

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

1. Historically, the Galatians as a people had come into the central highlands of what is now Turkey around the Third Century B.C. as part of an ongoing great Celtic migration out of central Europe. This migration extended also across western Europe and into what is now known as the British Isles and their language is still spoken in portions thereof. Historical records show an overlap of the terms Celtic and Gallic. Their region was once called Gallo Graecia and was made a Roman province (Galatia) around 25 B.C. John Gill notes that some affirm that the Grecians called them Galatians from *gala*, which signifies *milk*, because of their milky color.
2. Little is said in scripture about the forming of the churches of Galatia. **ACT 16:6; 18:23.**
 - A. They had been idolaters in spiritual bondage to fleshly works and ceremony. **GAL 4:8-10.**
 - B. Paul certainly takes credit for founding them. **GAL 4:13-15, 19.**
 - C. Paul gave them orders. **1CO 16:1.**
3. Their churches were in considerable doctrinal and practical disorder, yet Paul affirms them as *churches* (**GAL 1:2**). Their candlesticks were still in place.
 - A. Paul called them *brethren* and *children of promise* like himself. **GAL 4:28.**
 - B. He called them, "My little children..." (**GAL 4:19**), not disowning them.
 - C. That they were in considerable disorder and still churches is not an excuse for disorder but it does show that true churches may have serious flaws.
 - (1) Five of the seven churches of Asia (**REV 2-3**) had disorder. But they were each warned about the loss of their candlestick unless they repented and came to order.
 - (2) The preservation of Christ's church in this world is a fact (**MAT 16:18**) but not dependent upon absolute purity.
 - (3) The fate, though, of a persistently disorderly church, is the forfeiting of its blessing and identity in favor of another. **ROM 11:18-23.**
 - D. Their rapid and pervasive disorder provoked a censorious epistle from Paul.
 - (1) He marvelled at their rapid departure from the truth. **GAL 1:6.**
 - (2) He chided them for being turncoats to his ministry. **GAL 4:14-16.**
 - (3) He called them *foolish* (**GAL 3:1**), strong language in view of **MAT 5:22**.
 - (4) He closed the epistle, "From henceforth let no man trouble me..." (**GAL 6:17**). He had had enough.
 - (5) Other Pauline epistles to churches generally included prayer for them but this one has only his usual introduction and benediction of grace. **GAL 1:3; 6:18.**
 - a. God told Jeremiah, "...Pray not for this people for their good" (**JER 14:11**).
 - b. This is not to say that Paul had completely ceased praying for them, but a church should be comforted by having its minister tell them that he is praying for them when he writes them. They were denied such comfort.
4. Paul found it necessary to defend both his ministry and gospel as being from God. **GAL 1:11, 15-16; 2:8-9.**
 - A. False teachers of "the circumcision" had come unto the Galatians after Paul and cast doubts on his gospel and ministry. **GAL 6:13.**
 - B. They had evidently slandered Paul as being duplicitous: teaching circumcision for justification to Jews but not to the Gentiles who might be offended at circumcision, implying that he ordered his ministry for personal benefit. **GAL 1:10; 5:11.**
 - C. The irony of the slander was that the slanderers were preaching the necessity of

- circumcision, not for Christ's or the Galatians' sakes, but for their own benefit. **GAL 6:12.**
- (1) The overall message was, "You can be Christian while cleaving to the old ways of your peers and this will reduce persecution." That was their slant on Christianity.
 - (2) The Galatians had suffered persecution (**GAL 3:4**) so this message had an appeal.
 - (3) Such a gospel is certainly not of Paul. **2CO 6:16-17; 2TI 3:12.**
- D. Paul's main antagonists and rivals were self-pleasing Jews, even Christian Jews. **2CO 11:13, 22-23; TIT 1:10-11.**
5. The Galatians had "...fallen from grace" (**GAL 5:4**).
- A. They had not *fallen from grace* in the sense of losing their status as God's children. **GAL 3:26; 4:6-7.**
 - B. They had fallen from the doctrine of grace that had converted them by Paul.
 - C. When one abandons or degrades from a known superior position, he *falls* from that position. c/w **REV 2:4-5.**
 - (1) Apostasy is called a *falling away* (Gr. *apostasia*). **2TH 2:3.**
 - (2) "For the law was given by Moses, but GRACE and truth came by Jesus Christ" (**JOH 1:17**).
 - (3) The Galatians had initially trusted in Jesus Christ and His grace but had opted for hybridizing that with the inferior and abolished O.T. Mosaic code of "do and live" righteousness (**ROM 10:5**). This was how they had *fallen from grace*.
 - (4) Where the Spirit of Christ is, there is *liberty* (**2CO 3:17; GAL 5:1, 13**) but where the "spirit" of Moses is (the O.T.), there is *bondage*. **GAL 2:4; 4:3.**
 - (5) This epistle makes clear that relying on sinners' righteousnesses or on ceremony for justification is bondage *whether it be pagan or Mosaic*. **GAL 4:9-10; 5:1.**
 - D. The corruption of the doctrine of salvation from grace to works may have been affecting their conduct as brethren.
 - (1) Grace levels the playing field: all are unworthy incapable sinners by nature and no one has any earned or natural claim on God that implies superiority over others. **ROM 3:9 c/w EPH 2:1-3.**
 - (2) The introduction of works (like circumcision) to be added for justification automatically introduced the potential for vainglorious, prideful superiority: "Oh, you aren't circumcised? Well, you know you can't be saved unless you're circumcised like me." **GAL 5:26 c/w 6:15-16.**
 - (3) Contention had set in (**GAL 5:15**) and "Only by pride cometh contention..." (**PRO 13:10**).
 - (4) They had drifted from true "...faith which worketh by love" (**GAL 5:6**) to a corrupted faith which worked by pride, vanity and glorying.
 - (5) Never trivialize the importance of sound doctrine, especially the doctrine of Who God is and how He relates to His creation. The corruption of doctrine leads to the corruption of conduct. **ROM 1:21-25.**
6. Faith is a major theme in this epistle, and is contrasted with works-righteousness and quasi-faith.
- A. This epistle sets forth the *flawless* faith of Jesus Christ which justified sinners and made them righteous. **GAL 2:16; 3:21-22.**
 - B. It also sets forth the faith of the saint after the manner of the faith of Abraham which *evidences* justification and righteousness. **GAL 3:5-7.**
7. This epistle is an excellent partner to Romans and likewise exposes and condemns many heresies.

- A. Both epistles set forth salvation by the faith of Jesus Christ. **ROM 3:20-22; GAL 2:16.**
- B. Both epistles condemn adding works to grace for righteousness. **ROM 11:6; GAL 2:21.**
- C. Both epistles deny superiority by circumcision. **ROM 2:25-27; GAL 6:13.**
- D. Both epistles declare faith is superior to circumcision. **ROM 4:9-10; GAL 5:6.**
- E. Both epistles deny righteousness by law. **ROM 3:20-21; GAL 3:21.**
- F. Both epistles declare a true Israel v. a false Israel. **ROM 9:6; GAL 6:16.**
- F. Both epistles show God's promise unique to the seed. **ROM 9:7-8; GAL 3:16, 29.**
- G. Both epistles declare the children of promise as God's children. **ROM 9:8; GAL 4:28.**
- H. Both epistles deny salvation by race or class. **ROM 3:9-10; 10:12; GAL 3:28.**
- I. Both epistles declare believers to have claim on God's promise. **ROM 3:22; GAL 4:30-31.**
- J. Both epistles deny that the inheritance is of the law. **ROM 4:14; GAL 3:18.**
- K. Both epistles counter Pharisaism, Judaism, Dispensationalism and Arminianism.

8. At issue in this epistle is the true gospel versus a counterfeit gospel (**GAL 1:6-7**):

True gospel

Revelation from God
 Approved by the apostles and elders
 Christ magnified
 God-glorifying
 Blessing attached
 Salvation by grace
 Grace alone
 Glories in the cross
 Glories in the offence of the cross
 Faith of God and Christ
 Righteousness by the obedience of One
 Sinner's faith counted for righteousness
 Perfect salvation
 Christ's work saved
 Spiritual circumcision
 Live and do
 Abrahamic covenant
 Inheritance by God's promise
 Free salvation
 Man incapable
 Heavenly Jerusalem
 Apostolic doctrine
 Consistent
 Spread openly, plainly
 Not calendrical
 Mature religion
 Spiritual religion
 Forbids paganism
 Persecution for the truth
 Law a schoolmaster
 Law a temporary expedient
 Liberty

Counterfeit gospel

Invention of men
 Denounced by the apostles and elders
 Moses magnified
 Man-glorifying
 Curse attached
 Salvation by Law
 Grace plus works
 Changes the cross into a + sign
 Shrinks from the offence of the cross
 Faith of sinners
 Righteousness by the obedience of many
 Sinner's faith produces righteousness
 Incomplete salvation
 Christ's work saved none
 Fleshly circumcision
 Do and live
 Mosaic covenant
 Inheritance by sinners' obedience
 Earned salvation
 Man empowered
 Earthly Jerusalem
 Man's traditions
 Self-contradicting
 Spread by subtilty
 Calendrical
 Childish religion
 Fleshly religion
 Incorporates and consecrates paganism
 Compromises to evade persecution
 Law a taskmaster
 Law still in effect
 Bondage

9. This epistle was written from Rome (see the postscript), where Paul for the gospel's sake would end up in bonds.
 - A. A number of Paul's epistles were written from Rome.
 - B. God's minister may be bound but not God's word. **2TI 2:9.**
 - (1) Even the death of God's witness cannot silence his message. **HEB 11:4.**
 - (2) One might as well try to bind the sweet influences of the seven stars. **JOB 38:31.**
 - C. Some of the most influential gospel declarations have come from the confines of a prison, as witness Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, or the Baptist preachers overheard by James Madison in 1774.

Chapter 1

vs. 1-5.

1. A major element in this epistle is Paul's defense of his ministry, that his apostleship and gospel were directly from Jesus Christ. **vs. 1, 11-12.**
 - A. He was an apostle by *the will of God* (**1CO 1:1**), not his own will or other men's wills who elected him such, as was Matthias. **ACT 1:23-26.**
 - B. He was an apostle in truth, unlike the false apostles that were troubling the churches with a false gospel. **2CO 11:13-15.**
 - C. Paul's legitimacy as an apostle could have been verified by others.
 - (1) Ananias of Damascus could have done so. **ACT 9:10-17.**
 - (2) The prophets and teachers of the Antioch church could have done so. **ACT 13:1-4.**
 - (3) The Jerusalem apostles certainly could have done so. **GAL 2:8-9.**
 - (4) Ephesus was praised for *trying* (testing, proving) false apostles and exposing them. **REV 2:2.**
 - a. The Galatians had rather condemned Paul on the basis of false accusation, not seeking to verify his claims nor giving him a chance to defend himself.
 - b. They had essentially not tried the false teachers and found them liars but concluded Paul was a liar without proof.
 - c. How important it is to prove all things (**1TH 5:21**) and follow the Biblical protocol for judging others!
 - d. Legitimate witness invites scrutiny and investigation of its claims, which fosters conversion in honorable folks. **ACT 17:11-12.**
 - e. Pharisaism by contrast works by duplicity and stealth, dishonesty which Paul had to *renounce* to be a minister of Christ. **2CO 4:1-2.**
 - [1] Pharisaism's tactics expose their progenitor. **JOH 8:44.**
 - [2] Shun any system which preaches righteousness through double-talk, contradictions and such like.
 - (5) That Paul had converted them to Christ was the *seal of his apostleship* (c/w **1CO 9:1-2**); he had not converted them to Moses as did those who came later.
 - D. Others had been called to be apostles by Christ on *earth* but Paul's call was from *heaven*, "...by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead" (**v. 1**). His was a very special call.
 - (1) Seeing the resurrected Christ was a qualification for apostleship. **ACT 1:21-23.**
 - (2) Paul saw the resurrected Christ. **1CO 9:1.**
 - (3) Barnabas confirmed this. **ACT 9:27.**

- (4) Paul affirmed, "And last of all he was seen of me also,..." (**1CO 15:8**).
 - a. He was the last qualified apostle. No other after that could meet the conditions of **ACT 1:21-23**.
 - b. Any presumed apostle after Paul would be constrained to only preach his gospel (v. 9), so what would be the point?
 - c. After the apostolic era, we are to expect no subsequent appearance of the resurrected Christ until the Second Coming when all shall see him. **1PE 1:8; MAT 24:30; REV 1:7**.
 - d. We are not to walk by sight but by faith (**2CO 5:7**) which comes by hearing the word of God (**ROM 10:17**) and the word of God has been completed so we can use it to measure any prophet or teacher (**1JO 4:6**) which would be impossible if God was continually sending apostles with novel doctrines.
- E. That Paul says, "...and God the Father, who raised him from the dead" (v. 1) does more than simply declare the resurrection.
 - (1) Christ died in full faith of God's *promise* of life. **ACT 2:27-28**.
 - (2) The promise of God is the substance of the true gospel which Paul preached. **GAL 3:16-18; 4:28**.
 - (3) Salvation for eternity is by God's promise, not the sinner's performance. **TIT 1:2; 1JO 2:25**.
 - (4) God's raising of Christ from the dead was *for our justification* (**ROM 4:25**), therefore Moses, law-works and circumcision are irrelevant to our justification.
 - (5) God raised Christ from the dead to exalt Him over a new order.
 - a. God raised Him and gave Him *glory* (exaltation, one's highest state of magnificence or prosperity). **1PE 1:21**.
 - b. God raised Him to sit on David's throne (**ACT 2:30-33**), committing all power to Him in heaven and earth. **MAT 28:18; 1PE 3:22**.
 - c. God raised Him to be Head/King of the church. **EPH 1:20-23**.
 - d. That God raised Him from the dead presupposes a *new and living way* to relate to Him. **ROM 7:4-6; HEB 10:19-22**.
 - e. With a new government and body of law (the N.T.) came a new order which abolished "do and live" righteousness, fleshly circumcision as a sacrament or token of God's covenant, and fixed ceremonial high days, etc. (all of which the Galatians had adopted).
 - (6) Paul's introduction was therefore very appropriate to these churches which had been converted to the true gospel of promise, not the false gospel of law-works.
2. v. 2 indicates that this epistle was written before **2TI 4:10-11**.
 - A. That this epistle had to be addressed to more than one church speaks of the evangelistic zeal of the false teachers like the Pharisees. **MAT 23:15**.
 - B. There were at least two churches but the indications are that there were more than that and the *affection* (**GAL 4:17**) was not just local but *regional*. c/w **ACT 16:6; 18:23**.
 - (1) region: A realm or kingdom. *Obs.* b. A large tract of land; a country; a more or less defined portion of the earth's surface...
 - (2) The realm of Galatia was exquisitely blessed with multiple churches built on gospel truth, the very thing which exalts a nation (**PRO 14:34**) and preserves it. **PSA 9:17**.
 - a. The Galatian saints were squandering what they had been given for their spiritual salvation and tangentially for the temporal security of their region.
 - b. N.T. history is replete with many dissolved nations which had the gospel but sinned away its light.

