

Galatians

Seed of Promise

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Galatians

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Introduction: the Gospel - (Galatians 1:1-5)

"Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)" (vs1)

Galatians is a most unique book in the New Testament, and this uniqueness begins with the very first verse. If a person were to skip to each of the epistles by Paul, he begins them each with variations of God's call upon his life as an "apostle" or "bond servant". But they all begin with a 'positive' note. As letters were written in those days, the writer's name comes first: This is who the letter is -from-; and here is a little bit of data - about- the writer, and an introductory blessing or summary of a spiritual truth.

But here Paul is making a specific point to not only name himself, but also establish the BASELINE for the epistle, that the words that follow, the message, is NOT PAUL's. This message is NOT FROM MEN. It is not man's ideas. The messenger, even, is not a messenger from his own initiative. The messenger (vs1) and the message (vs11) is not of human origins, but from God.

And why does he set such a stage? Major FALSE DOCTRINE has crept in that needs correcting. To use today's vernacular, Paul is going to be "chewing out" his readers. (1:6, 2:14, 3:1, 4:9, 6:17) He needs to set the stage that this chewing out is not FROM PAUL, but from God. They have taken up doctrines based on Judaism (vs13) and traditions of the fathers. (vs14) As he will also warn the preacher Titus about...

"Jewish myths and commandments of men that turn away from the truth" (Tit1:14)

Where Romans and the lesser epistles teach doctrine, with their own emphases; and the two to Corinth deal with carnality and some specific sins, and as carnal people tend to do... attack the messenger with verbal barbs (2Co10:10), ridiculing his authority; the doctrines to the Galatians are of such a serious matter that Paul actually speaks of "falling from grace". (5:4) Here he makes sure that they understand, this is NOT by mere "permission". (1Co7:6) The greeting might say "Paul", but the message is not his. It is God's. And he gives a closing credential:

"I bear in my body the brand marks of the Lord Jesus" therefore "From now on let no one trouble me" (6:17)

So... what is the Gospel? If people are holding to false doctrine, what is the BASELINE from which they have deviated?

(Throughout this series please read the passages. We will not be re-quoting passages that are already in our Bibles.)

--GRACE: a state of protection and sanctification, given to us even though we did not deserve it. Immunity and reprieve.

What do we need protection from? As sinners we are deserving of death. (Rom3:23,6:23) Jesus "gave Himself" for our sins. (vs4) What we would have had to pay, by dying; Jesus died for us and paid the penalty for us. We have been given "eternal life" (Jn3:16) if we "believe" into Him and "receive" Christ (Jn1:12)

--PEACE: we were at enmity. We now have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom5:1) It's like warring factions that are at odds, somebody negotiates a settlement and the parties are at peace. There is no war. They get along. The communication lines are open. As long as we were in sin, God "does not hear sinners" (Jn9:31) As God says...

"...your sins have hidden His face from you, that He will not hear" (Is59:2) But now...

"...you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ." (Eph2:13)

And being at peace, we now also have bold access to the "throne of grace" (Heb4:16)

--DELIVERED:

"that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (vs4)

Not only are we saved "from the wrath to come" (Mt3:7, 1Th1:10), this bespeaks Holy Living. ...this PRESENT evil age...

This is the central theme of this book. Living by GRACE in the Holy Spirit. Living in the flesh is to live by the decrees of law. And living under decrees assumes the accompanying 'penalties' for infractions. Living in the flesh drags us back to our former state in sin. But when Jesus died for us, not only did He pay the penalty, but He also provides us with a "birth from above" in the Spirit (Jn3:3,8) where we are given a new -nature- (1Jn3:9) where everything is "new" (2Co5:17)

In the OT Jesus had not yet died on the cross, and so sins and trespasses were regularly atoned with physical symbols of animal sacrifices, and rituals, symbolizing what Jesus -would- do IN THE FUTURE. One knew they belonged to God because they were physically circumcised. But when Jesus died the transformation was in the heart. (Ro2:27-28) It was a done deal, not needing 'updates' with annual rituals.

