jewish diaspora led to the settlement of Jews in all the great cities of East and West. The decline of paganism led to the welcoming of spiritual monotheism. The translation of the Septuagint made the Old Testament available to the Greek populace. The synagogues which dotted the empire provided the initial meeting places for Christian evangelism.
- (4) The intellectual life of Greece prevailed among the Romans. Education was prioritized. Many of the great leaders of the Church were highly educated men.
- (5) The Greek language became the *lingua franca* of the Roman empire. Greek was so widespread that there arose a group called the hellenistic Jews. There soon evolved a popular Greek form called *koine* which was used for the writing of the New Testament.
- (6) The marvellous system of Roman roads, which knitted the civilized world together, not only served the legions but was of immense service to the early missionaries.
- (7) The Roman authorities granted a large measure of freedom to the religions of all nations, greatly favoring the growth of infant Christianity which was initially viewed as part of Judaism.
- (8) The Roman empire, as a unified community, made it possible for Christianity to develop into a world religion within decades.
- (9) The Roman laws were a great boon to the world. People were taught to obey and respect authority. The universal law of Rome helped prepare the way for the universal law of the gospel.
- (10) The Romans could offer their subjects good laws, uniform government, and military protection, but could provide nothing at the spiritual level. Only Christianity could offer true spiritual solace.

It was in such a divinely appointed time as this that God “sent out” His Son. That Jesus had to sent out tells us that He already existed before this time. Although it is a historical fact that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it must be realised that His conception did not bring about His creation but incarnation. Jesus already existed in eternity with the Father (John 1:1, 8:58; Rom 8:3; 2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:6; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3). His preexistence necessitated a supernatural birth if He was to take on humanity (John 1:14 cf Matt 1:20-23, Luke 1:35). Thus, Jesus was born of a virgin. Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived in her womb and remained a virgin until the time of His birth (Matt 1:24-25). Jesus, therefore, was fully man and fully God—the God-man.

Paul’s words that Jesus was “born/made of a woman” describe the

absolute humanity of Christ. Consider the literary structure of the Galatians 4:4-5. Albert Vanhoye pointed to a chiasmus here:

[a] God sent forth His Son	
<i>(Divine action: God sent His own Son)</i>	
[b] made of a woman (The <i>how</i> : born of woman)	[d] in order that He might redeem those under the law (The <i>why</i> : to free from Law)
[c] made under the law (The <i>how</i> : subject to Law)	[e] in order that we might receive the adoption of sons (The <i>why</i> : filial adoption)

The following observations may be drawn from the above inverted parallelism:

- (1) [a] states the divine act—the fact that God sent forth His Son. The others tell us that means and the goals of this divine action.
- (2) The parallelism of [b] and [c] (both beginning with “made” expressing the “manner”) and of [d] and [e] (both beginning with “in order that” expressing “purpose”) is clear.
- (3) There is an antithetic chiasmic structure. The antithetic relation of [c] and [d] (with “under the law” in both) is clear: In [c] the movement is descending: from glory to subjection; in [d] ascending: from subjection to deliverance.
- (4) There is another antithetic chiasmic structure. The antithetic relation of [b] and [e] manifests a pattern. The descending movement in [b] is the Son of God being lowered to the level of all humanity. The ascending movement of [e] is humanity being elevated to the glory of eternal sonship.
- (5) There is a relationship between [a] and [e] ([a] with “Son”, and [e] with “adoption of sons”). The Son’s sending [a] is required for filial adoption [e].

If the above observations be correct, then the authorial intent is clear: the condescension, incarnation, and humiliation of Christ was necessary for the redemption of man. This is because (1) God must become a human being in order to be man’s legitimate Representative; and (2) as the God-Man, He is able to secure our salvation by His twofold obedience: Keeping the moral law on our behalf (active obedience), and dying on the cross to atone for our sins (passive obedience).

The two purpose clauses indicate a dual role in the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ. They not only convey (1) the negative-positive purposes-results of the salvation work of Christ (ie freeing man from the bondage of the law, and making them adoptive sons respectively), but also (2) the dynamics behind the life-and-cross work of Christ which brought about such benefits. Lenski insightfully pointed out, “‘Under law’ implies that the incarnate Son was to fulfill law, and thereby purchase our Christian freedom. Paul is nullifying the contention of the Judaizers regarding the permanent validity of the Mosaic ceremonial laws for all Christians. That is why the sacrificial death of the Son, ie the passive obedience, is not treated here. It is the active obedience that nullifies all Judaistic ideas” (202).

The list of differences between Judaistic and Pauline soteriology is provided by Karl T Cooper:

- (1) Judaism required obedience as a prerequisite for ultimate salvation within the covenant. But imperfect obedience, in most cases, was deemed sufficient to meet the requirement. Paul, on the other hand, maintains a higher standard. Only perfect obedience will do (Gal 5:3).
- (2) Judaism laid the law’s demand for obedience at the door of each individual.

Paul, however, proclaimed that *this demand has been satisfied by another; the positive verdict passed on Christ 's obedience is transferred to the believer as a free gift* (Rom 3:24, 5:15-17).