- C. That Paul could write the same words to multiple churches also speaks of his consistency. His gospel was uniform. **1CO 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33.**
3. Though they had besmirched grace, Paul nevertheless salutes them with *grace and peace*. **v. 3.**
- A. Saving grace was the source of their initial faith. c/w **ACT 18:27; 2PE 1:1.**
- B. Saving grace was the source of the grace needed for victorious living. **JOH 1:16; ROM 5:2.**
- C. The grace of salvation is the source of our peace with God in eternity. c/w **COL 1:20.**
- D. The saint's practical enjoyment of peace very much depends on a conviction that Jesus did all the saving by Himself with no regard to the sinner's works.
- (1) Adding the impossible burden of law and works to grace only robs the soul of peace for it makes the saint a continual futile debtor to law. **GAL 5:3.**
- (2) Not attributing all good to God's grace invites vainglorious pride which foment division and strife among brethren, not peace. **1CO 4:6-7.**
- E. They had been destabilized by the imposition of Moses, circumcision and law as means of justification. Our hearts are to be *established with grace*, not with the ordinances of men. **HEB 13:9 c/w COL 2:20-23.**
4. Paul continues his sentence from **v. 3** concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:" (**v. 4**).
- A. Here is true salvation by grace: Christ's work on behalf of sinners according to God's will.
- (1) That it is deliverance from this *present* evil world implies deliverance to the *future* sinless world to come. **MAR 10:30 c/w 2PE 3:13.**
- (2) That is a world that sinners could never obtain but for Christ's work. **PSA 49:7-9 c/w HEB 9:12, 25-26; 10:12.**
- B. Salvation is not a matter of sinners giving themselves to God. All the giving is by Him.
- (1) God gave His only begotten Son for love's sake. **JOH 3:16.**
- (2) Christ in love gave Himself to God in sacrifice for us. **EPH 5:2.**
- (3) All was according to the will of God and our Father. **PSA 40:8; JOH 10:11, 17-18.**
- (4) Saving grace excludes the sinner's will. **ROM 9:16.**
- C. God delivered Christ into sinners' hands who delivered Him to death for our offences that we might be delivered from this world unto the world to come. **ROM 8:32; MAT 27:26; ROM 4:25.**
5. (**GAL 1:5**) To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
- A. Salvation by grace according to God's will and work excludes all sinners' boastings. **ROM 3:27; 4:1-2; EPH 2:8-9.**
- B. Remember that the sinner's *faith* is owing to the preceding saving grace of God. **ACT 18:27; 2PE 1:1.**
- C. The redeemed sinner's *good works* are owing to the preceding saving grace of God. **PHIL 2:12-13 c/w EPH 2:10.**
- D. In the world above, all glory is unto God and the Lamb. Nowhere is any credit given to angels or sinners for redemption. **REV 4:10-11; 5:6-14.**
- E. What God undertakes to do for His name's sake is a glory He will not share with another. **ISA 48:11.**
- F. Whereas the Judaizers were glorying in proselytizing others with Moses and circumcision (sinners' doings), Paul only gloried in Christ's cross (God's doing). **GAL 6:13-14.**
- G. Paul's prayer for the churches was that they may comprehend God's love through Christ to glorify God always. **EPH 3:14-21.**

vs. 6-12.

1. Paul here affirms the uniqueness, authority and source of the gospel he preached.
2. Deviations from and variants of his gospel constitute "...another gospel: Which is not another..." (**vs. 6-7**), but rather a *perversion* of the gospel.
 - A. As *there be that are called gods (1CO 8:5)* which *are no gods (GAL 4:8)*, and *another Jesus (2CO 11:4)* and *another spirit (2CO 11:4)* and *false Christs (MAT 24:24)* which are counterfeits, so there are *other gospels* which are not *the gospel*.
 - B. Some Catholic apologists have even affirmed "another Peter" because of the implications of **GAL 2:11-17**.
 - C. Churches should "...stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (**PHIL 1:27**).
 - D. The gospel is the glad tidings/good news (**ISA 61:1-2 c/w LUK 4:18; ROM 10:15**) which declares what God HAS done for sinners by Christ's death, burial and resurrection. **ACT 13:32-39 c/w 1PE 3:18; ROM 4:25**.
 - E. A gospel which says Christ saved none by His sacrifice but only made salvation possible is NOT good news since it denies the effectuality of His offering, per **HEB 10:14; 9:12**.
 - F. A gospel which says eternal salvation is left up to sinners is NOT good news since they are by nature incapable of effecting change in themselves. **MAT 12:33**.
 - G. A gospel which puts eternal salvation out of the reach of any who do not hear its message is NOT good news since they are obviously condemned in the absence of its message.
 - H. A gospel which says that Christ agonizes over the loss of multitudes for whom He died is NOT good news since it means that He failed in His appointed mission, per **JOH 6:37-39**.
 - (1) The most commonly preached Christs are failing Christs.
 - (2) How many say that Christ came to set up a divine kingdom but was thwarted?
 - (3) How many say that Christ was unable to preserve His true church?
 - (4) How many say that Christ was unable to preserve His word?
 - I. Any gospel which misrepresents the obedient, successful accomplishment of Jesus Christ's work for sinners' salvation and/or usurps His glory in saving them is NOT the gospel.
 - J. "Thinking that people have to do something to get eternal life is kind of like Satan telling Jesus that He could have all the kingdoms of the world when they were His already!" (Silas Ashworth)
3. The singularity of the gospel is also seen in its universality. This counters the heresy that there is a gospel to the Jews that differs from the gospel to the Gentiles.
 - A. Some have supposed that Paul's gospel of grace was to the Gentiles, but the other apostles preached a gospel of duty to the Jews.
 - (1) The assumption is that during the "church dispensation" Gentiles' sins are put away by grace but Jews' sins are put away by repentance and that the Jewish saints will not come under grace until the millennial kingdom age. Texts like **1PE 1:10, 13** are deemed to support this theory.
 - (2) Hard-core advocates of this system maintain that it is wrong for a Gentile Christian to pray as Jesus taught in **MAT 6:9-13** or to in general ask God's forgiveness for their sins.
 - (3) A sad irony of this heresy is that it is little more than a modernized form of the false gospel that had been foisted upon the Galatians which holds that God's real program is O.T. rather than N.T., that Christ needs Moses.
 - B. There is one common gospel for Jew and Gentile. **ROM 1:16-17; 10:12-16; 1CO 1:23-24**.
 - C. The gospel commands and blessings are the same for Jew and Gentile.

ACT 17:30-31; 2:38-39 c/w EPH 2:13; ACT 20:20-21.

D. Paul's gospel was the same as Peter's gospel.

ROM 2:16 c/w ACT 10:42; 2TI 2:8-9 c/w ACT 2:30-31; 4:2-3; 2PE 3:15-16.

E. The gospel of the kingdom IS the gospel of grace. **ACT 20:24-25.**

F. The gospel of salvation by grace and the justifying faith of Christ is for Jew and Gentile alike. **ACT 15:8-11; ROM 3:28-30.**

G. Perversions of the gospel are to be expected (**ACT 20:30**). The forces of darkness have always been very adept at producing counsellors to FRUSTRATE God's work.

EZR 4:4-5 c/w GAL 2:21.

4. Any "gospel" that differs from Paul's gospel invites a curse upon angels or men. **vs. 8-9.**

A. Paul is applying this to angels from heaven, not from hell. c/w **2CO 11:14.**

B. This shows the gospel is superior to angels.

(1) Angels desire to look into the gospel. **1PE 1:12.**

(2) We shall judge angels by the gospel. **1CO 6:3.**

(3) We read of an angel in heaven with one gospel. **REV 14:6.**

(4) The season of revelation via angels (**ACT 7:53; GAL 3:19; HEB 2:2**) is over since we have now the revelation of Jesus Christ Who is greater than angels.

HEB 1:1-4.

(5) No heaven-sent angel can deliver any other message than what has been revealed in Scripture. Therefore, the only thing an angel could tell someone today is "Read and believe the Bible."

5. Paul *marvelled* that these churches were *so soon removed* from their good foundation.

v. 6 c/w MAR 6:6.

A. They had a good start out of the blocks but had promptly stumbled. **GAL 5:7.**

B. Sometimes quick converts to the truth fall away just as quickly, which calls their nature into question. **MAR 4:5-6, 16-17.**

(1) They had been confounded and so removed. c/w **PRO 10:30; 1PE 2:6.**

(2) Such removal is owing to a heart problem. **ISA 29:13 c/w 2TI 4:3-4; PRO 17:4.**

(3) The false teachers had played to the weakness of the heart by *zealously affecting* them. **GAL 4:17.**

a. The Greek word translated "zealously affect(ed)" is *zeloo* (SRN # 2206) and means *to have warmth of feeling for or against*.

b. There were false teachers in Galatia that were manipulating the emotions of the Galatians *toward them* and *away from the truth*.

c. Be ever wary about being affected away from the truth by what *looks good* (**GEN 3:6**) or *sounds good* (**ROM 16:17-18**) but is not *God's good*.

d. Do not let yourself be duped by sleight of men and cunning craftiness which appeals to emotion and twists God's words in order to deceive. **EPH 4:14.**

e. When one's emotions are ruling the thoughts, there is instability and false teachers capitalize on unstable souls. **2PE 2:14.**

C. Discipleship is a serious venture which does not condone reversion. **LUK 9:62; 14:28-30.**

D. Christian experience is likened to a race that meets with challenges from within as well as without. **1CO 9:24-27; 2CO 7:5.**

E. As such, this race must be run *patiently*, with an eye always to reliance on Christ.

HEB 12:1-2; 6:11-12.

F. Thus, there is a pressing need to become firm and established in the faith so that we can counter the devil's corruptions. **1CO 15:58; 1PE 5:8-9; EPH 6:16.**

G. We need to be rooted DEEP in Christ and His word. Superficiality will not withstand the

trials and temptations of life. **COL 2:7; LUK 6:46-49.**

H. Those who remain steadfast to the faith of the gospel have the full assurance of eternal life. **COL 1:21-23; HEB 3:14; 1JO 2:24-25.**

I. Stability and maturity which stand fast against the winds of corruption come via the church, where brotherly fellowship, exhortation and ministerial guidance were ordained for that purpose. **EPH 4:11-14; HEB 10:23-25.**

(1) This manifests the error of so-called “gospel conversion” which does not plant someone in the house of God.

(2) Those who biblically come to Christ are *built up a spiritual house* which is his local church in this world. **1PE 2:4-5 c/w 1TI 3:15.**

(3) Those who are PLANTED IN the house of God flourish and bring forth enduring fruit. **PSA 92:13-14.**

6. “...but there be some that **trouble** you...” (v. 7). c/w **ACT 15:24.**

A. Tribulation attends godliness in Christ. **2TI 3:12.**

B. tribulate: To afflict; to oppress; to trouble greatly.

C. Tribulation may take many forms including doctrinal assaults. c/w **2TH 2:1-2.**

(1) The kingdom of God has survived and even flourished when physically troubled.

(2) Corruption from bad doctrine may ruin what persecution could not ruin.

a. The church may lose members to false teachers. **ACT 20:30; 2PE 2:1-2.**

b. Infections of bad doctrine may turn Christ against a church.

REV 2:12-16 c/w ISA 63:9-10.

D. Such troublers of the believers shall *bear their judgment*. **GAL 5:10.**

E. God will recompense tribulation to the saints' troublers. **2TH 1:6-9.**

7. As he found necessary to do from time to time (**ROM 15:15-17; 2CO 3:1; 13:3**), Paul here authenticates his office and gospel: that both came from God directly and stood in opposition to his past persuasion. **vs. 10-12.**

A. A minister ought to expect that there will be times when he must prove his calling.

NUM 16:1-5; 2CH 9:1; 2TI 2:15 c/w 1TI 4:15.

B. Paul's former errors did not diminish his apostolic rank. **1CO 15:9-10; 2CO 12:11.**

C. “For do I now persuade men or God?...” (v. 10).

(1) persuade: To induce (a person) to believe something; to lead to accept a statement, doctrine, fact, etc.; to win to a belief or assurance...

(2) Persuading is a fundamental purpose of teaching. **ACT 28:23.**

(3) False religion such as the Pharisaism which Paul now abhorred, presumes to instruct God and obligate God to men, as Job did.

JOB 40:2; 35:1-2 c/w MAR 7:1-13.

(4) (**1CO 2:16**) For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

(5) Paul now persuaded men about God to obligate men to Him. **2CO 5:20.**

D. Paul's former conversation of being a preacher of circumcision was being used as a lever against him by his opponents to persuade the Galatians. It is evident, though, that he was no longer aligned or in favor with the Judaizers. **GAL 5:11.**

(1) It is therefore obvious that one cannot be a promoter of Judaism/Pharisaism/circumcision and be the servant of Christ.

2CO 3:6; GAL 6:15.

a. “...with the destruction of the Temple the Sadducees disappeared altogether, leaving the regulation of all Jewish affairs in the hands of the Pharisees... Henceforth Jewish life was regulated by the teachings of the Pharisees; the

whole history of Judaism reconstructed from the Pharisaic point of view... Pharisaism shaped the character of Judaism and the life and thought of the Jew for all the future.”

(The Unedited Full Text of the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, art. *Pharisees*)

- b. Modern Judaism is simply modern Pharisaism, and the term “Judeo-Christian...” is contradictory and unbiblical.
 - c. The popular notion of a future age of Christianized Judaism where Christ and the N.T. are subordinated to Moses and the O.T. is a massive affront to the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel.
- (3) Paul had formerly been a *menpleaser* (c/w **EPH 6:6**). Ministers are entrusted with the gospel and must preach it according to God's dictates, not men's. **1TI 1:11; 1TH 2:4; MAT 6:24.**
- a. A minister must be more concerned with God's opinion of his efforts than that of his congregation's. **1CO 4:1-3; 1TI 1:19.**
 - b. The minister must press on willingly in the face of stout opposition from without. **EZE 2:6; 3:8-9; JER 1:17; 2TI 4:2-4.**
 - c. He must do likewise in the face of opposition from within. **2CO 7:5; 1CO 9:16-17.**
- E. Paul's gospel was not something that he had figured out or been taught by men (**vs. 11-12**). Christ revealed His will to Paul directly. **EPH 3:1-6.**
- (1) The authenticity of Paul's *apostleship* and his *gospel* are tied to his personal interfacing with the resurrected Jesus Christ. **1CO 15:8.**
- a. His claim that he had seen the risen Lord Who gave him a special commission could be confirmed by an independent source, Ananias. **ACT 9:15.**
 - b. His co-apostle, Barnabas (c/w **ACT 14:14**), a Levite (**ACT 4:36**) who would undoubtedly have appreciated Jewish circumcision, confirmed that Paul had seen Jesus and that Jesus had then spoken to him. **ACT 9:27.**
 - c. Barnabas obviously had no problem with Paul's gospel which downplayed circumcision. **GAL 2:1-3.**
 - d. Christ *appeared* to Paul on multiple occasions to *reveal* the truth to him. **ACT 26:16; 2CO 12:1, 7; GAL 2:2.**
- (2) Paul's gospel was in complete agreement with everything that the prophets had said. **ACT 3:24; 15:13-17; 26:22-23; ROM 1:1-2.**
- (3) The “mystery” previously “hidden” (**EPH 3:9**) was hidden in that its message was not revealed to the same degree as the superior light that was given to the apostles. **EPH 3:6 c/w 2PE 1:19; 1PE 1:10-12.**
- (4) It was hidden in that it was obscured by the law until Christ made an end of the law. **2CO 3:12-16; GAL 3:23.**
- (5) It was hidden in that the people did not believe what their own prophets had said. **JOH 5:46-47; ACT 13:27.**
- (6) It was (and is) hidden to those under Satan's blinding power. **2CO 4:3-4.**

vs. 13-14.