Rituals bespeak activities which WE DO, by which we go home -feeling-justified because WE -DID- SOMETHING. There is the feeling that we had "a little something to do with" our own salvation. But Grace, by definition, indicates that we COULD NOT DO anything. We were not even 'worthy', let alone 'able' to effect our own salvation.

But you see, the "traditions" of Judaism, not to mention all the religions of the world, rely on 'works'. Offer this animal, sprinkle some blood, say so many prayers, light some candles, do certain "good deeds" that the priest will find meritorious to one's account. And somebody comes along saying that Salvation is a "free" gift? (Ro5:15-18) How can that be? It just doesn't -feel- right. And for somebody from a background in Judaism, that free gift is said to come from that "impostor" whom the "fathers" condemned and had crucified. After all, He was 'bragging' how He was 'doing away with the law'...which was why He was condemned to death.

They didn't understand that Jesus was not so much "doing away" with the Law, but FULFILLING it.

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." (Mt5:17)

They had been ritualizing a 'future' event; a -symbol-; a representation. But those things all pointed to Jesus Christ. When Jesus died, that was the REAL THING. And once Jesus cried out "IT HAS BEEN FINISHED!" it was a done deal. What need is there for the symbolic, when the REAL THING has been finished?

These and related things are covered more in-depth as we continue.

--PRAISE:

Of course, the Gospel is not complete without proper recognition and praise.

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Re5:12)

The Gospel is summed up:

"knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your vain way of life received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1Pt1:18-19)

A Different Gospel? - (Galatians 1:6-10)

"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you into the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you, even determined to pervert the gospel of Christ." (vs6-7)

If the previous lesson was the "baseline" for the book, this lesson is the *raison d'etre*, the "reason" for the book having been written. If the reader takes away from this series only one thing, it is this one. The following lessons will get into doctrine and Paul's 'call' to proclaim it. But this one is the impetus. This one is "why".

What does it mean to "marvel"? It is a combination of intellectual and emotional: surprise, wonder, astonishment, amazement, bewilderment. When a person is surprised, the eyes open wide and the jaw drops. With wonderment a person may emit a questioning "Ooooooh?" With astonishment a person might utter, "NNNOOOOO!" Amazement might elicit a "REALLLLY?" And with bewilderment, "HOW COULD THEY? They know this, they have agreed with that. They have said and confirmed...so HOW IN THE WORLD do they come up with THIS OTHER THING? IT - JUST- DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!!!" It is beyond belief! It baffles the mind!

In the previous lesson notice that the Baseline of the Gospel is "Grace" provided by Jesus Christ. Paul's readers have TURNED AWAY from the "grace of Christ". They have turned away from the Gospel. In our vernacular, if we consider that "Grace" equals "Salvation"; they have TURNED AWAY from Salvation. Later when Paul speaks of "fallen from grace" (5:4) notice very carefully that Paul is not talking about "losing" one's Salvation. They are TURNING AWAY from it. They were not walking along, got to their destination and "Oops! Where's my Salvation? I had it here someplace. I must have dropped it along the way." No... they rummaged around in their pocket, found it, crumpled it up, and tossed it aside; either littering or into the garbage.

It is like the case Jesus speaks of the person who grabs the plow and "looks back" (Lk9:62) It is the person who "draws back" that the passage says God is "not pleased with him" (Heb10:38) If God is "not pleased" does that not create a situation where there is no peace.

"There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked" (Is48:22,57:21)

And "...the way of the wicked shall perish" (Ps1:6)

Now... the Gospel is not being turned away from, for -nothing-, in abandonment. They are turning away -to- a -DIFFERENT- Gospel. Why? Did they decide that the -original- Gospel was flawed? ...and so set about looking for a replacment?

When God first made Adam and Eve it says that His creation was "extremely good" (Ge1:31) So, why did Eve deviate from God's command? Somebody came along with an alternative. Put some doubts in Eve's mind, planted seeds of dissatisfaction. Satan's own personal intent was to "be like the Most High" (Is14:14) His intent is to usurp God's authority and works. His method is to pervert God's Truth.