- (3) Judaism grounded salvation upon a combination of God's grace in establishing the covenant, and man's response of obedience, repentance, and atonement. But Paul claims a one-for-all eschatological fulfillment of the demands of Torah in the obedience of Christ. *Therefore, the believer's personal obedience need not be added to Christ's as part of the believer's claim on God's covenantal justice* (Rom 4:4-6). *In fact, to require such an addition would cast in question the eschatological finality of the obedience of Christ, and destroy its sufficiency for salvation* (Gal 2:21, 5:2-4).
- (4) The problem of transgression and guilt was resolved in Judaism by proposing various means of atonement. The one essential element in such atonement was the sinner's repentance, his own effort to change. Thus the law's threat of condemnation need not be prosecuted, but could be laid aside. Paul, on the other hand, upheld the justice of God by asserting that the condemning sentence of the law had in fact been executed. Consequently, the guilty man can avoid condemnation only by identification with the one who has borne the extremity of that condemnation on his own person.

The law was indeed "ordained to life" (Rom 7:10). Thus, there was a necessity not only for the Saviour's payment of sins as our Substitute, but also the fulfilment of works as our Representative in the atonement (Rom 3:21-22 cf Gal 2:16, 3:22). Fung correctly concludes, "Christ achieved the purpose of redeeming those under the law by bearing the full obligation of the law in life as well as the curse of the law in death" (182). Machen has well said, "The active obedience of Christ ... no hope without it."

The perfect obedience of Christ, therefore secured for both Jews and Gentiles the "adoption of/as sons." This brings us back to the illustration Paul gave about minor heirs and their functionally low status (like the slaves who were appointed over them) though they were positionally princes (Gal 4:1-2). With the coming of Christ and the completion of His mission, all believers are now of full age. The sons of the kingdom are under no obligation to keep the Old Testament ceremonial or Levitical laws for they were but a "shadow of good things to come" (Heb 10:1). The benefits of Christ do not consist merely of deliverance from the depths of earthly sin but also the elevation to the heights of heavenly blessing. The best commentator on Paul's statement in Galatians 4:4-5 is Paul himself, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor 8:9). Calvin restated it marvellously thus: "The Son of God became the Son of man, so that the sons of man might become the sons of God."

In the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit who indwells every believer assures him that he is a child of God (v 6). We are now able to call God "Abba." "Abba" is Aramaic for "father" (see also Rom 8:15). This was a most endearing term, very much like our English "papa," or "daddy." We are no longer slaves under the curse of the law as unbelievers. Having believed, we have now become sons, and as such heirs through God. In Christ we have been made recipients of the Father's blessings and riches.

- 4b. The Ceremonial were Laws Abrogated when the Promise was Fulfilled (4:8-20)
- 1c. The Exhortation by Paul that the Galatians do not to Return to the

Bondage of the Ceremonial Laws (4:8-11)

“But then, when you did not know God, you served the ones by nature who were not gods. But now having known God, and rather having been known by God, how is it you are turning again to weak and poor elements in which again you are willing all over again to serve? You are observing days and months and times and years. I am afraid for you lest in vain I have laboured for you.”

The Galatians were once in darkness, being idol worshippers, but now are in the light, knowing the one living and true God. They had been enslaved by the demons who were behind all forms of idolatrous worship (cf 1 Cor 8:9). They were once very superstitious and very fearful of those gods. They had to perform various rituals to appease these false deities so that they would not become angry and punish them with ill fortune. But now they know that there is only one God who is a Spirit—living and true. In Christ, they have discovered who God really is (John 16:4, 1 Tim 2:5). They have experienced God’s power in their changed lives (2 Cor 5:17). They have come into this state of true knowledge not because of any effort or cleverness on their part, but because God first knew them, and chose them to be saved (cf Deut 7:7, Jer 1:5, John 15:16, Eph 1:1, Rom 9:15-16).

Having stated this fact, Paul questions the logic of the Galatians now wanting to return to burdensome ceremonies of the Mosaic law. The word “elements” points back to verse 3 where the same word is used to refer to Mosaic ceremonial laws. These were “weak,” and “beggarly” ceremonies because in and of themselves they cannot produce life. As Paul himself explained so clearly in the epistle to the Hebrews, “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. ... For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb 10:1,4).

The Galatians were already beginning to observe Judaistic rituals and ceremonies (v 10). These were referred to as (1) “days,” ie Jewish holy days such as the sabbath day; (2) “months,” ie the celebration of the new moons at the beginning of each month of the Jewish calendar (Num 10:10; 28:11; 1 Sam 20:5, 18, 24; 2 Kgs 4:23; Isa 1:13; Ezek 46:1, 3; Hos 2:11; Amos 8:5); (3) “times,” ie periodic festivals like the week long feast of tabernacles, or of the unleavened bread; and (4) “years,” ie the keeping of the sabbatical or Jubilee years. The Galatians were probably influenced by Judaizers that such observances were necessary for their salvation. If they want to be clean, and be accepted by God, they must engage in such activities.

Paul in verse 11 said that if the Galatians do turn to such “weakly” rituals, then His efforts among them when He preached to them the glorious Gospel would have been wasted. For the Gospel that Paul preached was an exclusive one—by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. To include works in Paul’s Gospel as the Galatians were attempting to do was to make his Gospel null and void. It would show that the Galatians had not really understood the Gospel.

2c. The Exhortation by Paul that the Galatians Remember His Ministry among them (4:12-20)

“Be as I am, because I am as you are, brothers, I beseech you. You have not done me wrong. But you know that on account of the weakness of the flesh,

I preached to you formerly, and your (TR: “my”) temptation in my flesh you did not despise neither did you spit out, but as a messenger of God you received me, as Christ Jesus. Where therefore is your happiness? For I testify to you that if it had been possible you would have dug out your eyes (and) gave (them) to me. So then have I become your enemy while speaking the truth to you? They are enthusiastic about you, not well, but to shut you out they are willing, in order that you may be enthusiastic about them. But (it is) good to be enthusiastic always in a good thing and not only when I am present with you. My children, whom again I suffer birth pangs until such time as Christ might be formed in you; and I wish to be present with you now and to change my voice, because I do not know what to make of you.”