1. The news of Paul's notoriety had even spread as far as Galatia, perhaps by Paul himself at his first coming among them. As a Pharisee, he had been the most zealous of all. **PHIL 3:5-6; ACT 26:4-5, 9-11.**

- A. conversation: The action of living or having one's being in a place or among persons. Also *fig.* of one's spiritual being. *Obs.*
- B. Mind that Paul here twice calls his former persuasion, "...the Jews' religion..." (vs. 13-14). He does not call it the *religion of God* or the *religion of Moses*.
- (1) **"in the Jews' religion;** or 'in Judaism'. He was born of Jewish parents, had a Jewish education, was brought up under a Jewish doctor, in all the peculiarities of the Jewish religion, and so could have received no hints, not in a notional way, of the truths of the Gospel; which he might have done, had he been born of Christian parents, and had had a Christian education: besides, he was brought up in the religion of the Jews, not as it was founded and established by God, but as it was corrupted by them; who had lost the true sense of the oracles of God committed to them, the true use of sacrifices, and the end of the law; had added to it a load of human traditions; placed all religion in bare doing, and taught that justification and salvation lay in the observance of the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders: add to this, that he was brought up in the sect of the Jewish religion, Pharisaism, which was the straitest sect of it, and the most averse to Christ and his Gospel; so that he could never receive it, or have any disposition to it from hence; so far from it, that he appeals to the Galatians, as what they must have heard,"
(John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible)
- (2) The Pharisees were ambitious traveling missionaries. **MAT 23:15.**
- They traveled far and wide to win converts to Pharisaism.
 - Paul traveled far and wide to destroy opposition to Pharisaism.
ACT 22:19; 26:11.
 - They traveled far and wide to discredit or destroy the likes of Paul who forsook Pharisaism. **ACT 14:19.**
 - It was a sect of Pharisees in the church that was traveling far and wide to oppose Paul and corrupt churches with Pharisaism. **ACT 15:1, 5.**
 - The validity of religion is NOT measured by the zeal of its adherents nor by their evangelistic outreach but by the testimony of God.
ISA 8:20; ROM 3:4; 10:1-2.
 - NOTE: It is an especially toxic form of religious zeal that assumes that the eternal fate of men or the eternal plan of God is imperiled by differing religious opinion.
- C. Paul was convinced that what he was doing was for the glory of God, unwittingly fulfilling Christ's words. **MAT 23:34; JOH 16:2.**
- D. Paul discovered what his own teacher, Gamaliel, had warned of sometime earlier.
ACT 22:3 c/w ACT 5:34-40; 9:3-4.
- E. Christ takes actions towards His church very personally.
JOH 13:20; MAT 25:40, 45 c/w 12:46-50.
- F. Paul had persecuted the church "beyond measure" (v. 13), but he would suffer "above measure" for the faith he once destroyed. **ACT 9:16; 2CO 11:23-28.**
- Paul also received mercy above measure, that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ would be magnified and exemplified in him. **1TI 1:12-16; 2PE 3:9.**
 - Paul's dedication and devotion to Christ were unequalled. Such should be the case with forgiven great sinners. **LUK 7:40-47.**
 - Paul had a very personal grasp of the *measure* of salvation: "...the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge..." (**EPH 3:18-19**).

2. Paul had *profited* (v. 14) in his former religion, which had a *tradition* of equating gain with godliness and redemption. **1PE 1:18.**
 - A. profit: *intr.* To make progress; to advance, go forward; to improve, prosper, grow, increase (in some respect). *Obs.*
 - (1) Paul had advanced in the Jews' religion, and it is a general rule that systems promote those who further *their* interests, not the interests of something contrary.
 - a. He had been a Pharisee, "...the most straitest sect of our religion..." (**ACT 26:5**). To be a Pharisee was to be the epitome of the Jews' religion.
 - b. Pharisees were covetous (**LUK 16:14**) and self-enriching religious hypocrites (**MAT 23:14**) who used dishonesty, craftiness and deceitful handling of the word of God along with pseudo-miracles to further their gain. **2CO 4:3; MAT 12:27.**
 - c. To profit in the Jews' religion as a Pharisee was to be in a specialty that maximized the use of religion to prey upon the burdened consciences and ignorance of men for personal gain (**MAT 23:4-7**). They were the experts, the divines that dared not be gainsayed. **JOH 9:34.**
 - d. Covetousness was the one thing that Paul knew condemned him (**ROM 7:7**). He was a tentmaker (**ACT 18:3**) but one with ambition. The *traditions of the fathers* had spoiled him. c/w **COL 2:8.**
 - (2) Paul's post-conversion view on true riches stood in obvious contrast to his former persuasion. **EPH 1:7; 3:8, 16; HEB 11:25-26.**
 - B. The Jews (especially apostate Jews like the Pharisees) had a fixation on material prosperity, particularly the acquisition of gold and silver. **MAT 23:16-17.**
 - (1) Their financial drive proved to be their primary stumblingblock to the truth. **EZE 7:19; ROM 11:7-10.**
 - (2) They basically longed for the power of King Solomon, who "...made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones..." (**1KI 10:27**).
 - (3) The hexagram "Star of David" flag of the First Zionist Congress of 1897 was adopted as the emblem of the flag of the State of Israel in 1948 and has roots in their ancient Kabbalistic magic. It is overtly indistinguishable from the "Seal of Solomon" from Jewish tradition and Arabic/Muslim occultism which was used as an *amulet* (charm) or *talisman* (engraved object assumed to have occult powers of the planetary influences and celestial configurations under which it was made).
 - (4) As great as Solomon was, Jesus told the Jews concerning Himself, "...a greater than Solomon is here" (**MAT 12:42**).
 - C. Historically, the pursuit of wealth by the ungodly of them had been without scruples. **AMO 8:4-6; HOS 12:7-8; ZEC 11:4-5.**
 - D. These warped materialistic priorities found their way into the Jewish Christian church. **JAM 4:13; 5:1-6.**
 - E. The church had to be especially on guard against the advocates of Judaism who had ulterior motives to their ministries. **TIT 1:10-11; 2PE 2:3.**
 - F. True spiritual Christian Jews paid dearly to follow Christ. **HEB 10:32-34; ROM 15:26.**
 - G. The proof of Paul's ministry was not the same kind of proof that would have advanced him in the religion of the Jews. **2CO 6:4-10.**
 - H. Always beware the advocates of the "prosperity gospel" (**1TI 6:5-6**). They are the spiritual brothers of the Pharisees.
 - I. Remember that modern-day Judaism is the religion of the Pharisees. (The Unedited Full Text of the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, art. *Pharisees*, cited earlier in this series)

- (1) The dynamic of modern Judaism is therefore that of the Pharisees: wealth and the assumption that they are a special people who are “in” with God. c/w **JOH 8:39-41**.
 - (2) That many of them are decent, hard-working, educated people or that some may even be blameless before the law as Paul was (**PHIL 3:5**) does not alter the blind dynamic of their religion which is pro-Jew, pro-wealth, antichrist (**1JO 2:22**).
 - (3) A Jew who converted to Christ, Michael Brown, underscores what it was like growing up as a Jew in New York years ago.
 - a. He would often see the words, “Jesus saves” scrawled on walls, etc. but had no idea what that could even mean. It was an unfinished sentence and a foreign concept to him. Some Jews came up with a mocking bumper-sticker that said, “Jesus Saves and Moses Invests.”
 - b. A mid-1970’s Christian evangelistic campaign had a slogan, “I Found It.” Brown’s fellow grad-student, an Orthodox rabbi, countered that campaign with the slogan, “We Never Lost It” and explained to Brown, “We Jews do not need saving.”
 - c. At a dismal point in his life, Brown became painfully aware of his sinfulness and humbly turned to Christ! But these two anecdotes sum up modern Judaism.
 - d. <https://www.wnd.com/2020/04/jesus-saves-need-saving/>
 - (4) Only when an unbelieving Jew turns from lust and lucre *to the Lord* will the blindness be taken away (**2CO 3:16**) and the same may be said of men in general. **1TI 6:9-10**.
- J. Pharisaism/Judaism, loose secular or strict orthodox, is unable to save one unto the kingdom of heaven. **MAT 5:20**.
- (1) The only type of Pharisee that makes a good Christian is an ex-Pharisee like Paul who completely forsook that system (**PHIL 3:7-8**) and the same applies to someone in modern Judaism.
 - (2) The Pharisees which had gotten into the church without abandoning their Pharisaism were trouble for the church and the gospel. **ACT 15:24; GAL 1:7**.
 - a. A Jew might be one of God’s elect in Christ yet an enemy of the gospel. **ROM 11:28; PHIL 3:2-3, 18-19**.
 - b. How foolish (like the Galatians, **GAL 3:1**) are churches which cozy up to Judaism or Zionism and advance their errors for them!
 - c. To impose the abolished code of Moses’s religion upon N.T. believers or support the present or future political aspirations of Zionism does not curry favor with God. **2CH 19:2; HEB 13:9-13**.

vs. 15-16.

1. Paul here sets forth his conversion to Christ from the Jews’ religion and the bondage of sin’s deception.
 - A. As a Pharisee trusting in his own righteousness to justify him before God, he would have been convinced that he was free. **JOH 8:33**.
 - B. But his overlooking of the covetousness that condemned him before God made him also overlook that he was not free. **JOH 8:34**.
 - C. “None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free.” (J.W. von Goethe)

D. Only the truth of Jesus Christ can make someone free from this strong deception.

JOH 8:31-32.

- (1) The mind and will remain in bondage until one submits to the facts of his own corruption and of Christ's perfection.
- (2) The conscience of hypocrites is first *defiled* (**TIT 1:15**), then *seared* (**1TI 4:1-2**) to the point eventually that it is *past feeling* (**EPH 4:19**).
 - a. In this state, one is either convinced that he can do no wrong, or that it doesn't matter if he does wrong.
 - b. It may take a violent divine intervention to break one free of this bondage.

E. Paul was suddenly and violently interrupted by Christ and jarred out of his self-righteous deception.

- (1) The transition between **v. 14** and **v. 15** allows for no gradual conversion process, as when one man teaches another. **PSA 51:13.**
- (2) Paul seemed beyond man's reach but he was not beyond God's reach.
- (3) Paul was suddenly drafted into God's army. Sometimes the draft is what is needed to straighten out rebels and make them useful. **EPH 4:7-8 c/w PSA 68:18.**

2. These verses about the Damascus road experience (**ACT 9**) set forth Paul's conversion, not his regeneration.

A. Nowhere is it here stated or implied that Christ stopped Paul to regenerate him, make him a new creature with a new nature, pass him from spiritual death unto life, take up residence within Paul, make him into a child of God, etc.

- (1) The common theory of the sinner's reconciliation to God is that the sinner must be presented with an offer of the Son of God made effectual by the sinner's response (which variably would be confession, faith, baptism, sacraments, etc.).
 - a. This would mean that God halted Paul to REVEAL and OFFER His Son TO him.
 - b. But it says, "To reveal his Son IN me..." (not BY me nor THROUGH me).
 - c. The Son was already IN Paul and this needed to be revealed to him.
 - d. The Son being IN one is spiritual life which guarantees bodily resurrection unto life eternal. **ROM 8:9-11 c/w PHIL 3:20-21; COL 1:27.**
- (2) That Christ was in Paul shows that he was a regenerated child of God before his conversion. Regeneration and conversion are not the same thing.
 - a. regenerate: (v.) *trans.* In religious use: To cause to be born again in a spiritual sense; to invest with a new and higher spiritual nature.
 - b. convert: (v.) *trans.* To turn in mind, feeling, or conduct; to bring into another state (of mind, etc.).
 - c. As a natural man is generated passively by the will of a father, the new spiritual man is regenerated by the will of the heavenly Father so as to be made a son of God. **JOH 1:12-13.**
 - d. In conversion, the will and act of the regenerated man is required. This is the duty of those who are called to spiritual life by God's will and power when they are convicted by truth. **MAT 18:3; ACT 3:19.**
 - e. A regenerate man may not know he needs to be converted until instructed. **MAT 16:16 c/w 1JO 5:1 c/w LUK 22:31-32.**
 - f. **GAL 1:15-16** plainly state that two things occurred in Paul at some point *prior* to his arrest by God on the Damascus road where God revealed His Son in him: he was separated from his mother's womb and called by God's grace. The call by God's grace is the inward quickening of the spiritually

dead unto eternal life, resurrection power applied inwardly.

JOH 5:21, 25 c/w JOH 11:43-44 c/w EPH 2:1, 4-5 c/w 1PE 5:10.

- g. The purpose for Christ's arrest of Paul is further stated here: "...that I might preach him among the heathen..." (v. 16). The conversion of Paul was not to make him a son of God but to make him a *useful* son of God who would declare Christ's reconciliation of sinners unto the Gentiles.

ACT 26:16-18 c/w 2CO 5:18-19.

- h. That Paul was so vigorously fighting against Christ prior to conversion shows that he was one of those elect Jews that belonged to God yet an enemy of the gospel. **ROM 11:27-29.**
- i. Paul had been *kicking against the pricks* (**ACT 9:5**), the inward pricks that should provoke the regenerate heart to repentance. c/w **ACT 2:37.**
- j. In his blind Pharisaic zeal he had been fighting against his God unawares, as Jacob had once done. **GEN 32:24-32.**

- (3) These facts underscore a critical and fundamental theme of this epistle to the Gentiles: spiritual life comes from God alone by grace and precedes activity.

- a. One's activity is the evidence and result of life, not that which produces it.
- b. One breathes, moves, thinks because he IS alive, not to make himself alive.
- c. So also spiritual activity like faith, repentance, conversion, obedience and love of God in Christ are evidences, not causes, of spiritual life and justification before God. **ACT 13:39, 48.**
- d. Therefore, if the Galatians' repentance, faith, conversion to Christ, etc., were all manifest in them and proofs of their sonship to God and possession of eternal life, how could the lack of fleshly circumcision even be a factor relative to their eternal justification? **GAL 3:3.**
- e. New covenant faith concedes "live and do." The weak and unprofitable old covenant (**ROM 8:3; HEB 7:18**) was "do and live." **GAL 3:12.**

- B. Paul's words, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb..." further concur with the true purpose for Christ's arrest of him on the Damascus road.

- (1) First note that the phrase, "But when it pleased God..." is referring to his conversion experience.

- a. Conversion is at God's pleasure, not before. **LUK 24:16; ACT 14:16, 27; 2TI 2:24-25.**
- b. Since conversion is at God's pleasure, we should be cautious about concluding that the lack of good fruit today is certain evidence of no life or the possibility of future fruit. **LUK 13:6-9.**

- (2) Paul may have simply been acknowledging God's role in his natural birth. c/w **JOB 10:18; PSA 71:6.**

- (3) But here he is focusing on the reason for his conversion: to make him a minister.