It's like fishing. I'm not an angler, but know just enough to catch bullheads...which is why I'm not an angler! One does not simply drop a 'hook' in the water, and the fish come along and happily bite down and submit to the filleting knife. No. The hook might be covered in the body of the worm, or fancy 'lures' are made to trick the fish into thinking they are biting into a worm, bug or minnow.

These different 'gospels' are from "-some- who trouble you". And they are - DETERMINED- to pervert God's Gospel. What does it mean to determine?

DETERMINE: decide, establish, cause to come to a conclusion, give direction, to limit in scope or extent, to explain or limit by adding differences. (these: from the American Heritage Dictionary)

Likely one of the best examples of this is modern "facilitation" of the 'dialectic' towards 'consensus'. It happens in religion and politics. According to the agenda the facilitator 'guides' the discussion. Perhaps as some points are raised by participants the facilitator will repeat -parts- of the topic, leaving other parts out; which everyone discusses. Then the facilitator adds differences, and they are discussed. By the time the topic has been dissected and added to, certain key things of importance are left out, and certain other false things are added into the mix. And when it comes to the Gospel, God's love becomes all-inclusive, He doesn't judge for sin or misbehavior. Now, while the doctrine is different in this book, and Judaism...in today's dialectic, this is the basic pattern. They will talk about "love", but it is not God's love. They will talk about "salvation", but it is not Biblical Salvation. They will talk about "forgiveness", but it is a generic, nebulous meaningless forgiveness where people 'feel' the pain of the evil doer and blanket forgiveness is given without the guilty person ever repenting or asking forgiveness...but the one who extends forgiveness 'feels good' about themselves for having forgiven. In politics they might talk about sustainability, which on the surface sounds noble; but the nitty gritty involves killing off 90% of earth's population, giving earth back to the wild animals, and is earth worship and the progressivism of communism towards one-world government and religion. It is appropriate to say these last things because part of what calls itself "church" today, with leaders like Rick Warren, is embracing and proclaiming the UN Agenda21; and for many churches "saving the planet" is right up there with "saving sinners". In fact, saving the planet is probably MORE important to them, than saving sinners; because in their own minds, man has already 'achieved' and doesn't need saving. Part of their "gospel" is, in fact, worship of the

"created things more than the Creator" (Ro1:25) But Paul says, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..." (1Ti1:15)

"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning the common salvation, it was necessary for me to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were set forth to this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God, even our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ju1:3-4)

Paul expresses "marvel" that the Galatians had bought into the - perversion- that was brought in from outside. A -different- gospel had been brought in. But notice Paul says "which is not another". Certainly, people can come in and persuade people into falsehoods. But that persuasion doesn't 'change' the Gospel of Christ. Such as: supposing somebody came along with spray paint and painted somebody's lawn to a 'purple' color, so the lawn -looks- 'purple'. The painting having been done does not change the pure color of grass, which is 'green', and if the paint didn't kill the grass, as it grows back out its true 'green' color will be visible. And so, just because somebody comes along and says the way to Heaven is some different way, doesn't make it so. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is still by "grace through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works" (Eph2:8) no matter how much Judaisers want to bind people to the old Law. What Judaism seeks and does, does not change God's Truth into a lie.

BUT... there is reprisal to those who pervert the Gospel.

"But even if we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed." (vs8-9)

If we see Paul's use of the word "accursed" in Rom9:3, this is a condemnation to everlasting lostness. This is a state of being forever separated from Christ; which as we know the rest of Scripture, is an everlasting sentence in the Lake of Fire.

What sorts of false doctrines come from angels? (Understanding that demons are fallen angels) The angel appeared to Joseph Smith which was the basis for the establishment of the mormons, where they progress to become gods and goddesses. Under the auspices of Babylon/Rome there are many periodic apparitions of the Queen of Heaven, claiming to be "Mary". In these modern "new apostolic" times people are claiming visions of Jesus, new revelations, new doctrines. All of these are -ACCURSED-.