In verses 12-14, Paul makes a personal appeal to the Galatians not to reject the Gospel of grace, in exchange for a gospel of works. As he is freed from the bondage of the law, Paul tells them to continue enjoying the same freedom they had received through his ministry. This happened when Paul visited their city in his first missionary journey, and he preached the gospel to them while he was physically ill. This physical trial that he went through which had put him in a difficult position was not scorned nor loathed by the Galatians. They did not turn him away, but on the contrary received him as if he were an angel with utmost respect (Acts 13:43-49, 14:8-18).

In verses 15-16, the apostle, in seeing that they are so quick to listen to the false gospel of the Judaizers, asks them what has become of this honour that they had so accorded to him at the beginning. They had confessed that through Paul, they had been blessed with the new life in Christ. What then had become of this blessedness is Paul’s question. That they had been thoroughly convinced and converted by the Gospel and were so appreciative of and grateful to Paul for it that they were most willing to do anything for Paul, even to give their eyes to him if he had asked for them. In light of this, Paul asks why they should now regard him as an enemy. In other words, Paul is asking, “I told you the truth then, and you loved me for it. I am still telling you the same truth, but why do you now hate me for it?”

In verses 17-18, Paul warns them of the pernicious zeal of the Judaizers. These men were zealous for selfish reasons. They were sparing no effort to win them over to a wrong system of salvation, and to turn their hearts away from Christ Himself, the only Giver of eternal life. These false teachers were not truly concerned for the eternal well-being of their hearers. They preach in order to get a following, and to get gain. They are promoting themselves and not Christ.

In the process of deceiving the believers, they also attempt to shut out the true message of salvation, and those who teach it. They are isolationists who claim that truth and salvation are found only within their fold. For example, the Central Christian Church (Singapore) which teaches baptismal regeneration goes to the extent of saying that all other Christians though baptised are still not saved because they do not belong to its membership roll. These false teachers instill fear in their own members by their false teachings, and in so doing keep them within their control.

In verses 19-20, Paul again appeals to them, now as a mother to her children. Paul is extremely worried for them because they are being totally deceived. He describes himself as going through the labour pains of an expectant mother. He experienced the same thing when he first preached the gospel to them, then to deliver them out of darkness into light. Here he is struggling to rescue them out of falsehood to the truth. Paul wants to see Christ (Christ as

Saviour, and Christ as Truth) in their lives. Due to the seriousness of the situation, Paul desires very much to change his way of communication, from an epistle to a visit. He felt that it would be more effective if he be present in the Church to deal with the problem on the spot, face to face with them, against the false teachers. Paul admits that he is perplexed over what is the best way to prevent them from falling into error. I do not think Paul was totally lost at what to do. In saying that he stands in doubt of them, he reveals his anxiety, and wishes that they turn away from error quickly.

5b. The Allegory of Abraham's Two Sons (4:21-31)

"Tell me, the ones willing to be under the law, the law do you not hear? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one out of the maid-servant, and out of the free-woman. But the one, on the one hand, out of the maid-servant according to the flesh had been born, but the one, on the other hand, out of the free-woman through promise. Which things are being allegorised, for they are two covenants, one from Mount Sinai born to slavery, who is Hagar. And (TR: "For") Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; and corresponding to the now Jerusalem, for she is enslaved with her children. But the above Jerusalem is free, which is our mother; for it is written, 'Be joyful, the barren woman who is not giving birth, break out and call aloud, she who is not suffering birth pangs, because the solitary woman is having many children, more than the one who is having a husband.' And you (TR: "we") brothers according to Isaac, children of promise you (TR: "we") are. But just as then the one who has been born according to the flesh persecuted the one according to the spirit, so also now. But what does the Scripture say? 'Throw out the maid-servant and her son; for the son of the maid-servant shall never inherit with the son of the freewoman.' Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the maid-servant but of the freewoman."

"The chapter closes with a reminder—in the form of an allegory—that those who hear the law should take it to heart. When the Judaizers pride themselves in the fact that they are "sons of Abraham," and the Galatians are influenced by this boast, let it be remembered that Abraham had two sons: one by the slave-woman, the other by the free-woman. Slavish law-observance, as if this were the pathway to salvation, makes one similar to Ishmael, slave-son of a slave-woman (Hagar). On the contrary, the exercise of one's freedom in Christ, basing one's trust in him alone, makes one a true son of Abraham, similar to the free-born son Isaac, born to the free-woman, Sarah" (Hendriksen, 189).

5a. CHRISTIAN LIVING ENCOURAGED (5:1-6:10)

lb. Encouragement to Live a Christian Life of Freedom and not Bondage (5:1-12)

"In the freedom (that) Christ has set us free; stand therefore and do not again in the yoke of slavery be involved. Behold I Paul am saying to you that if you (allow yourselves to) be circumcised, Christ shall benefit you nothing. And I affirm solemnly again to every man who is being circumcised that a debtor he is to keep the whole law. You have been cut off from Christ, you who are being justified by the law, you have fallen from grace. For we ourselves by the Spirit out of faith await eagerly for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is strong for anything, nor uncircumcision but faith through love is working. You were running well, who has hindered you the truth not to obey? This persuasion (is) not from the one who calls you. A small leaven the whole lump leavens. I have confidence in you in the Lord that

nothing otherwise you shall think; and the one who is disturbing you shall bear the judgment, whoever he may be. But I, brothers, if the circumcision I am yet preaching, why am I still being persecuted? Then has the stumblingblock of the cross been abolished? Would that also they who upset you should castrate themselves!"