- a. Jeremiah was ordained a prophet while in the womb. **JER 1:5.**
- b. Paul was similarly a *chosen vessel*. **ACT 9:15.**
- c. Paul applied the Messianic prophecy of **ISA 49:1-6** to his own ministry. **ACT 13:47.**
- d. In due time the Holy Ghost separated Paul to the ministry. **ACT 13:2.**
- e. He was thus by God's ordination separated from the womb, by the Holy Ghost's direction separated for the ministry, "...separated unto the gospel of God" (**ROM 1:1**). God's choice makes vessels of mercy and honour (**ROM 9:21-24**). All good comes from God's election.

- C. "...immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (v. 16).
- (1) What need is there for a conference when the instruction is clear and directly from the Source?
 - a. "Always drink upstream from the herd. Even the Water of Life is purest before it has input from a corrupt creation." (PWB)
 - b. Corruptible flesh and blood (**1CO 15:50**) had not revealed the truth to Paul: his gospel was "...not after man..." (**GAL 1:11-12**) so why seek confirmation of men?
 - c. NOTE: It is a general trend of our nature, when Scripture clearly commands us to change our thinking or conduct, to confer with men, not to confirm the Scripture, but to see if there might be some way of condemning it.
MAT 22:15.
 - d. Paul did not even then go up to Jerusalem to the apostles (**GAL 1:17**), whom he later observed *added nothing to him in conference* (**GAL 2:6**), so clear were both Christ's revelation to him and his appointment to be the minister to the Gentiles. **EPH 3:1-7.**
 - (2) Paul was impressed with an urgency upon having been arrested by Christ: "...immediately..."
 - a. He wasted no time in *washing away his sins in baptism* as a testimony of having been cleansed by Christ. **ACT 22:12-16 c/w MAR 1:40-44.**
 - [1] The *legal* cleansing of sinners from the guilt and eternal penalty of sin (death in the lake of fire, **REV 20:14-15**) was accomplished by Christ alone in His sacrificial work for the elect (**HEB 1:3; 9:12**). This was a washing by Christ's blood. **REV 1:5.**
 - [2] Baptism is a figure of that saving work of Christ "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (**ROM 4:25**) c/w **1PE 3:21.**
 - [3] There is a pardoning cleansing away of one's practical sins at baptism that remits penalty and gives one a clean slate to live as a new man. **ROM 6:3-6 c/w 1CO 6:9-11; HEB 10:21-22.**
 - b. When the call of God is clear, consultation with men must take a back seat to obedience. **LUK 9:59-60; PSA 119:60.**
 - c. Paul in doing so was in accord with the prophecy of **ISA 49** which he applied to himself in **ACT 13:47. ISA 49:8 c/w 2CO 6:2.**
 - d. The time for submission to God is when the call comes. Hesitancy or obstinacy at the water's edge invites wandering and misery.
HEB 3:7-11 c/w PRO 1:24-33.
 - e. One may delight in hearing the word of truth but not in submitting to it, which increases his condemnation.
EZE 33:30-33 c/w LUK 12:47-48; 2TI 3:6-7.

vs. 17-20.

1. Though the account in **Acts 9** doesn't mention it, shortly after his conversion, Paul went into Arabia (v. 17), where he likely "...increased the more in strength..." (**ACT 9:22**).
 - A. Perhaps this was a pilgrimage to bid goodbye to the Mosaic covenant. **GAL 4:24-25.**
 - B. But it may be that he went there to flex/hone his spiritual acumen for his commission of preaching Christ among the heathen (v. 16), in which case the "...Sun of righteousness..."

(**MAL 4:2**) was presented to the Arabians hundreds of years before the moon god, Allah, was elevated to monotheistic supremacy by Mohammed.

(1) NOTE: Muslims affirm that they can visit the tomb where the founder of their religion lies. Christians can't do that.

(2) If Paul did preach to the Arabians, there were no uncircumcised converted, since the first uncircumcised convert was Cornelius of Caesarea in **Acts 10**.

C. As with Moses, Elijah and Christ, prior to the heavy part of his ministry, Paul was, as it were, "...led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (**LUK 4:1**). c/w **ACT 9:6**.

D. It is a godly desire to separate temporarily from fellows to intermeddle with divine wisdom. **PRO 18:1**.

E. On the heels of his baptism at Damascus, "...straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues..." (**ACT 9:20**) to the Jews which were part of his commission. **ACT 9:15**.

(1) He retained a deep longing for the salvation of his own countrymen even well after he turned his ministry's focus to the Gentiles. **ROM 9:1-5; 10:1**.

(2) His hope was that the conversion of Gentiles would tick off Jews to not be left in the dust (**ROM 10:19; 11:13-14**) but they generally preferred to put him in the dust. **ACT 22:21-23**.

(3) An irony of Paul's dealings with the Galatians is that some of his own countrymen who had gotten into the church at Jerusalem were not fully into Christ but rather going about to con Gentile Christians into becoming as Jews. **GAL 2:14**.

2. Paul returned from Arabia to Damascus (v. 17) and confounded the Jews with his doctrine and understanding. **ACT 9:22**.

A. "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem..." (v. 18), which was owing to his having to escape the Jews at Damascus (**ACT 9:23-26**). Compare the "many days" and "three years" with **1KI 2:38-39**.

B. On that trip he saw only two apostles, Peter and James (vs. 18-19 c/w **ACT 9:27**) which seems odd but of that Paul affirmed, "...I lie not" (v. 20).

(1) Paul often had to buttress his credibility with such affirmations (**ROM 9:1; 2CO 11:30-31**) for it is common with men to surmise evil or doubt facts that are contrary to their experience.

(2) One could wonder as to what Peter might have thought of Paul's going unto the Gentile Arabians but by **Acts 10**, Peter would have clearer insights.

C. Here also Paul was helped by Barnabas (**ACT 9:27**), a faithful Levite who gave up earthly wealth for a higher cause (**ACT 4:36-37**) and who would be chosen of the Holy Ghost to be Paul's companion in evangelism. **ACT 13:2**.

D. The Christians at Jerusalem were anxious about Paul whose antagonism towards Christ had been so well known. **ACT 9:26**.

(1) Here is a critical issue of church membership: saints should be convinced that a work of grace has occurred in an individual who desires to be joined to the church, especially of the Pharisees. c/w **MAT 3:7-8**.

(2) Barnabas confirmed Paul's conversion. **ACT 9:27**.

E. Owing to Paul's bold and *sound speech which could not be condemned* (c/w **TIT 2:8**), "...they went about to slay him" (**ACT 9:29**).

(1) Denunciation is the second last resort of a defeated opponent; destruction is the last.

(2) The godly stop mouths by sound doctrine (**TIT 1:9-11**) but the wicked first stop their ears (**ACT 7:57**) and silence their critics carnally.

F. What Paul experienced in conversion and suffering gave rest, comfort and growth to the churches. **ACT 9:30-31**.

- (1) God knows that seasons of relief are needed. **1PE 5:10.**
- (2) Seasons of peace should promote the building of God's house. **1CH 22:9-10.**
- (3) Seasons of challenge need not halt the building of God's house.
EZR 4:23-24; 5:1-2 c/w HAG 1:2-4.
- (4) The word of God (by which the house of God is built numerically and spiritually) is to be advanced in all seasons. **2TI 4:2.**

vs. 21-24.

1. Having escaped Jerusalem, Paul came to Caesarea and Tarsus. **ACT 9:29-30.**
 - A. Tarsus was of Cilicia and Paul's hometown. **ACT 21:39.**
 - B. It is interesting that Paul passed through Caesarea where Cornelius the centurion lived.
ACT 10:1.
 - (1) No mention is made of Paul preaching or baptizing in Caesarea.
 - (2) No mention is made of Philip having a role in Cornelius' conversion, though he made Caesarea his home. **ACT 8:40; 21:8.**
 - (3) The conversion of Cornelius fell to Peter by the choice of God. **ACT 15:7.**
 - (4) Timing and divine will and providence are factors in evangelism. **ACT 16:6-10.**
 - C. Paul evidently abode at Tarsus until God opened the door of faith unto the uncircumcised Gentiles (**ACT 11:18, 25**) during which time Peter's activities in **ACT 9:32** began to lead him to Caesarea.
2. Paul "...was unknown by face to the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only..." (**vs. 22-23**).
 - A. This further underscored his declaration that he had not received his gospel by any other than Christ. **GAL 1:11-12, 16-17.**
 - B. Though there was no personal interfacing, yet the good news of Paul's conversion spread.
v. 23.
 - (1) Telecommunication technology was not needed.
 - (2) The knowledge of Jesus Christ Himself does not depend on personal interfacing with Him but on a current of information from reliable sources who did personally interface with Him. **1JO 1:1-3.**
3. The churches of Judaea did not have the whole story about Paul's conversion but they nevertheless *glorified God in Paul.* **v. 24 c/w 2CO 9:13.**
 - A. One should rejoice and glorify God for even limited portions of good news!
PSA 119:162; MAT 13:45-46; LUK 23:46-47.
 - B. Paul's post-conversion works were light for others glorifying God. **MAT 5:16.**
 - C. This fulfilled Paul's great hope for his life in Christ: that God would be glorified.
PHIL 1:20; GAL 6:14.
 - D. All good gifts and works that we may have are owing to God Who gives and enables.
JAM 1:17; 1CO 4:6-7; 1:26-31; 1PE 4:10-11.
 - E. Even our liberties are to be governed by whether God is glorified. **1CO 10:31.**
 - F. Christ sought not His own glory, but that of the Father. **JOH 8:50; 7:18.**
 - G. The very glory of God was at issue in the Galatian churches since they had strayed from the gospel of justification by God's pure grace unto one of justification by grace *plus* man's works (which robs God of glory).
 - (1) God is very jealous of His glory. **ISA 48:9-11.**
 - (2) In heaven, God alone is glorified for redeeming salvation. **REV 7:9-12.**

Chapter 2

The first half of this chapter is Paul's account of the great church council at Jerusalem (**ACT 15**). That council convened because of the Judaizers' infiltration of the Antioch church (**ACT 14:26 – 15:2**). It was for the express purpose of deciding what aspects of Mosaic law and ritual, (particularly circumcision) should be binding upon Gentile Christians and whether they should be conditions for eternal justification. Thus, its determinations had a direct application to the Galatians. Paul's gospel was there proven to be right and in the latter half of this chapter, contrary to his Judaizing opponents, he affirms justification by Christ's faith alone, a gift of God according to His election without the works of the law. This is *the true grace wherein believers stand*. c/w **1PE 1:1-5; 5:12-14**.

vs. 1-2.

1. Many years had passed since Paul's first journey to the Jerusalem church. He overlooks a mercy mission of charity to Jerusalem (**ACT 11:27-30; 12:25**) to get to the mission of greater importance: doctrine.
 - A. Paul does not neglect to instruct the Galatians about being ready and willing to help the poor and serve others. **GAL 2:10; 6:10**.
 - B. But Christians must be cautious to not exalt such charitable service above, or to the exclusion of doctrine. Doctrinal truth has precedence over serving others. **LUK 10:38-42**.
 - C. Charitable relief to others without doctrinal guidance may not be a service to them. **PRO 1:32; PSA 112:5**.
2. The Lord had made it clear to Paul at the time of his conversion that he should minister the gospel to the Gentiles. **ACT 26:16-18**.
 - A. However, it is interesting that before Paul was formally ordained (**ACT 13:2-3**), God chose Peter to have the honor of first preaching to and baptizing Gentiles. **ACT 10**.
 - B. Unlike Paul, Peter was one of those who had "...continued with Christ in His temptations" (**LUK 22:28**).
 - C. It seems only appropriate that when God "...opened the DOOR of faith unto the Gentiles" (**ACT 14:27**), that the man to whom had been committed the KEYS of the kingdom should be the one God used to do it. **MAT 16:18-19**.
 - D. It is also noteworthy that though Peter first ministered to the Gentiles, the great work of their conversion was entrusted to Paul.
 - (1) The honors of God's kingdom are shared honors. Some labored; others entered into their labors. **JOH 4:35-38**.
 - (2) Paul would not boast of things without his measure. **2CO 10:13-18**.
 - (3) Men are but tools in God's hands. It is Christ that builds His church and is worthy of the honor. **1CO 3:5-9 c/w LUK 17:7-10**.
3. Though it is not mentioned in **ACT 15**, Paul took Titus with him (v. 1) and this was an important detail. **GAL 2:3**.
4. Paul "...went up by revelation..." (v. 2) to Jerusalem. His movements were governed by God's word, not his own ideas. Men of faith are thus directed. **HEB 11:8 c/w 1KI 17:2-5; 8-9; 18:1-2**.
 - A. Paul's evangelistic efforts were by God's direction. **ACT 16:6-10**.
 - B. Running before the Lord can have sobering consequences. **JOS 9:14 c/w JDG 1:1-2**.
 - C. Consultation with scripture should direct our paths. **PRO 15:22; PSA 119:24; PRO 3:5-6**.
5. When he got to Jerusalem, Paul was careful to not publicly declare the gospel that he had been proclaiming (v. 2). The issue of circumcision, with 2000 years of Jewish history to its credit, was

a particularly volatile one, especially since so many of the Jewish Christians were still zealous for the law. **ACT 21:20.**

- A. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel he preached (**ROM 1:16**), but there are simply times when it is wise to limit speech. **PRO 17:27; ECC 9:17; JOH 16:12 c/w HEB 5:11.**
- B. To create a premature uproar might have thwarted the whole purpose of his trip. He wanted to obtain the spiritual liberation and the support of the Jewish brethren, not alienate them.
- C. Paul never wanted to abuse his power in the gospel. **1CO 9:18-23.**

vs. 3-5.