Paul tells the Galatians that they are no more slaves but free men. Christ has freed us from the chains of sin and the law. Since freed, it is ridiculous to want to be chained again. A convict who has served his sentence in jail and is finally let out, surely does not want to exchange this freedom for imprisonment again. The sweetness of life in Christ, and the bitterness of death under the law should cause one to hold tightly to this new found life that he has obtained. The exhortation to "stand fast" (v 1a) has the idea of an object so firmly grounded that it becomes unmoveable.

As Christians enjoying freedom in Christ, they should not subject themselves to any yoke of bondage. It is significant that Paul did not say "*the* yoke," but simply "yoke" (v 1b). In so doing, he refers not just to the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonial laws in general, or circumcision in particular, but to any legalistic system that seeks to remove our freedom in Christ. This speaks against the attempt by the Roman Catholic Church today to woo Protestants back into her fold, to her system of sacramental bondage, and extra-biblical traditions. We rather take on the yoke of Christ which is easy and light (Matt 11:28-30).

In verse 2, Paul invokes his apostolic authority on what he is about to say. It is just like in ancient China, certain special officials in the Emperor's court receive the emperor's seal or token of authority to act on his behalf. When that seal or token is shown, everyone must *kowtow* to the official as if the emperor was present. Paul is now flashing his seal of authority bestowed on him by the Lord Himself when he said "I Paul." What he is about to say is of utmost importance. He is acting on God's behalf. The words that follow are no less God's.

From Paul's words in verse 2, it is very clear that only one Gospel saves, viz, the Gospel of grace through faith in Christ alone. No salvation is obtained by trusting in a false gospel, viz, a gospel of faith plus works be they good deeds or ceremonial observances. That is why we say that those in the Roman Catholic Church are still outside the kingdom though they confess faith in Christ. To Roman Catholics, faith is but one of many steps toward salvation. To those who understand salvation in such a way, Paul says, "Christ shall profit you nothing" (v 2), and "Christ is become of no effect unto you" (v 4). Charles Spurgeon has rightly said, "If my garment of salvation requires only one stitch from me, I am lost." The person who trusts in "another gospel" (1:8), remains "a debtor to do the whole law" (v 3), and is "fallen from grace" (v 4). Law and grace do not mix. You are either justified by the law or by grace. It cannot be both. If you seek justification by the law, the result is death (because of sin). If we seek justification by the grace of God, the result is life (because of Christ).

In verse 5, the words, "through the Spirit," and "by faith," "express the means whereby Christians expect to receive the consummation of salvation. Rather than embarking on a course of legal duties which never promise the final approval of God. Christians have believed the promise of God. They have been born from above by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. ... This contrast between the law and the Holy Spirit is a frequent one with Paul, and has been clearly demonstrated by William Hendriksen who shows that the law produces death but the Spirit makes alive (Rom. 8:2, 3); the law produces slavery and fear but the Spirit brings hope (Rom. 8:15, 16); the law enslaves but the Spirit brings freedom (Gal. 4:24, 25, 29—5:1)" (Kent, 145).

In verse 6, Paul repeated the fact that circumcision was but an outward sign of an inward grace. Just like the marriage ring, it merely indicates the marriage covenant. The ring in no way secures the marriage. The marriage is secured by the vows the couple have

made to each other in the presence of God. Ring or no ring, the vows stand and remain valid. That is why Paul said that whether one is circumcised or not, it does not add to or subtract from one's salvation which is solely obtained by the "faith which worketh by love." In other words, genuine faith would produce this all-important virtue called love (cf Jas 2:14-26). The fruit of the Spirit is love ... (v 22).

In verse 7, Paul used the analogy of an athletic contest to describe the situation the Galatians were in (cf Gal 2:2, 1 Cor 9:24-27, Phil 3:14, 2 Tim 4:7). Since the time of their conversion until recently, they had been running the Christian race well. But during the course of the race, someone "cut in" and caused them to stumble, throwing them off the track. Paul was no doubt referring to the Judaizers who have introduced a false doctrine to sway them away from the truth that he had taught them. Through persuasive words and subtle arguments they managed to hoodwink the Galatian Christians to thinking that there was something missing in Paul's Gospel. Paul told them that what they had received from the Judaizers did not come from God (v 8).

He told them to be wary of the leaven of heresy, for "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (v 9). This wrong doctrine was not something minor. Though it might seem small, Paul warned that if it was not nipped at the bud, it would permeate and corrupt the whole Church and cause it to be destroyed. Paul would surely say the same of the Evangelicals-Catholics Together (ECT) accord of March 29, 1994, wherein truth is played down, and love played up for the sake of unity. An acceptance of or even a sympathy for the ECT is the first but sure step towards a return back to the chains of Rome. This is modern leaven that must be purged!

In verse 10, Paul revealed his confidence in the power of the Gospel. He believed that the Gospel had really converted Galatians, that they were truly born again. His ministry among them had not been in vain. Paul no doubt was reminded of the fact that a person who is truly saved cannot lose his salvation. Jesus is powerful to save to the very end (John 10:28).

It was not Paul who saved them, or they who has saved themselves, but Christ who has saved them. On account of this, Paul was confident that they would agree with him; that they would recognise the error of the Judaizers and reject this alien gospel (cf John 10:1-5). These false teachers, Paul went on to say, who preached and believed in "another gospel" and thus not saved would receive God's judgment. They would be punished for being false witnesses, having used Christ's name in vain, and having wrongly interpreted and applied the Law of Moses.

In verse 12, Paul again answered the Judaizers' false charges against him. They apparently accused Paul of having double standards, or that he had two messages, namely, to the Jew Paul would say that circumcision was necessary for salvation, but to the Gentile, he would say that it was not. Paul's circumcision of Timothy (Acts 16:1-3), and non-circumcision of Titus (Gal 2:3) would probably be brought up as an example of Paul's inconsistency. But this was a total misunderstanding of Paul's action. In circumcising Timothy, Paul was not saying that circumcision was necessary for salvation, but only that the Jew may not abandon their Mosaic traditions properly understood (Acts 21:21-26). The fact that the other Apostles did not insist that Titus be circumcised when he was in Jerusalem (2:3) proved that Paul had understood the proper place of circumcision.

And if what the Judaizers had accused him of was true (ie circumcision was necessary for salvation) then why were they persecuting him? Was it not because he preached the cross? These Judaizers say they trusted in Christ, but by including circumcision as part of the requirement for salvation, they were really going against Christ as His all-sufficient work on the cross. In verse 12, Paul said something very striking. A literal translation of the verse would read like this: "Would that those who are

troubling you would even mutilate themselves” (NASB). “The verb ‘cut off’ (KJV) is the term for castration or similar mutilation in Deuteronomy 23:1 (LXX). Such physical mutilation for religious purposes was commonly known in Galatia, being practiced in the worship of Cybele. Paul’s irony meant: If these Judaizers regard the physical act of circumcision as a saving rite, they may as well go all the way and imitate their pagan neighbors, for in principle they were no different” (Kent, 151).

2b. Encouragement to Live a Christian Life of Freedom in the Spirit (5:13- 26)

“For you were called for the purpose of freedom, brothers; only (do not turn) the freedom into a pretext for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law stands fulfilled in one statement, in this: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. And if one another you are biting and devouring, beware, lest you be consumed by one another. And I say, walk in the spirit, and the lust of the flesh you might not yield to. For the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit lusts against the flesh, for these things lie in opposition to one another, so that whatever you do not desire, these things you do. But if you are being led by the spirit, you are not under the law. and the works of the flesh are obvious, which are fornication, uncleanness, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, rivalry, jealousy, rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and the things like these, which I am saying to you, just as I have said before that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law. And the ones of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts. If we live in the spirit, in the spirit also let us follow. Let us not be vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.”

In verse 13, Paul again addresses them as “brethren” (ie brothers and sisters in Christ, cf 3:15; 4:12, 28). Again he considers them to be truly saved, and a part of the family of Christ. However, salvation is not a licence for sin, to live according to our carnal pleasures. Although as Christians we are still in the flesh, we are not to live according to the flesh (2 Cor 10:3). On the contrary, this Christian freedom should spur us to greater heights of love, to “be slaving for” one another. We are no longer slaves to sin to do evil, but slaves to Christ to do good.

In verse 14, Paul drew attention to the all-fulfilling law of love, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (from Lev 19:18). James called it the “royal law” (Jas 2:8). “Neighbour” here refers to both friend and foe, to family or stranger. What is love? Paul’s definitive description of it is found in 1 Corinthians 13. If one loves his fellow man, he would not want to kill him, betray his trust, steal his goods, bear false witness against him, or covet his possessions (cf Exod 20:13-17). It is only when we have the Spirit indwelling us, that we have this ability to love, this power to obey the moral law.

If they throw out the moral law which is essentially the law of love, it would lead to destructive behaviour. Lawlessness is characterised by “biting,” and “devouring” one another (v 15). In other words, we become like wild animals eating each other up when instead of loving, we are hating one another. Was this in reality the situation in Galatia? Probably it was. The fact that Paul had to defend his apostleship so vehemently intimates fierce opposition against him in the church by the Judaizers. Paul warned the Galatians that if they displayed the same sort of behaviour, it would come to no good end for them as well.

Instead of walking in the flesh, the Galatians as Spirit indwelt people should walk in the Spirit, and not in the flesh (vv 16-18). To walk in the Spirit means to be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18). The fact that even as believers, we may fall into sin tells us that we are not sinlessly perfect. The sin nature was not eradicated when we became Christians.

It is still very much a part of us. But since we are now Spirit baptised people, we have a new nature. The new is constantly at battle with the old (Rom 7:14-25). This is the “Christian Warfare.” How may we overcome our sinful nature? Paul answered, “Walk in the Spirit.”

What are the works of the flesh (vv 19-21)? “The first three works of the flesh denote evils in the realm of sensuality, particularly relating to sex. Fornication (*porneia*) is the general term for sexual immorality. A cognate word *porne* meant ‘prostitute,’ and may be derived from *pernemi*, meaning to sell. The word-family is thus influenced by the thought of sex which is sold. Greek and Roman life was permeated with extra-marital sex, often under religious guise. ...

“Uncleanness’ (*akatharsia*) can denote physical dirt, ceremonial impurity, or moral defilement. It describes what is soiled and repulsive. In its ceremonial use, it denotes that which separates people from God. It is broader than mere sexual evil, but it can denote impure thoughts and associations which can eventually lead to immoral acts.