1. While at the council, a failed attempt was made by *false brethren* to force circumcision upon Titus (**vs. 3-4**) and these were Pharisees. **ACT 15:5.**
 - A. They had come in *privily* (In a privy manner; not openly or publicly; secretly, privately; stealthily; craftily). c/w **JUDE 1:4.**
 - (1) This continued the pattern of the "...spies, which should feign themselves just men..." (**LUK 20:20**).
 - (2) Such men "...privily shall bring in damnable heresies..." (**2PE 2:1**).
 - (3) Such men "...lie in wait to deceive..." (**EPH 4:14**).
 - (4) Truth does not need to hide itself under a deceptive cloak but evil does since its position cannot endure scrutiny.
 - (5) Nothing of Christ's doctrine was done in a corner, but openly. **JOH 18:20.**
 - (6) Some come into the church and go astray, others are led astray, others to lead astray.
 - (7) Faithful saints need not worry about surmising who among them might be the "plant" with an ulterior motive for they will be manifested in due time (**2TI 3:8-9**). Saints need only to be well-grounded in the truth, led by knowledge and reason rather than emotion, and humbly pure (**1PE 2:1-2; 1JO 2:11**) and they thus will know the true doctrine that sets error in sharp relief when it appears. **JOH 7:17.**
 - B. Regrettably, false prophets/teachers all too often find reservoirs prepared to receive their polluting doctrine. The unstable, morally weak and the disaffected are drawn to the tune of these Pied Pipers. **2PE 2:14; 2TI 4:2-4.**
 - C. Heretics (those who openly advance contrary doctrine) must be warned before rejection. **TIT 3:10.**
 - (1) They may be ignorantly advancing heresy and only need compassionate correction.
 - (2) But if they insist on opposing the truth (and themselves), they must be identified as heretics, disciplined and avoided (**TIT 3:10-11; ROM 16:17-18**). This the Galatians had failed to do and Paul's words in **ACT 20:29** resonate.
2. The abundant warnings about the leaven of the Pharisees were here confirmed. **MAT 16:6-12.**
3. True to form, these Pharisees were seeking to impose *unnecessary, unbearable burdens* upon redeemed saints by affixing O.T. law and ritual to grace to effectuate Christ's finished work of redemption. **MAT 23:4 c/w GAL 3:13.**
 - A. By this, they were indebting their "converts" to themselves for their eternal salvation and also for their good standing before God, which means that all Christ had done to redeem them and all Paul had done to perfect them with knowledge of that redemption were nothing without them (the Judaizers).
 - B. This is bondage to men and the impossible, not liberty. **GAL 5:1-3.**
4. No platform was given to the Pharisees to promote their heresy at the council. **v. 5.**
 - A. The church of Jesus Christ is not a vehicle for open-forum promotion of contrary opinions

like the heathen court of the Areopagites on Mars' hill (**ACT 17:19-21**). God is neither the author nor the condoner of confusion. **1CO 14:33; REV 2:20.**

- B. Heresy must be checked promptly lest it spread and infect others. **2TI 2:16-18; TIT1:10-11.**
- C. No pastor, having taken the oversight of a flock (**1PE 5:2**), should sit idly by while divisive doctrine scatters the sheep. **JOH 10:12; 1TI 1:3.**
- D. If need be, a pastor may require his congregation to make an oath concerning a point of doctrine which is being challenged. **HEB 6:16.**
- E. If a pastor is thought to be in error, it is the responsibility and province of church members to *search the scriptures* (**ACT 17:11**) to *prove all things* (**1TH 5:21**) and address the pastor *privately* to give him a chance to correct himself or correct them with sound doctrine. **TIT 1:9.**
- F. If the established teaching of a church is to be *publicly* called into question, there is one way to do so: the church court, not by subversive whispering or gainsaying.
 - (1) An elder/bishop/pastor who, being warned, yet insists on publicly advancing unbiblical doctrine, may with sufficient witnesses be formally accused and publicly censured. **1TI 5:19-20.**
 - (2) Assuming the charge and judgment were valid, such a minister is no longer *blameless* (**1TI 3:2**) and is henceforth disqualified of the office. c/w **1CO 9:27.**

vs. 6-10.

- 1. These verses make it plain that the Jerusalem council agreed with Paul's doctrine. As he said, they "...added nothing to me" (**v. 6**). They recognized his apostleship and gospel as valid and in no way implied that the one thing he lacked was the promotion of circumcision for justification.
- 2. Though the other apostles did precede him, they did not exceed him in authority and doctrine. **2CO 11:5-6.**
 - A. Lest any should think that position, office, or relationship precludes the fair judgment of a person's calling and labors, Paul reminds us, "...God accepteth no man's person..." (**v. 6**).
 - B. The man who is in agreement with God need not take a backseat to others of higher estimation. **JOB 32:9; PSA 119:100; 1TI 4:12.**
 - C. Impartiality is a Christian's responsibility at law, in the house of God and in secular life. **DEU 1:17; 1TI 5:21; JAM 2:1-4, 8-9; EPH 6:5-9.**
- 3. The events of the Jerusalem council were important and relevant to Paul's letter. **ACT 15:6-29.**
 - A. Peter reminded the church that when he first was sent to the house of Cornelius, God made it very clear to him and his Jewish companions that He had His children among the Gentiles (**ACT 15:6-9**). God demonstrated His acceptance of believing, uncircumcised (and as yet unbaptized) Gentiles as brethren by giving the Holy Ghost to them as He had done to the Jewish believers at Pentecost. **ACT 10:34-35, 44-45; 11:15-18.**
 - B. God indeed had ended the separation of Jew and Gentile as touching men's approach unto Himself and their inheritance in Christ. **ROM 3:29-30; EPH 2:11-18.**
 - (1) With the acceptance of uncircumcised Gentiles into the church, the significance of fleshly circumcision officially ended.
 - (2) The token of righteousness and acceptance with God is faith like Abraham had before he was circumcised. **ROM 4:9-12.**
 - C. Peter, noting that law was an impossible burden for Jews, concluded that it would be of no benefit for Gentile salvation either. Grace would save both. **ACT 15:10-11.**
 - D. Paul and Barnabas then gave further evidence that God was with them also in their work by

- the confirming miracles which attended their ministry. **ACT 15:12 c/w GAL 2:7-8; 3:5.**
- E. James then gave his assessment of the situation (**ACT 15:13-21**). He concluded that the incorporation of Gentiles into the church was exactly what the prophets had previously declared. **ACT 15:14-15.**
- (1) This great mystery of a common body and salvation not defined by genealogy, nation, circumcision or Moses's law was certainly revealed to the prophets, but not with present clarity. **EPH 3:3-6.**
 - a. Moses spoke of it. **DEU 32:21, 43 c/w ROM 10:19; 15:10.**
 - b. David spoke of it. **PSA 18:49; 117:1 c/w ROM 15:9, 11.**
 - c. Isaiah spoke of it.
ISA 55:5; 65:1 c/w ROM 10:20; ISA 11:10 c/w ROM 15:12.
 - d. Hosea spoke of it. **HOS 1:10; 2:23 c/w ROM 9:24-26.**
 - (2) Circumcision-free Christianity therefore was not a departure from Moses and the Prophets but the realization of their words.
- F. James made particular application of a prophesy of Amos which spoke of a rebuilding of a tabernacle of David. **ACT 15:15-17 c/w AMO 9:11-12.**
- (1) Dr. Scofield interpreted these passages as prophesying of a future re-gathering of Israel in their own land—the re-establishment of the Davidic monarchy:
“Dispensationally, this is the most important passage in the N.T. It gives the divine purpose for this age, and for the beginning of the next. (1) The taking out from among the Gentiles of a people for His name, the distinctive work of the present, or church-age. The church is the *ecclesia*---the 'called-out assembly.' Precisely this has been in progress since Pentecost. The gospel has never anywhere converted all, but everywhere has called out some. (2) 'After this [viz. the out-calling] I will return.' James quotes from Amos 9:11-12. The verses which follow in Amos describe the final regathering of Israel, which the other prophets invariably connect with the fulfilment of the Davidic Covenant (e.g. Isa.11:1, 10-12; Je.23:5-8). (3) 'And will build again the tabernacle of David,' i.e. re-establish the Davidic rule over Israel (2 Sa.7:8-17; Lk.1:31-33). (4) 'That the residue of men [Israelites] may seek after the Lord...'” (pp. 1169-70, Scofield Reference Bible)
 - (2) The “tabernacle of David” was not referring to an earthly Davidic political dynasty.
 - (3) The tabernacle of David preceded the later temple of Solomon which was still standing in all its glory on *Mt. Moriah* (**2CH 3:1**) at the time that Amos made this prophecy in the days of Jeroboam II before the Babylonian captivity. **AMO 1:1.**
 - (4) The tabernacle of David was set up on *Mt. Zion* to house the ark of the covenant where God communed with His people. **EXO 25:21-22; 1 KI 8:1.**
 - a. The tabernacle of David was a temporary alternative to the *tabernacle of the LORD* which was concurrently in Gibeon receiving typical Levitical offerings. **1CH 16:1, 39-40.**
 - b. There was therefore a temporary overlap of Davidic-style worship without Levitical appurtenances and Mosaic worship with them, a curious preview of 1st C. Jewish religion in Judea.
 - c. *Mt. Zion* is typical of the SPIRITUAL city of God (**HEB 12:22; REV 14:1**): we do not come to God in spiritual *Mt. Moriah* nor spiritual Gibeon.
 - (5) The tabernacle of David enjoyed a form of worship which was a departure from the Mosaic service, like the church. It was a joyous time of blessing to man and woman with sacrifices of praise. **1CH 16:1-3, 35-36 c/w GAL 3:28; HEB 13:15.**
 - (6) According to Amos's prophecy, at the time of this rebuilding of the tabernacle of

David, Israel would not be regathered in their land, but scattered among the nations!
AMO 9:9-11 c/w ACT 2:5; JAM 1:1.

- (7) The “residue of men” (**ACT 15:17**) who would seek the Lord when David's tabernacle was rebuilt would not be Israelites as Dr. Scofield asserts, but rather “the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen...” (**AMO 9:12**). This is the gathering in of the elect Gentiles into God's house, the church (c/w **ISA 2:1-3**), the actual means by which Israel would possess Gentiles.
- (8) The focus of the Jerusalem council was not the restoration of Jews in their land, but the conversion of Gentiles to the gospel: “...And to THIS...” (**ACT 15:14-15**).
- (9) The Lord had promised David that his seed would build a house (He said) “...for my name...” (**2SAM 7:12-13**).
 - a. James points to the calling out of elect Gentiles as just that (**ACT 15:14**).
 - b. Christ was indeed building God's house: the church comprised of Jew and Gentile in a common body of faith. **MAT 16:18 c/w EPH 2:18-22.**

G. James's *sentence* (**ACT 15:19-21**) was adopted by the council, who then sent an *epistle*, (**v. 30**) to that effect unto the Gentile believers (**vs. 22-23**).

- (1) NOTE: This is an *apostolic epistle* recorded by Luke: his is the only record of it.
- (2) The precedent was here established: the law of Moses had been fulfilled; its time and purpose were completed and it was on the way out. **GAL 3:19; HEB 8:13.**

H. It may also be noted that during the entire record of the Jerusalem council, the argument of Pedobaptists that baptism has “come in the room of circumcision” as an “infallible sign of God's covenant of election” was never suggested as a reason to not obligate Gentiles to be circumcised. The notion that infants should be baptized in the N.T. because baby boys were circumcised in the O.T. suffers some heavy damage here.

4. As Paul rehearses the determination of the Jerusalem council, he refers to James, Peter (Cephas, **JOH 1:42**) and John as *pillars*. **v. 9.**

A. Pillars are prominent supports in great structures. So it is with the apostles.
EPH 2:20; REV 21:14.

B. The man who walks by faith will be made a pillar in God's house.
1JO 5:4-5 c/w REV 3:12; JER 1:18.

C. It is a comfort to the faithful who overcome temptations and trials that, as in times past, the King stands by the pillar. **2KI 11:14; 23:3; ACT 27:23; 2TI 4:17; MAT 28:20.**

5. The council had also emphasized the support of the poor, who shall be with us always (in spite of utopian dreamers). **v. 10 c/w MAT 26:11; PRO 28:27.**

A. There may be poor saints. **ROM 15:26.**

B. The Good Samaritan shows us general relief. **LUK 10:30-36 c/w GAL 6:10.**

vs. 11-14.

1. Of all people to have so done, Peter succumbed to the pressure of the Jews. Even the best of men are but men at best. **JOH 13:37-38; 1CO 10:12.**

A. At issue here was an inconsistency. Peter had been willing to live as a Gentile (eating bacon, shellfish, etc. in their homes) but by his turnaround example was compelling Gentiles to live as Jews.

- (1) Peter knew full well (as did others) that the Holy Spirit had made clear that Jew and uncircumcised Gentile believers alike are saved by grace and accepted by God. The Jerusalem council in **ACT 15** had confirmed this and issued *decrees* (**ACT 16:4**) which caused rejoicing and consolation in Antioch. **ACT 15:30-31.**

- (2) The issue here was whether Gentile Christians should be admitted to *social intercourse* with Jewish Christians without conforming to Jewish institutions (**v. 12 c/w ACT 11:3**). Peter ate with Gentiles until the Jews arrived, then stopped doing so. What kind of message was this sending to the Gentile believers? What were they? Chopped bacon?
- (3) Peter and others there "...walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel..." (**v. 14**). Practical Christianity must be *in accord with* the truth of Christ: our intercourse with others should be congruent with the tenets of our faith.
- (4) An analogy to this might be if white Christians came to the realization that black Christians had as much a part in Christ as themselves (or vice-versa) but could not bear social intercourse with them.
- (5) NOTE: It is only the fullness of the gospel that delivers men from bondage to sin and from foolish prejudices that run contrary to grace.
- B. This event most likely occurred after the Jerusalem council, when Paul and Barnabas returned to, "...and continued in Antioch..." (**ACT 15:35**).
 - (1) It probably happened in "some days" between **ACT 15:35** and **ACT 15:36**.
 - (2) Barnabas would have caught indirect fire from Paul and it may be wondered if that reproof had some influence on Barnabas's insistence in the John Mark affair that followed. **ACT 15:36-41**.
 - a. A prophet was "...subject to like passions as WE are..." said the Apostle James (**JAM 5:17**). Prophets and apostles were human.
 - b. Weakness and temptation of all kinds are common to men (**PRO 27:19**). Not even apostleship guaranteed against succumbing to the influence of the old man. **ROM 7:8, 18-19**.
 - c. Beware of thinking/saying, "I would never..." c/w **MAR 14:29-31**.
- C. Because the Papists value the Apostle Peter so highly, they have tended to argue that this was a different Peter (perhaps one of the seventy disciples, **LUK 10:1**).
 - (1) The context and grammar clearly show that there is only one Peter under consideration: the Apostle Peter. **GAL 1:18-19; 2:7-11**.
 - (2) Here was a lapse in judgment from which Peter (and Barnabas and others) needed conversion. **LUK 22:32 c/w JAM 5:19**.
- D. Peter's "...fearing them which were of the circumcision" (**v. 12**) was a great departure from his earlier boldness concerning the uncircumcision. **ACT 10:45-48; 11:1-3; 15:5-11**.
 - (1) The fear of man brings a snare. **PRO 29:25**.
 - (2) The Judaizers themselves were letting the fear of man dictate their thinking and actions. **GAL 6:12-13**.
- E. The powerful sway of the Pharisees and apostate Jews deterred many from following Christ. **MAT 23:13; JOH 9:22; 12:42**.
- F. Politicians were prone to pacifying the powerful Jewish element in the land. **LUK 23:23-24; ACT 12:3; 24:27; 25:9**.
- G. In a sense, this remains a persuasive factor to this day. Many professing Christians mistakenly endorse Pharisee religion based upon a faulty interpretation of Scripture. **GEN 12:3 c/w GAL 3:7-9**.
2. Peter had been given an exalted position as an apostle and elder. He that walks with a full cup must walk very level. **ECC 10:1; JAM 3:1**.
 - A. See here the terrible consequences that a bad example in leadership brings and thus, the responsibility incumbent upon a man of God to stand fast under pressure. **EXO 32:1-2**.
 - B. Peter's bad example was all that others needed to give in to their fears and weaknesses

(v. 13). Fear is infectious and hinders the armies of Christ (**JOS 14:8; DEU 20:8**). Leaven spreads quickly. **GAL 5:9; 2TI 2:17-18; HEB 12:15**.

C. Peter and those that followed his example had been guilty of *dissimulation*, an error consistent with Pharisaic influence. **LUK 12:1 c/w ROM 12:9**.