“Wantonness’ is an appropriate translation for the third term (*aselgeia*). In two other Pauline listings it is grouped among sexual sins (Rom. 13:13; II Cor. 12:21), and this obviously is the case here. ...

“VERSE 20. The next two words describe vices involving false religion. ‘Idolatry’ (*eidolatria*), the worship of false gods and their idols, was often associated with sexual immorality. Hence the transition to this section of Paul’s list was a natural one. Sacred prostitutes were often attached to pagan temples, and idolatry frequently involved immorality as part of their worship. ‘Witchcraft’ (*pharmakeia*) refers to the practice of magic or sorcery. The term originally meant medical treatment with drugs (cf. the English ‘pharmacy’), but it developed the meaning of witchcraft because sorcerers often used potions in practicing their evil art. At Ephesus the gospel preached by Paul caused many sorcerers to become Christians and abandon their former deeds in a public renunciation (Acts 19:19).

“The next eight vices refer to personal animosities. ‘Hatreds’ (*echthrai*) is plural, and denotes hostile feelings and actions which the flesh harbors and gives vent to. The term describes the attitude existing when men are enemies (*echthroï*). ‘Strife’ (*eris*) is the quarelling and contention that results from a condition of enmity and hatred. It was characteristic of the church at Corinth when it split into parties and bickered within its ranks (1 Cor. 1: 11; 3:3; II Cor. 12:20). ‘Jealousy’ (*zēlos*; KJV ‘emulations’) is a term which can have the good sense of ‘zeal’ or ‘ardor’ (Rom. 10:2), but it is capable of degenerating into its negative meaning. It here suggests an attitude of rivalry and concern for personal advancement.

“‘Outbursts of anger’ (*thumoi*; KJV ‘wrath’) uses a plural to depict repeated displays of animosity, in contrast to the more settled states represented by its Greek synonym *orge* (‘wrath’). ‘Displays of selfishness’ (*eritheiai*) is a translation which fits well all of the New Testament occurrences of this term (note specially Phil. 1:17; 2:3; James 3:14, 16). It is derived from the word for day-laborer (*erithos*), and the unfavorable sense of working only for one’s own interests, in contrast to one who denotes his service in philanthropic activity. Evil jealousy is always selfish, and anger often is.

“‘Divisions’ (*dichostasiai*; KJV ‘seditions’) are the dissensions and splits which are the inevitable result when personal conflicts run their course. A factious spirit eventually results in a splintering of whatever group has existed. ‘Parties’ (*haireseis*; KJV ‘heresies’) are the groups which emerge when the divisions noted above take on distinct identities. The term did not necessarily denote what we call a heretical sect, but simply a group of persons who shared a particular belief. Later the term came to be applied to beliefs which were unorthodox. In the present context the emphasis is on the divisiveness of such parties. “

VERSE 21. The last of the eight terms denoting personal animosities is ‘envyings’ (*phthonoi*). It is allied in thought with ‘jealousy,’ but is the more serious of the two. Jealousy can have a good sense, but it is also used of a selfish rivalry. If it is unchecked it can easily lead to envy. ‘*Zelos* (jealousy), we might say, is the envy which casts grudging looks; *phthonos* (envying) is the envying which has arrived at hostile deeds.’

The last two items designate evil practices associated with drunkenness. ‘Drunkenness’ (*methai*) and ‘revellings’ (*komoi*) are used together also in Romans 13:13. They describe the evils of intoxication and the carousings which are so frequently associated with drinking. The drunken celebrations depicted by these terms were often accompanied by idolatry and immoral practices. All sorts of evils could be perpetrated when men gave up their self-control under the influence of drink.

“The reference to this dismal list as ‘such things’ indicates that the listing was representative and not exhaustive. The above are not the only evil works of which the flesh is capable. However, the listing was sufficiently broad to illustrate Paul’s point that those who habitually practice such deeds as these will not inherit the kingdom of God. This sort of conduct is characteristic, to a greater or lesser degree, of unsaved persons, ones who are limited to ‘the flesh’ as their sphere of action. The continual exhibition of these works is evidence of the unregenerate nature undisturbed by the Spirit. Christians, it is true, may fall into some of the sins mentioned here when they fail to walk by the Spirit, for they still have their old nature which sometimes entices persuasively, but such will not be the general pattern of their lives” (Kent, 157-61).

In verses 23-24 we find the well-known passage on the fruit of the Holy Spirit. An excellent essay on this passage is Gary Meadors’, “Living the Fruit of the Spirit,” in *Grace Magazine* (Spring 1990): 37, 39. Meadors was correct to point out that “the Fruit of the Spirit is not simply a list of internal traits for personal enjoyment but is a mirror of relational traits which evidence whether we really do love our neighbor.” When we manifest the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, when we live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit (v 25), we die to self, and sin (v 24), and live for God and others (v 26).

3b. Specific Instructions on How to Live the Christian Life of Freedom in the Spirit (6:1-10)

“Brothers, if a man shall be overtaken in a certain transgression, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, while looking out for yourself lest you be tempted also. The burdens of one another bear, and thus you shall fulfil the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something while being nothing, he deludes himself. But let each put the work of himself to the test, and then to himself only the boasting he shall have, and not to the other. For each one shall bear his own burden. But let the one who is being taught the word share with the one who teaches in all good things. Be not misled, God is not being mocked. For what a man shall sow, this also shall he reap. Because the one who sows in the flesh of himself shall reap out of the flesh corruption, but the one who sows in the Spirit out of the Spirit shall he reap life eternal. And while doing good, let us not lose heart, for in His own good time, we shall reap if we do not grow faint. So then as we have time, let us do good to all, but especially to the household of faith.”