(1) dissimulation: The action of dissimulating or dissembling; concealment of what really is, under a feigned semblance of something different; feigning, hypocrisy.

(2) They had surrendered gospel principle and practice to the interests of the flesh, making religion a hollow set of platitudes.

3. Paul withstood Peter "...to the face..." (v. 11). One of the hardest things a Christian must do is confront an errant brother or sister to their face. But, it must be done. **LEV 19:17; PRO 27:5**.

A. A wise man will respond favorably to godly reproof, though he may initially resent it. **PRO 9:8; 28:23**.

B. This underscores the benefits of corporate fellowship and the ministry of fellow-saints. **HEB 3:13; ECC 4:9-10**.

4. An apparent problem arises here. If Peter's offence was open and evident, why was he not disciplined for a common-report transgression?

A. Hypocrisy is not listed as an excludable offence in **ROM 1:29-32; 1CO 6:9-10; GAL 5:19-21; EPH 5:3-5; 2TI 3:1-5**.

B. For a professing Christian, ANY conduct contrary to his profession would be hypocrisy. We are all hypocrites since we subscribe to a perfect standard of righteousness, and are especially hypocrites when we think we could never be wrong.

C. It does not say that Peter was blamed, but that "...he was to be blamed" (v. 11). The phrase "was to be" implies futurity or potential. c/w **ACT 21:37; 2CO 3:7**.

D. If Peter were to be charged at all for his actions here, it would have to be with heresy. Peter was creating a division or schism in the body of Christ, which things are borne of heresy. **ROM 16:17; 1CO 11:18-19**.

E. Heretics are allowed two admonitions before action is taken against them. **TIT 3:10**.

vs. 15-21.

1. Paul here says to Peter, "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles," (v. 15).

A. Paul is certainly not insinuating that Jews have no sin. c/w **ROM 3:9**.

B. A contrast is simply being drawn between the Jews to whom pertained the adoption, glory, covenants, law, and promises (**ROM 9:4**) and the late-comer Gentiles who were "...grafted in among them..." (**ROM 11:17**) and were spiritually Jews. **ROM 2:28-29**.

(1) The gospel was first to the Jews informing them of Christ's justifying work. Jews were the ones who "...first trusted in Christ" (**EPH 1:12**). c/w **ACT 3:26**.

(2) The Jewish believers' preeminence in time, original favors and *knowledge* was all the more reason for them to not waver on the futility of law-works for spiritual justification. v. 16 c/w **ROM 3:19-20**.

C. Sidebar: Some (like Campbellites) deny the doctrine of inherent sin and affirm that **EPH 2:1-3** ("...were by nature the children of wrath...") is speaking of *acquired* nature, as when one does something long enough that it becomes *second nature* to him. Such reasoning would be ill-applied to "We who are Jews by nature..." (**GAL 2:15**), or "...uncircumcision which is by nature..." (**ROM 2:27**).

2. These verses openly present the glorious doctrine of justification. The word *justify* and its different cognates (justifier, justification, justified, justifieth, justifying) are used in two different senses in Scripture.

- A. Sometimes, as in **DEU 25:1; ROM 5:18**, it is used in this sense:
 - (1) “Made just or right; made or accounted righteous; To absolve, acquit, exculpate; *spec. in Theology*, to declare free from the penalty of sin on the ground of Christ's righteousness, or to make inherently righteous by the infusion of grace.”
 - (2) In such application, the object is the passive receiver of the justification.
 - B. Sometimes, as in **PSA 51:4; LUK 7:29**, this sense is intended:
 - (1) “To show (a person or action) to be just or in the right; to prove or maintain the righteousness or innocence of; to vindicate.”
 - (2) In such application, the subject does the justifying. A man may justify himself, another, a thing (in the abstract: a concept, proposition, theory, conclusion, etc.).
3. The underlying question concerning eternal justification that must be addressed is how this comes to pass for the spiritually dead, alienated sinner. Is it something that is done for him? Or, is it something that he procures for himself by fulfilling certain conditions? Or, is it a combination of these? Is it Christ's personal faith or man's faith that justifies sinners in the first sense of *justify* (above)?
- A. Scripture clearly teaches that the eternal salvation of fallen sinners (which includes their justification, **ROM 8:29-30**) is not based nor dependent upon their works. It is not:
 - (1) *of* works. **ROM 9:11; 11:6; EPH 2:8-9.**
 - (2) *by* works. **TIT 3:5.**
 - (3) *according to* works. **2TI 1:9.**
 - (4) *with* works. **ROM 4:6.**
 - B. work: Something that is or was done; what a person does or did.
 - C. As **GAL 2:16** states, justification (in the sense of absolution) does not come by the sinner keeping the law. **ROM 3:20-21; GAL 3:11.**
 - (1) By contrast, justification (in the sense of showing one to be just or in the right) does come by keeping the law. **ROM 2:13; JAM 2:21-25.**
 - (2) He who walks in God's statutes and keeps His judgments is *just* (**EZE 18:9**) and is to be adjudged as such, i.e., *justified*. **DEU 25:1.**
 - D. If **GAL 2:16** is teaching that eternal justification (in the sense of absolving and declaring free from the penalty of sin) is by our personal *faith* (belief, trust, confidence) which we exercise, problems are created.
 - (1) Faith which men exercise is something they *do* and is therefore a *work*. **ACT 16:30-31; JOH 6:28-29.**
 - (2) Faith is a doing / work of the law. **MAT 23:23.**
 - a. Belief of the gospel was a work of the law. **HEB 3:17-4:2.**
 - b. The faith of the law even included belief, trust or confidence in Christ. **JOH 8:56; HEB 11:24-26.**
 - (3) Belief in Jesus Christ is the *keeping of a commandment* and thus we would end up again relying on our works for justification. **1JO 3:23.**
 - (4) If our personal faith that we exercise when we believe the gospel of Jesus Christ (an act of obedience, **ROM 16:26**) is a necessary condition to procure our eternal justification, then our justification is not *free*, a position which Scripture flatly denies. **ROM 3:24; 5:18.**
 - a. free: (Of a gift): Given out of liberality or generosity (not in return or requital for something else).
 - b. gift: Something, the possession of which is transferred to another without the expectation or receipt of an equivalent; a donation, present.
 - c. The *gift* of eternal life (**ROM 6:23**) is commonly assumed to be only an

offer (a holding forth or presenting for acceptance; an expression of intention or willingness to give or do something conditionally on the assent of the person addressed; a proposal). But an offer is NOT a transfer of possession. An offer may be rejected but not a gift, as when someone gives another a black eye, a cold, an inheritance, or a paid-off title to property.

- (5) If our obedience is a requirement to procure eternal justification, then justification comes by the obedience of more than one, which Scripture also denies.

ISA 53:11 c/w ROM 5:17-19 c/w HEB 1:3; 1PE 2:24.

E. The person who truly believes the gospel of Jesus Christ is someone who is already a quickened child of God in possession of eternal life. **JOH 5:24.**

F. If a person truly believes the good news that "...Christ is the end of the law for righteousness..." (**ROM 10:4**) and acts accordingly, he IS justified. **ACT 13:39.**

4. Consider that the term "faith of Christ" (**ROM 3:22; GAL 2:16, 20; 3:22; PHIL 3:9**) means just what it would appear to say: the faith which Christ Himself possessed and exercised.

A. Jesus Christ was a Man of faith. **HEB 2:13 c/w MAT 27:43.**

- (1) Jesus always pleased God, which cannot be done without faith.

JOH 8:29 c/w HEB 11:6.

- (2) Everything Jesus did or said was by faith, even when He cursed. **MAT 21:19-21.**

- (3) Christ fulfilled the law, which required faith. **MAT 5:17 c/w MAT 23:23.**

B. Christ was *faithful* (full of, or characterized by faith) in that He fully discharged His appointed duties, even unto death. **JOH 6:37-39 c/w JOH 10:17-18; PHIL 2:8.**

C. Christ was the epitome of the *faith with works* James describes. **JAM 2:17-18.**

D. All that Christ did by faith prior to His death were things in which He was personally active: keeping the law, preaching, reproof, miracles, prayers, singing praise, etc.

- (1) But the faith He had upon the cross was purely in God's promise to end His suffering and not suffer His flesh to see corruption. **ACT 2:25-27.**

- (2) This was a passive submission to God Who promised, and so He could *commend* (give in trust or charge, deliver to one's care or keeping; to commit, entrust) His spirit to God. **LUK 23:46.**

- (3) We too are called to not only by faith do what is right (faith with works), but to trust God to do what He has promised where it is beyond our power (faith that God will work). **PRO 3:5-6; HEB 11:17-19 c/w ROM 4:19-25.**

E. Having faithfully discharged His duties, He took the sin of the elect upon Himself, died in their stead, and rose again for their justification (**ROM 4:25**). He took away our sin and gave us His righteousness. **2CO 5:21.**

F. Thus, saints should desire to BE found in Him having a righteousness "...which is through the faith of Christ" (**PHIL 3:9**), not their own faith (which is a law-work). **EPH 2:8-9.**

- (1) Compare desire "...to BE found in Him..." (**PHIL 3:9**) with "...we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might BE justified by the faith of Christ..." (**GAL 2:16**).

a. Compare the use of the word "be" in **GAL 2:16-17** with "be" in **2CO 6:14-18; MAT 5:44-45.**

b. These texts are obviously not setting forth conditions to *procure* sonship to God since they are instructions to believing disciples who ARE sons of God. These are instructions to God's children how to live, not how to acquire life.

c. Similarly, **GAL 2:16** concerns how *God's children* ought to believe and act in order to properly identify with God through Christ.

- (2) God *seeks* true worshippers (**JOH 4:23-24**) Who give Christ all the glory in salvation, having NO confidence in the flesh (**PHIL 3:3**) but *finds* many whose

faith is really in their own faith and/or works: what Jesus did on Calvary was inadequate to save sinners---it's really up to the sinner.

- (3) God *seeks* men after His own heart (**1SAM 13:14**). How do you want to *be found in Him*: trusting in Christ's work of faith for sinners, or trusting in something you did to procure righteousness and justification?

G. This is justification by the faith OF Jesus Christ.

H. An objection may be made from **GAL 3:26**.

- (1) Sometimes the phrase "faith in Christ" does in fact refer to the trust that men personally exercise when they believe the gospel. **EPH 1:12-15; COL 1:4; 2:5**.
(2) But the expression "faith in" can also mean the faith that *indwells* one *personally* and *locationally*. **2TI 1:5; 1TI 1:14; 3:13**.
(3) It can only be in this second sense that **GAL 3:26** is properly understood. A sinner is a forgiven, justified child of God by means of the faith that is *in* Christ *personally* and *locationally* which He possesses and exercises.

I. NOTE: Jesus Christ was/is not only the FIRST Man of pure faith in God, He was/is the ONLY Man of pure faith in God. It took more than the faith of Moses, the faith of Abraham or your faith to fully please God. Sinners are truly saved by the faith of Christ Who fully pleased God (**JOH 8:29**), even to His sacrificial death.

ISA 53:10-11; HEB 10:5-10.

5. In **vs. 17-18**, Paul continues to address Peter (and by extension the other Jewish Christians who were there) on the implications of the doctrine of grace which the doctrine of works-justification *frustrates*, per **v. 21**.

A. While the old-school Judaizers *futilely* vied for justification by keeping the law (*for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified*, **v. 16**), true N.T. Christians had surrendered themselves to justification by Jesus Christ Whose obedience *alone* made men righteous, per **ROM 5:19**.

B. Since the saving justification was all the work of Christ on behalf of undeserving, powerless, passive sinners corrupt in nature and practice who receive the gift of eternal life from Him in spite of themselves, that salvation is entirely by *grace*.

- (1) grace: Favour, favourable or benignant regard or its manifestation (now only on the part of a superior); favour or goodwill, in contradistinction to right or obligation, as the ground of a concession.
(2) Any system that presumes a sinner to *oblige* God to justify is NOT grace since such would be a reward reckoned of debt. **ROM 4:4**.

C. An objector might reason that if the sinner's law-works are irrelevant to eternal justification and righteousness, then grace is a license to sin and Jesus Christ could be charged with being the minister of sin. God forbid! **v. 17**.

- (1) This was a common charge against Paul's gospel of grace. **ROM 3:5-8**.
(2) Grace does not condone sin but teaches against it. **TIT 2:11-12; ROM 6:1-2**.
(3) The faith of Christ does not make void law but *establishes* (render stable or firm; ratify, confirm, validate) it. **ROM 3:30-31**.
(4) Those who exploit grace unto sin are condemned, ungodly. **JUDE 1:4; ROM 3:8**.
(5) NOTE: Believers will from time to time be found sinners (**ROM 7:19**) but they have an Advocate in Christ and a throne of grace for mercy on confession. **HEB 4:16 c/w 1JO 2:1; 1:9**.

D. In **v. 18**, Paul makes clear that the only accountable party when one sins is self, certainly not Christ. c/w **JAM 1:13-14**.

- (1) destroy: To pull down or undo (that which has been built); to demolish, raze to the

ground.

- (2) Paul had once been a builder after the manner of **ACT 4:11**, building a system of religion by *sophistry* (specious but fallacious reasoning; employment of arguments which are intentionally deceptive). **2CO 4:2**.
- (3) Paul had been a self-righteous Pharisee, building false hope of justification upon his works and credentials. **PHIL 3:4-6**.
- (4) Upon conversion, he *destroyed* those delusions in deference to Christ (**PHIL 3:7-9**). Conversion is a holy violence of *casting down* unbiblical thoughts. **MAT 11:12 c/w LUK 16:16 c/w 2CO 10:4-5**.
- (5) He not only had destroyed his sophistry and the covetousness that condemned him (**ROM 7:7**) but also destroyed any notion of “do and live” righteousness to justify a sinner before God. **GAL 3:11-12**.
- (6) For Paul to rebuild a sin or bad doctrine which he had destroyed would make him a transgressor, an apostate per **HEB 10:38-39**.
- (7) Peter and the other Jewish Christians who were dissembling (**GAL 2:13**) in their treatment of Gentile saints at Antioch were flirting with a *rebuilding* of the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile which Christ destroyed by His cross and which they had destroyed by preaching and determination. **ACT 15:9-11, 19-22; EPH 2:14-18**.
- (8) NOTE: A definition of *destroy* is “to bring to nought, put an end to; to do away with, annihilate (any institution, condition, state, quality, or thing immaterial).
 - a. Christ made an end of the Law with its “do and live” nature and its peculiar institutions, replacing it with a New Testament. **2CO 3:13; EPH 2:15; COL 2:14**.
 - b. The Judaized Dispensationalists affirm that Christ intends to rebuild that which He destroyed by restoring the Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices. Wouldn’t that therefore make Him a transgressor, dishonoring the blood of His own testament and voiding His priesthood? **HEB 8:4**.
- (9) Paul’s reasoning with Peter was certainly relevant as a warning to these Galatian saints who had abandoned former follies in being converted to Christ but were turning again to them. **GAL 4:8-10**.
 - a. Works-righteousness was a commonality of Mosaic and pagan religion, as was the observing of holy-days (holidays). Paul deems it all bondage.
 - b. But such is a bondage that the flesh actually desires, falsely assuming it to be liberty.
 - c. “None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free.” (J.W. von Goethe)
 - d. (**GAL 5:1**) Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

6. In **vs. 19-21**, Paul emphasizes the fact that the law, with all of its ineffective sacrifices, ordinances and impossible requirements (**ACT 15:10; GAL 3:10; HEB 10:1-4**) had served its purpose, and its purpose was never to produce the righteousness of God in sinners.