Like it or not, we are our brother’s keeper. We should be concerned over the spiritual well-being of fellow believers. If a fellow Christian has yielded to temptation, and has transgressed the law of God, we who are spiritual (ie walking in the Spirit) have the responsibility “restore” him (v 1). It does no good to condemn the sinner. We hate the sin, but love the sinner. A healing process must take place. Mature Christians are required to help the weaker ones in the healing process—to bring him back to the path

of righteousness. When we do such counselling work, it must be done in a spirit of meekness. We must also be constantly aware of the fact that we ourselves are sinful and prone to fall when careless. A humble spirit is needed. A self-righteous, holier-than-thou, attitude will not do. The gentleness of Christ as displayed in His restoration of backslidden Peter is instructive (John 21:15-19).

As our brother's keeper we share his burdens (v 2). A Christian is not an island. He is part of the body of Christ. We live as a family under one roof. There must therefore be this familial fellowship in times of difficulties. This sharing may either be in word or in kind. It is part and parcel of Christian living.

In verse 3, Paul admonished those who think that they are great when in fact they are nothing. This conceitedness is self-destructive. Modern Christian counselling that stresses self-esteem is being denounced by Paul here. The ego must be brought low if the sinner is to receive any help from God. In Romans 12:3, we are told to evaluate ourselves very carefully in the light of God's Word, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." As an Apostle of no mean standing, this was what Paul said of himself, "Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief (1 Tim 1:15). In another place he cancelled his ego, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). The Bible does not teach Self-esteem, but Christ-esteem—*not I but Christ*.

Instead of comparing oneself with others, one should objectively evaluate one's conduct in the light of God's Word (v 4). If he finds that he has met God's standards then there is cause for "boasting" (in a good sense as in Phil 2:16), "in himself alone." In other words, this is not the loud boasting, the blowing one's own trumpet, but a silent enjoyment of knowing that one's accomplishments have brought glory to God and done good for His people.

The believer is personally responsible for how he lives his Christian life (v 5). Personal holiness is non-transferable. On the day of Christ's Judgment Seat we stand before Him alone to give an account of how we have lived our life—whether it be approved or not.

Verses 6-9 deal with the Christian duty to supply the needs of full-time ministers of the Gospel. Let Calvin comment on verse 6: "It is probably that the teachers and ministers of the word were at that time neglected. This shewed the basest ingratitude. How disgraceful is it to defraud of their temporal support those by whom our souls are fed!—to refuse an earthly recompense to those from whom we receive heavenly benefits! But it is, and always has been, the disposition of the world, freely to bestow on the ministers of Satan every luxury, and hardly to supply godly pastors with necessary food. Though it does not become us to indulge too much in complaint, or to be too tenacious of our rights, yet Paul found himself called upon to exhort the Galatians to perform this part of their duty. He was the more ready to do so, because he had no private interest in the matter, but consulted the universal benefit of the Church, without any regard to his own advantage. He saw that the ministers of the word were neglected, because the word itself was despised; for if the word be truly esteemed, its ministers will always receive kind and honourable treatment. It is one of the tricks of Satan to defraud godly ministers of support, that the Church may be deprived of such ministers. An earnest desire to preserve a gospel ministry, led to Paul's recommendation that proper attention should be paid to good and faithful pastors.

"*The word* is here put, by way of eminence, ... for the doctrine of godliness. Support is declared to be due to those by whom we *are taught in the word*. Under this

designation the Papal system supports idle bellies of dumb men, and fierce wild beasts, who have nothing in common with the doctrine of Christ. *In all good things*. He does not propose that no limit should be set to their worldly enjoyments, or that they should revel in superfluous abundance, but merely that none of the necessary supports of life should be withheld. Ministers ought to be satisfied with moderate fare, and the danger which attends pomp and luxury ought to be prevented. To supply their real necessities, let believers cheerfully devote any part of their property that may be required for the services of devout and holy teachers. What return will they make for the invaluable treasure of eternal life, which is communicated to them by the preaching of those men?" (Calvin, 176-7).

In regard to the support of genuine pastors, Luther said, "When the members of a Christian congregation permit their pastor to struggle along in penury, they are worse than heathen" (in Kent, 172).

Rev Timothy Tow, our principal, has exhorted us to "do something good for Jesus everyday." This saying restates Paul's injunction in verse 10, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men." Those who come to seek our help in times of material need, we should not turn away. Although we have this personal responsibility to help those in need, yet our first priority is to meet the needs of those within the family circle, our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ (cf Acts 2:44-45, 4:34-35, 11:27-30).

4b. Final Words In Summary of the Epistle (6:11-18)

"Behold, how big a letter to you I have written with my own hand. As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these compel you to be circumcised, only in order that in the cross of Christ they may not suffer persecution. For neither they who are being circumcised are themselves keeping the law but are willing to circumcise you, in order that in your flesh they might boast. But be it far from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom to me the world has been crucified, and I to the world. For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as are keeping in line with this rule, peace upon them, and mercy even upon the Israel of God. Of the rest, let no one cause trouble to me; for I am bearing the marks of Jesus in my body. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (be) with your spirits, brother. Amen."

Paul concludes the epistle with his own handwriting (v 11). The writing up till this point was done by an amanuensis, but now Paul takes over. Instead of writing with the cursive script, he writes these words in uncial (ie capital letters). This to underscore the main theme of his epistle.

In verses 12-13, Paul revealed to the Galatians the wrong motives behind the message of the Judaizers. Their only concern was their self-promotion. They did not really care for the spiritual well-being of their listeners. They would not suffer for them. If trouble did come, these false pastors would desert the flock to save their own skin. Not only that, they were not practising what they preached. Although they stressed the ceremonial law, they blatantly violate the moral law. Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, they were hypocrites. On the contrary, Paul was their true pastor. He did not preach himself but Christ crucified (cf 2 Cor 4:5). His only concern was that the Galatians see Christ, and Him alone as their Source of salvation. The world had nothing to offer Paul in regard to salvation. He found salvation only in Christ. Paul experienced a double crucifixion. The world was crucified (negatively) as far as Paul was concerned. The world held no meaning and attraction to him. The world was dead to Paul. Paul was crucified (positively) with Christ. Christ now becomes His life because the living Saviour has made him into a new person (v 15). He died to the world in order to be alive for Christ (cf

2:20).

It is only to those who walk by this rule (ie salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone, and not by the works of the law, or of the flesh) that they can experience God's peace and mercy (v 16). The "Israel of God" here refers to saved Israelites who lived according to faith like their father Abraham (cf 3:6-7). Paul was perhaps hoping that some of the Judaizers might see the error of their message and turn to Christ alone for their salvation. [For a study on the term, "The Israel of God," read S Lewis Johnson's paper on "Paul and 'The Israel of God': An Exegetical and Eschatological Case Study," in *Essays in Honour of J Dwight Pentecost*, edited by Stanley D Toussaint and Charles H Dyer (Chicago: Moody, 1986): 181-96.]

Paul had convincingly proved that he was a genuine apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. He urged them not to doubt his ministry again. The evidences of his apostleship are not only seen so clearly in his epistle, but also on his body, for "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (v 17). "In the Greco-Roman world the word *stigma* referred to a brand mark, and was found on domestic cattle, deserters from the army, criminals, and slaves who had been caught after running away, stealing, or committing some other flagrant offense. The brand was a permanent disfigurement placed usually on the body's forehead or hand (hoof). Paul, however, undoubtedly refers to the physical scars which he carried as a result of his Christian labors. The scars from the recent stoning at Lystra were one example (Acts 14:19). The argument is not unlike the response of Antipater, the father of Herod the Great, when he was accused of disloyalty to Caesar. Throwing off his garments and exposing his countless scars, he said he needed to say nothing about his loyalty because his body shouted it aloud without his saying a word. Were the Judaizers glorying in their ritual marks and gashes (circumcision)? Then Paul can claim something better—an identification with Jesus even to the sharing of His afflictions (Col. 1:24); and he had the scars to prove it" (Kent, 183-4).

Again, Paul called them "brethren" (v 18). Paul had no doubts that the Galatians were saved during his first missionary journey when they sincerely received the gospel which he preached. He was quite confident that they would heed his words of warning. As a matter of fact, there is no Scriptural evidence that such a problem of legalism ever arose again in the Galatian churches. There is reason to believe that Paul's powerful defence of the gospel here settled the problem once and for all. It was thus most appropriate for him to wish them "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" for that is the whole basis of Christian freedom. Amen.

2nd edition

Feb 25, 2000

FEBC, Singapore

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CITED

- Bauer, Walter, W F Arndt, F W Gingrich, F W Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979. Abbreviated BAGD.
- Boyd, Robert T. *Paul The Apostle: An Illustrated Handbook on His Life and Travels*. USA: World, 1995.
- Bromiley, Geoffrey W. Editor. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Four volumes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. Abbreviated ISBE.
- Brown, Colin. Editor. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. Four volumes. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. Abbreviated NIDNTT
- Cooper, Karl T. "Paul and Rabbinic Soteriology." *Westminster Theological Journal* 44 (1982): 123-139.
- Fung, Ronald. *The Epistle fo the Galatians*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Hendriksen, William. *Exposition of Galatians*. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968.
- Johnson, S Lewis. "Paul and 'The Israel of God': An Exegetical and Eschatological Case Study," in *Essays in Honor of J Dwight Pentecost*. Edited by Stanley D Toussaint, and Charles H Dyer. Chicago: Moody, 1986.
- Kent Jr, Homer A. *The Freedom of God's Sons: Studies in Galatians*. Winona Lake: BMH, 1976.
- Lenski, R C H. *The Interpretation of St Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians*. Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937.
- Luther, Martin. *Commentary on Galatians*. Edited by John Prince Fallowes. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1850.
- Meadors, Gary. "Living the Fruit of the Spirit," *Grace Magazine* (Spring 1990): 37, 39.
- Roustio, Edward R. "Galatians," in *The KIV Parallel Bible Commentary*. Edited by Edward E Hindson, and Woodrow Michael Kroll. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994.
- Skilton, John H. Editor. *Machen's Notes on Galatians: Notes on Biblical Exposition and Other Aids to the Interpretation of the Epistle to the Galatians from the Writings of J Gresham Machen*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1973.
- Vanhoye, Albert. "Mary in Galatians 4:4." *Theology Digest* 28 (1980): 257-9.
- Zodhiates, Spiros. Editor. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*. Iowa Falls: World Bible, 1992.