A. Sinners might be credited with righteousness for *acts* of righteousness that conformed to God’s law (**DEU 6:24-25**) but a nature of sin interrupted by occasional acts of righteousness is NOT the righteousness of God Who “...is righteous in ALL his works which he doeth...” (**DAN 9:14**) and “...the judgments of the LORD are true and RIGHTEOUS ALTOGETHER” (**PSA 19:9**).

- (1) Further (as Paul became keenly convicted of in his conscience), heart sins are as

- guiltful as sins in word and action (**ROM 7:7-9**). Mind that some Jewish writers have held that texts like **PSA 66:18** should be interpreted as meaning that God gives no heed to internal sin.
- (2) Further (as Paul also came to realize), being *blameless* (without censure / judicial sentence) is not the same as being *sinless*. **PHIL 3:6-7**.
 - a. One can sin but not get caught, or not charged, or be wrongfully acquitted, and so be blameless.
 - b. The sentence of the law dealt with words and actions, not thoughts. One might be an outward keeper of the law (and thus blameless) yet corrupt inwardly and condemned by God as a sinner. A mute, paralyzed man on a ventilator and feeding tube can still sin.
 - (3) As Christians, we need to avoid muddy thinking such as this. Cleansing must begin within and then worked out. **MAT 23:26; JAM 4:7-8; PHIL 2:12-13**.
- B. To revert to the Law's form as a standard of life and practice or rely upon keeping its commandments to procure the righteousness of God and eternal life would be to deny the reality of what Christ did on the cross and in the resurrection. **ROM 4:25**.
- C. The law most certainly did not procure the righteousness of God.
 - (1) It rather worked condemnation and wrath. **ROM 3:19; 4:15; 5:19; 7:7-11**.
 - (2) It *made nothing perfect*. **HEB 7:19; 9:9; 10:1**.
 - (3) It was the *ministration of death*. **2CO 3:7**.
- D. The problem was not with the law, but with man. **ROM 7:12-14; 8:3; HEB 8:7-8**.
 - (1) The law could only regulate sin's outbreaks, not remove sin itself.
 - (2) The sacrifices of the law were not only ineffective, they were offered by priests who themselves were sinners that died. **HEB 7:23**.
- E. Thus, the law was valuable in driving men to Christ, teaching them of their inadequacies and helpless estate. **GAL 3:24; 4:1-3; HEB 10:1-4**.
 - (1) NOTE: There are many who do not fully come to God because of a sense of futility: they know that they cannot possibly measure up to the righteousness of His law and so remain trapped by their sins and consciences. For such is the true gospel of a Perfect Man and a realized salvation especially made. **1TI 1:15**.
 - (2) It is said that the great escape artist, Harry Houdini, could pick the lock and break out of any cell except the one that was already unlocked. Such is the lot of those held captive by their own misconceptions of apparent barriers to God.
- F. The law, with all of its demands, rituals, sacrifices and penalties was *only for a season* (**GAL 3:19; HEB 9:10**). It was FULFILLED in the person and body of Christ Who faithfully met all of its requirements. **MAT 5:17 c/w ROM 10:4; GAL 3:25**.
 - (1) NOTE: It is the Law system that is the temporary institution, not the church (contrary to Dispensational theory).
 - (2) God will always be glorified in the church. **EPH 3:21**.
- G. This is how Paul was *dead to the law* (v. 19). He and all of the elect, be they Jew or Gentile, were represented in the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (1) When He died under the law, they were deemed as having died with Him, and the Law has no power over a dead man (the opposite of a testament, **HEB 9:17**).
 - (2) Likewise, when He arose, they were deemed as having risen with Him to serve under a new covenant and order. **ROM 7:1-6; HEB 10:19-20**.
 - (3) For illustration, visualize the folly of a widow who remarries but insists on digging up her first husband's corpse to share the marriage bed with her new husband. Ugh.
- H. That form of religion which Paul once adored and embraced, he now considered himself

dead unto. He (and Peter, the Galatians and ourselves) must not try to put new wine into old bottles (**MAT 9:16-17**), but rather, as Paul puts it, “...live unto God” (**v. 19**) under the N.T. order that is built upon a completed and provided justification, the “...ministration of the spirit...” (**2CO 3:8**) wherein O.T. institutions avail nothing and should be discarded along with fleshly lusts. **GAL 5:6; 6:15; COL 2:20-3:3; HEB 13:10-13.**

- I. Paul goes on to say “...I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live...” (**v. 20**).
 - (1) Paul died *legally* in Christ, as did all the elect. **ROM 6:6; 2CO 5:14.**
 - (2) Paul still lived, but only by the grace of Christ, Who faithfully took away his sins and changed the inward nature according to the promise of the new covenant, thus enabling the elect to believe and obey (**HEB 8:10-12**). Thus, it is truly said that we “...live by the faith OF the Son of God...” (**v. 20**).
 - (3) We are obliged to acknowledge both *saving* grace and *available* grace in all of our obedience. **PHIL 2:12-13; 1CO 15:10; ROM 5:1-2 c/w JOH 1:16.**
- J. It is contradictory to say that life and the righteousness of God comes by a combination of grace AND the obedience of the sinner to the law. That is a *frustration* of grace! **v. 21.**
 - (1) frustrate: To balk, disappoint (a person). 2. To deprive of effect, render ineffectual; to neutralize, counteract (an effort or effect).
 - (2) Righteousness comes from one Man’s obedience. **ROM 5:19; 2CO 5:21.**
 - (3) The Judaizers were *frustraters* as were the church’s enemies of old. **EZR 4:5; GAL 5:4.**

Chapter 3

Having reminded them of the doctrine to which they had been initially converted, the precedent established at the Jerusalem council and the error of Peter at Antioch, Paul now directs his rebuke at the Galatians. In the light of such evidence and their own experience, how could they so easily be drawn into the designs of the Judaizers? It is a concern of the man of God that serious labors to show men the way of truth are received with apparent shallowness and that without constant supervision, the sheep will stray, their memory lapse and their conversion seem little more than “some new thing” (**ACT 17:21**), the spiritual “bright shiny object syndrome.” **PSA 106:9-13; NUM 11:12; HEB 5:12; MAT 13:5-6, 20-21; MAR 8:17-18; EXO 32:1; GAL 4:18 ct/w PHIL 1:27; 2:12.**

NOTE: Believers are told to heed them that have the rule over them by the word of God (**HEB 13:7, 17**). Whereas we should be ever willing to be corrected and improved in our understanding, beware, lest in heeding new and contrary teaching from other sources, we be “...moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard...” (**COL 1:23**). Ask your own minister about the “new thing” before you buy into it: he is likely to have insights that you have not considered.

vs. 1-4.

1. Paul charges the Galatians with *foolishness* (**vs. 1, 3**), a strong statement in light of **MAT 5:22**.
 - A. foolish: Fool-like, wanting in sense or judgment.
 - B. fool: One deficient in judgment or sense, one who acts or behaves stupidly, a silly person, a simpleton (In Biblical use applied to vicious or impious persons).
 - C. Compare **MAT 5:22 with LUK 24:25; 1CO 15:36.**
 - D. Paul does not here outrightly call the Galatians fools, but that they were *foolish/fool-like*. When a person’s attitudes or actions find too much agreement with the characteristics of a

fool, there is sufficient cause for concern. The Galatians had:

- (1) abandoned their spiritual father's instructions. **PRO 15:5.**
- (2) been drawn back into past error. **PRO 26:11.**
- (3) left the path of righteousness. **ECC 10:3.**
- (4) decided to build on the unstable ground of works-justification, whereas the heart is established by grace. **HEB 13:9; ACT 20:32 ct/w MAT 7:26.**

2. Having been subverted by the doctrine of the Judaizers, Paul asserts that they must have been *bewitched*. **v. 1.**

- A. bewitch: 1. To affect (generally injuriously), by witchcraft or magic. Sometimes with complemental phrase defining the result. 2. *fig.* To influence in a way similar to witchcraft; to fascinate, charm, enchant...
- B. Before we relegate “bewitched” here to a figurative sense, we would do well to consider that the Savior warned against people employing the powers of darkness to deceive others. **MAT 24:24.**
 - (1) It is noteworthy that this is the only N.T. epistle which expressly condemns witchcraft. **GAL 5:20.**
 - (2) Mind that the nation of Israel itself was in the process of being overtaken by the powers of darkness in the form of unclean spirits. **MAT 12:43-45.**
- C. The last prophet of the O.T. had spoken against sorcerers in the wake of John the Baptist and Messiah. **MAL 3:5.**
- D. Observe other examples of apostate Jews in league with dark powers in opposition to the gospel. **ACT 8:9-11; 13:5-8.**
- E. Consider that one of the most subtle and dangerous doctrines of world government as proposed in dispensationalism is substantially the doctrine of Pharisaic Judaism.
 - (1) The historic origin of this eschatology which purports a coming world government by a “messiah” came out of a radical spiritist “christian” movement in the United Kingdom in the early 1800’s which emphasized long-discarded spiritual gifts, visions, etc.
 - (2) This is most curious in light of what Paul says about the antichrist man of sin in **2TH 2:1-10.**
- F. It is true also that false doctrine has intimate ties with powers of darkness. **1JO 4:1 c/w 1TI 4:1.**
- G. It would be an error to exclude the possibility of open use of occult power to affect people’s thinking, and it would certainly be an error to not connect false doctrine with evil spirits and the powers of darkness.
- H. Charismatic orators can indeed have a “spell-binding” effect on men, especially those led by lust, the simple, and the unstable. **ROM 16:17-18; 2PE 2:14, 18 c/w 1CO 2:1-5.**
 - (1) The Judaizers had *mesmerized* the Galatians with their teaching which stirred them emotionally and turned them against Paul. **GAL 4:16-17.**
 - (2) Elsewhere we read, “But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and MADE THEIR MINDS EVIL AFFECTED AGAINST THE BRETHREN” (**ACT 14:2**).
 - (3) Emotion-driven thought (as opposed to faith and reason) will not only lead you into trouble, it will turn you against the person who genuinely desires your good.
 - a. You are likely to deem the truth and its teller “hateful” because it/he challenges your comfort and warped vision.
 - b. “The truth cannot be hateful however, except in the eyes of those who hate the truth.” (Michael Hoffman)
 - (4) The alluring speech of the Judaizers was so persuasive that it was appropriately

called a *bewitching*. Witches pretend to have power to put people under a curse, and persuading people of justification by the works of the law is to put them under the curse. **GAL 3:10.**

- I. The Galatians had *rebelled against the truth* (v. 1; **GAL 5:7**) and opted for an alternative form of service to God, which act is itself likened to witchcraft. **1SAM 15:22-24.**
3. Paul concludes v. 1 with this observation about the Galatians: "...before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"
 - A. evidently: So as to be distinctly visible or perceptible; with perfect clearness, conspicuously. Hence in active sense, with verbs of perceiving, knowing, explaining, etc: Without possibility of mistake or misunderstanding; clearly, distinctly.
 - B. Jesus Christ was not personally and physically crucified at Galatia. They did not physically "see" Him on the cross.
 - C. The gospel message wherein accomplished salvation and sin's destruction are declared is the preaching of the crucifixion. **1CO 1:18, 23; 2:2.**
 - D. Paul preached the cross of Christ to the Gentiles to facilitate the opening of their spiritual eyes. **ACT 26:17-18 c/w EPH 1:18.**
 - E. Paul set forth Jesus Christ EVIDENTLY--preaching the word clearly and distinctly, as it ought to be done. **NEH 8:8; 2CO 1:13; 3:12.**
 - F. The Galatians had responded positively to the gospel of justifying grace through the faith of Christ. The preaching of the word of the Spirit had provoked a corresponding testimony already written on their hearts. **ROM 8:16; 6:17.**
 - G. The fact that the Galatians had believed the gospel, been baptized and repented of their idolatrous ways was abundant evidence that they were children of God. Why now this vacillation? **GAL 4:8 c/w 1TH 1:4-10; 1PE 3:21.**
 - H. Proper response to the gospel is close, personal assurance of participation in the crucifixion of Christ. When a person mortifies the errors of his flesh, it evidences that Christ died for him. **TIT 2:14; GAL 5:24.**
 - I. This is how Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, crucified among them. Though their physical eyes had not seen Jesus hanging on the cross, they had just as clear an evidence of that reality from Paul's gospel and their convicted response of faith. Initially, they had walked by faith, not sight. **2CO 5:7 c/w HEB 11:1.**
 - J. When something is presented *evidently*, there is no excuse for turning from it. **ROM 1:20.**
4. As Paul carries on (v. 2), he poses an obvious question which the Galatians seem to have overlooked: had they *received the Spirit* by keeping law-works like circumcision or by hearing about Jesus Christ faithfully fulfilling the law for them? Had the Spirit come upon the church under the dispensation of the law/O.T. from Moses or under the dispensation of faith/grace/N.T. from Jesus Christ? **JOH 1:14, 17 c/w ROM 3:21.**
 - A. The dispensation of the Law wound down with the dawning of the N.T. gospel age. **LUK 16:16; GAL 3:19.**
 - B. The prophets and Christ had spoken of the coming of the Spirit which awaited His work of redemption, His resurrection and glorification. **JOEL 2:28-29; ZEC 14:8; JOH 7:37-39; 16:7.**
 - C. In fulfillment of the words of the prophets and of Christ, the Holy Ghost fell upon the N.T. church at Pentecost, empowering it. **ACT 1:8; 2:1-4, 16-21.**
 - (1) The Holy Ghost came only on the church, not on all previously baptized folk. Nor was this event tied to circumcision which defined the Mosaic order.
 - (2) Being crowned with glory and honor in heaven, King Jesus began His rule as the God-Man over all things seen and unseen. **HEB 2:9; 1PE 3:22.**

- (3) People (especially an oppressed people) generally look for a better hope and better law when a new government begins its rule. **HEB 7:19; ROM 3:27.**
- (4) The N.T. era of the Spirit which replaced the “do and live” (**GAL 3:12**) Law is the only genuine New World Order.
- D. During the forty year season of confirming signs and wonders (**MAR 16:20**), the Spirit/Holy Ghost sometimes was received in a visible manifestation and accompanied by miracles. **HEB 2:4.**
 - (1) Such was the case at Pentecost with the miraculous gift of tongues. **ACT 2:4-6.**
 - (2) The gift of tongues was likely used to convert the Galatians. **ACT 2:10 c/w ACT 16:6.**
 - (3) They certainly had the Spirit’s miracles among them. **GAL 2:5.**
- E. At Pentecost Peter preached the faith of Christ in God’s promises as the means to His exaltation and coronation. **ACT 2:25-32.**
 - (1) The coming of the Spirit/Holy Ghost was the heaven-sent token of Jesus Christ being set on the throne of David. **ACT 2:33-36.**
 - (2) The Spirit could not have come if Jesus Christ is still waiting to assume David’s throne. Premillennial Dispensationalism again has a problem here in that it holds that Christ has yet to receive the throne of David.
 - (3) Men responded with repentance and baptism, and were graft into that well-spring of living waters which indwells God’s house. Thus, in this sense also, they *received the Spirit*. **ACT 2:37-41 c/w 1CO 12:13.**
 - a. This is when a believer is “...sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (**EPH 1:13**).
 - b. seal: v. To attest by a seal. To place a seal upon a (document) as evidence of genuineness, or as a mark of authoritative ratification or approval.
 - c. As Jesus was sealed by the Father at baptism (**JOH 6:27 c/w MAT 3:17**) so believers are sealed as the sons of the Father upon baptism.
 - d. NOTE: Baptism is a figure of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (**ROM 6:3-4**) and Christ’s death was a *willing submission* (**JOH 10:17-18**), so any baptism which consists of an unwilling submission is a faulty picture of Christ’s death. The seal is for believers only.
 - (4) Because He is the Comforter (**JOH 14:26**), the Spirit has an according message:
 - a. The work of redemption, reconciliation and justification is perfected. **GAL 3:13; ROM 4:25-5:1, 10.**
 - b. The burden of sin was borne by Christ to make us righteous. **2CO 5:21.**
 - c. Impossible “Do and live” has been replaced by “Christ did, you live.”
 - d. The promise of life is certain. **JOH 10:27-29.**
 - e. Satan has been defeated. **HEB 2:14.**
 - f. Death has lost its power. **1CO 15:56-57.**
 - g. We have a lively hope of resurrection. **1PE 1:3-4.**
 - h. Christ’s law is bearable. **1JO 5:3; MAT 11:30 ct/w ACT 15:10.**
 - i. His grace is greater than our sin. **ROM 6:20.**
 - j. Christ is our Advocate and Propitiation. **1JO 2:1-2.**
- F. None of the above accorded with the Law, Moses or circumcision.
- 5. The Galatians had received the Spirit *by the hearing of faith* (v. 2). The gospel of the faith of Christ had been preached to them. They had heard it and believed in His work alone for justification. They were then baptized into Christ’s church and received the Spirit.
 - A. Paul had not preached unto them Moses, the Law and circumcision.

- B. Faith (their responsive faith) *came by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*: the declaration of Christ's faith that looked beyond death and of an accomplished salvation. **ROM 10:17.**
- C. Paul by the Spirit had preached Christ. The Judaizers by another spirit had sown doubt. Their message was basically, "...Yea, hath God said...?" (**GEN 3:1**).
- 6. The Galatians had started out believing the *ministration of the Spirit* (**2CO 3:6-8**) which speaks of grace and Christ's faith alone, but they had fallen from that belief by now depending on something they had done also: circumcision. **v. 3 c/w GAL 5:4, 7.**
 - A. The true circumcision have NO confidence in the flesh. **PHIL 3:3.**
 - B. The flesh plays no active part in the quickening of sinners. **JOH 5:21; 6:63.**
 - C. They had *begun in the Spirit* (gospel of grace), and deteriorated to the message of the flesh.
 - (1) This was contrary to the order of transcendence (spirit trumps flesh). **1CO 15:45-47.**
 - (2) Satan has a remarkable capacity for reversing everything of God and making it sound better to human wisdom and desire.
 - D. The false teachers that had perverted the gospel of Christ did not themselves keep the law to which they had brought the Galatians into bondage. They just didn't like the offensiveness of the cross and grace. **GAL 6:12-13.**
- 7. The Galatians had willingly borne the offense of the cross (**v. 4**). Would they now give up having come this far? Where was their patience and endurance? **HEB 10:32-36; 6:12 c/w 1JO 2:24-25.**

vs. 5-9.

- 1. Continuing on, Paul reminds them that the blessings and ministration of the Spirit which were peculiar to the N.T. gospel church were theirs to enjoy, not by law-works like circumcision, the "do and live" righteousness of Moses' Law, etc., but by hearing the gospel of Christ and turning submissively to Him. This was the great lesson of **ACT 10**. He then makes an appropriate comparison with Abraham.
- 2. **v. 5** asks another obvious/rhetorical question: "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"
 - A. The language here demands a present condition: ministereth, worketh, doeth. Paul was not at this time among them (**GAL 1:1-2**) so he is referring to someone other than himself by "he."
 - B. "He" is God (c/w **GAL 2:7-8**) Who *ministers* the Spirit to the church.
 - (1) minister: 1. To serve (food or drink). *Obs.* 2. To furnish, supply, impart (something necessary or helpful)... 3. To dispense, administer...
 - (2) administer: *fig.* To dispense, furnish, supply, or give (anything beneficial, or assumed to be beneficial, to the recipient...
 - (3) Ministration and administration may be used as synonyms. **2CO 9:12-13.**
 - C. God ministers in the church by diverse operations of the Spirit. **1CO 12:4-11, 28.**
 - D. The working of miracles was unique to the N.T. gospel to confirm that message of full salvation by Jesus Christ: the message of grace. **HEB 2:3-4.**
 - (1) No such thing attended the O.T. synagogue-style service where Moses was preached, genealogy emphasized, circumcision a token of acceptance, and "do and live" righteousness the message. That system overall implied confidence in the sinner.
 - (2) The lack of miracles among the Moses crowd was a dilemma for them. **ACT 4:16.**
 - (3) They knew that sign-gifts attended prophecy. **PSA 74:9.**

- (4) The presence of such gifts outside the Mosaic synagogue system would have stood to convict them, as Jesus had designed. **JOH 15:24-25.**
- E. Though the season of the working of miracles has long since passed, the Spirit still ministers in the church:
 - (1) He comforts (strengthens, encourages, heartens, inspirits, incites). **JOH 14:16.**
 - (2) He teaches. **JOH 14:26 c/w JOH 17:20.**
 - (3) He binds brethren in fellowship and unity. **EPH 4:3; PHIL 2:1.**
 - (4) He empowers. **ACT 1:8 c/w 1CO 2:4-5; 1TH 1:5.**
 - (5) He promotes righteousness, peace and joy. **ROM 14:17.**
 - (6) He renders believing Gentiles acceptable offerings to God. **ROM 15:16; 12:1.**
- F. Consider this most important aspect of ministering the Spirit:
 - (1) The word is authored by the Spirit. **2PE 1:20-21; EPH 6:17.**
 - (2) The N.T. gospel is the “ministration of the Spirit” in contrast with the O.T. which was the “ministration of death/condemnation.” **2CO 3:6-9.**
 - (3) The N.T. gospel of completed salvation in Christ is *ministered* or preached by the Spirit's enablement. **1PE 1:9-12.**
 - (4) Again, circumcision is obviously not a necessary prerequisite for that ministry, but belief of and submission to the gospel is. **GAL 2:3.**
 - (5) It would be safe to assume that if Paul, according to his pattern (**ACT 14:21-23**), confirmed the saints and ordained elders to lead and preach in the Gentile Galatian churches, he did NOT insist they be circumcised.
 - (6) Paul was essentially saying, “Oh, circumcision, etc.! Why didn’t I think about that when I first came among you in the power of the Holy Ghost preaching Christ crucified, buried and resurrected for sinners’ justification?!”
- G. The Galatians’ received spiritual benefits accorded with the *hearing of faith*: the message of the faith of Jesus Christ Who trusted God’s promise to deliver from death. The good news (gospel) is not what sinners do but what Christ did for sinners by trusting God.
3. Paul then vaults back in time to an event hundreds of years before Moses to emphasize the importance of faith in God: the faith of Abraham. **vs. 6-9.**
4. The example of faithful Abraham proves that faith (trust, reliance or confidence) in God takes precedence over law-works like circumcision.
 - A. Abraham's faith was a steadfast confidence that God would faithfully keep His promise to him of a Seed when human reasoning would have denied such. **GEN 15:1-6.**
 - B. Abraham's faith was obviously not a confidence in his own ability. **ROM 4:18-22.**
 - C. Abraham's faith did not MAKE him righteous. It was ACCOUNTED to him FOR righteousness. It was a token or evidence of righteousness. c/w **PSA 106:30-31.**
 - D. Abraham's faith, the evidence of his righteousness, was something he had BEFORE circumcision. **ROM 4:8-10.**
 - E. Circumcision, therefore, availeth NOTHING! **GAL 5:6; 6:15.**
 - F. Of particular and relevant importance was that Abraham trusted God to resurrect Isaac from the dead. **JAM 2:21-23 c/w HEB 11:17-19.**
 - (1) He had not let the deadness of his body’s reproductive powers overwhelm God’s promise to create his seed.
 - (2) He did not let the apparent certainty of Isaac’s death overwhelm God’s promise that in Isaac would his seed be called.
 - (3) The message of Abraham is that one can trust in God’s promise of life even when death is in the equation.
 - (4) This is what Jesus did. **LUK 23:46; ACT 2:26-28.**

- G. Those who, like Abraham, trust in God to do the impossible according to His promise, are the spiritual children of Abraham and share in his blessings. **vs. 7, 9 c/w ROM 4:11-12, 23-25.**
- H. Abraham's circumcision was a SEAL of his already evidenced righteousness. **ROM 4:11.**
 - (1) It was a follow-up token to the token of righteous faith he had exercised upon hearing the gospel.
 - (2) Similarly, our baptism upon hearing and believing the gospel is a SEAL of imputed righteousness and assurance of sonship.
- I. From **GAL 3:8**, it is evident that the Judaic/dispensational interpretation of **GEN 12:3** is wrong.
 - (1) God was not promising eternal special favors for every descendant of Abraham to the exclusion of Gentiles.
 - (2) Rather, He was foreseeing that ONE descendant of Abraham (Jesus Christ) would bring justification to the heathen through His faith. **GAL 3:13-14.**
 - a. We are justified *legally* by the personal faith of Jesus Christ.
 - b. We are justified *evidentially* by our faith in Jesus Christ, not in our flesh.

vs. 10-14.

- 1. The law of Moses was a great blessing to its recipients (**ROM 3:1-2**) but when relied upon to secure eternal justification, it became a curse. **v. 10 c/w ROM 3:19.**
 - A. "under the law" (**GAL 3:23; 4:4-5, 21**) = "under the curse."
 - (1) "under the law" contrasts with "under grace" (**ROM 6:14-15**), God's favor freely bestowed without condition upon unworthy, incapable sinners.
 - (2) Righteousness by the law is a frustration of grace. **GAL 1:21.**
 - B. Men have a propensity for misusing bestowed blessings or exalting them to an inordinate degree to where they become a curse. **DEU 28:12 c/w PSA 69:22.**
 - (1) Corinth turned the gifts of the Spirit and the Lord's Table into self-destruction. **1CO 14:26; 11:29-30.**
 - (2) This principle should remind us to not let the "dear old church" become more precious than the Savior Whose blood purchased it and Whose doctrine regulates it.
 - C. The opposite of sinners, God turns a curse into a blessing. **DEU 23:5; GAL 3:13-14.**
- 2. Justification via the law required much more than Mosaic circumcision. It demanded continual, unflinching obedience to all of its precepts. Breach of one law meant death. **v. 10 c/w GAL 5:2-3; EZE 33:13.**
 - A. If one is bent on relying upon his own righteous deeds/works to obtain eternal life, God may very well accommodate him in furthering his error. **PRO 26:5 c/w MAT 19:16-22; EZE 14:4.**
 - B. The Pharisees knew full well that they could not perfectly keep all of the law, so they exalted certain laws that they could keep and downplayed the rest (a common tendency).
 - (1) The easy laws were then made the measure of righteousness. **MAT 23:23; LUK 18:9-14.**
 - (2) Their pride blinded them into a form of cognitive dissonance. Another form of this is the popular proposition, "There is nothing you can do to be saved; all you have to do is..."
 - (3) NOTE: We rightly cherish the house of God but if that's all there is to our Christianity, are we any better than selective-law Pharisees? **EZE 33:30-33.**
 - C. Another Pharisaic ploy is to fabricate something neither prescribed nor proscribed in God's

word and exalt that tradition over God's standard for righteousness. **MAR 7:1-13.**

(1) The tradition becomes a substitute for Scriptural duty.

(2) The only positive uses of "tradition(s)" in Scripture are in **2TH 2:15; 3:6**, which refer to apostolic tradition.

3. Paul shows the weakness of arguing for justification by the law by an obvious principle which was stated in the law: "...The just shall live by faith..." (**vs. 11-12**). c/w **HAB 2:4; ACT 13:39.**

A. Ordinarily, the O.T. was divided three ways: the law, the prophets and the psalms.

LUK 24:44.

B. Sometimes, though, the psalms are called *law*.

JOH 10:34 c/w PSA 82:6; JOH 15:25 c/w PSA 69:4.

C. Likewise, the prophets. **1CO 14:21 c/w ISA 28:11-12.**

D. Therefore, the law itself was witness against law-works justification. **ROM 3:21.**

E. "...the law is not of faith" (**v. 12**) does not mean that faith was not required by the law, for it was. **MAT 23:23; HEB 3:18-19.**

F. Rather, the *nature* of the law covenant was a "do and live" proposition.

LEV 18:5; ROM 10:5.

(1) This "do and live" order secured and blessed *temporal* life.

DEU 30:20; PRO 3:1-2.

(2) Individual righteous acts were declared righteousness to the doer. **DEU 24:13.**

(3) We have similar promises. **ROM 8:12-13; 1TI 4:8; 1PE 3:10-12.**

(4) The error was/is in making the conditional promises for *temporal* life the means for *eternal* life, which could never be possible because of the curse for one disobedient act. **v. 10 c/w DEU 27:26; JER 11:3-4.**

(5) "The alteration which the gospel has made is in the last word: still *the man that does them shall live*, but not live *in them*; for the law could not give life, because we could not perfectly keep it; it was *weak through the flesh*, not in itself; but now *the man that does them shall live by the faith of the Son of God*. He shall owe his life to the grace of Christ, and not to the merit of his own works..."

(Matthew Henry Commentary on **LEV 18:5**)

G. The "do and live" nature of the law covenant contrasts with the new covenant which is "live and do." Christ gives us life so we can do His will. **HEB 8:7-13.**

(1) Old Covenant: law written down, taught by men outwardly, sin avoided, end: *temporal* life.

(2) New Covenant: law written within by God, sin forgiven, end: *eternal* life.

4. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. **v. 13.**

A. He did not earn a curse, He was made a curse for us on the cross. c/w **DEU 21:23.**

B. The redemption cost was His blood to which we were chosen.

EPH 1:3-7; 1PE 1:2, 18-19.

C. The blood of Christ put the New Testament/Covenant into effect. **HEB 9:16-23.**

5. The redemptive work of Christ was designed to incorporate Gentiles into distinctively Jewish promises. **v. 14 c/w EPH 2:11-17; ROM 11:17.**

A. The blessing of Abraham comes through his Seed, Jesus Christ. **GAL 3:16.**

B. The promised Spirit (the abiding presence of God) is received by faith in Christ. c/w **ACT 2:38-39.**

C. Once Christ by His faith eliminated the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile (**EPH 2:14-15**), the *door of faith was opened to Gentiles* (**ACT 14:27**). The elect among them could, like elect Jews, *receive the promise of the Spirit through their faith*.

EPH 1:9-14.