You see, Paul is saying that all doctrine HAD ALREADY BEEN GIVEN, up through and including his day. And he says "even if we". In other words: All

doctrine HAS BEEN GIVEN...if I now come along and preach something different. Paul - marvels - that they had accepted a new/different gospel. Judas exhorts that we must "contend earnestly" for the Faith which was "ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED". It's -all- there. There is nothing to add. And if anyone takes away, "God shall take away his part in the Book of Life" (Re22:19)

And continuing his "chewing"... Whom do we serve? I know from experience during my younger days: when I didn't go along with the consensus, but stuck to God's Word, I was castigated as "judgmental". For a few years I softened in matters of practical living and methods of ministry. But how could I deny God's Word??? -People- called me 'intolerant' of their various views. I would not listen to other opinions (translation, I would not budge from the Bible and accept other doctrines). I would not "please men". I would rather hear from the Lord: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Mt25:21,23) I would rather be of the stance:

"..let God be true but every man a liar" (Ro3:4)

Certainly God "knows those who are His" (2Ti2:19) And Paul, before he was saved sought to "destroy" the church. (vs13) God knows the heart of those who fight against Him. Paul was saved and became a foremost apostle. But when the term "accursed" is used, that should strike fear in those who are perverting the Gospel.

The demons cannot be saved. The Lake of Fire is being preserved for the "devil and his angels" (Mt25:41) When they would see Jesus they would shout out, "Have You come here to torment us before the time?" (Mt8:29) In other words, whatever the nature of the rebellion of those angels, and the 'conversation' that happened from God, they didn't -immediately- get thrown into the fire...but they know it IS COMING in due time.

But what about humans who are rebelling? Have they opened up their "house" to allow the evil spirits to enter in a dead-end deal where their "last state is worse than the first"? (Mt12:45) Have they at one time known the Lord, but then "drew back" such that they can never be saved -again- (Heb6:4-6) And they now go about 'perverting' the Gospel to unsuspecting souls? They are 'accursed'. Paul was able to be saved because he had fought against God out of "ignorance" (1Ti1:13) And as he preached...

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" (Ac17:30)

But, if a person -purposely- leads others into the "ditch", does not the one leading also deserve to be in the ditch?

"...both with fall into the ditch" (Mt15:14)

What was the context of that statement? Jesus was having debates with the Pharisees, the religious rulers. Related to the ones to whom Jesus pronounced "woe"

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." (Mt23:13)

It is not the purpose here to name names beyond such as Peter Wagner, Todd Bentley, Brian McLaren, Benny Hinn, and so many others. Today there are -many- who have the label "accursed" attached to themselves. Jesus spoke of the scribes and pharisees. Jeremiah pronounces

"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture! says Jehovah" (Jer23:1)

This means: seminary and Bible school professors, denominational leaders, pastors, 'facilitators' of those dialectic Bible "studies", Sunday school teachers, VBS teachers, "christian" counselors. You know how some, when they become a VBS teacher, they stand just a little taller and they gain a hint of a 'strut' to their step, as they think they have been 'honored' with this 'position'. People look 'up' to people with academic letters behind their names. Well...NOT SO FAST!!!

Paul says about appointing new ministers:

"not a new convert, that he not be puffed up with pride and fall into the SAME CONDEMNATION AS THE DEVIL." (1Ti3:6)

Paul's own mission was not one of pride, but...

"For if I preach the gospel, there is no glory to me, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel." (1Co9:16)

Jeremiah's call:

"Thus says Jehovah: Stand in the court of Jehovah's house and speak to all the cities of Judah, which come to bow down in Jehovah's house, all the Words that I command you to speak to them; do not diminish a word." (Jer26:2)

The reason we won't list names here is because God is the Judge. But consider in these days of apostasy where...

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, being devoted to corrupting spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy..." (1Ti4:1-2)

Where we are in the days like the "days of Noah" (Mt24:37), where Peter says Noah was "one of eight people" (2Pt2:5) ... CONSIDER CAREFULLY 'who' it is that is seen behind the pulpits and in front of the TV cameras. If these deceivers are -determined- to "pervert" the Gospel of Christ, and they are proclaiming "doctrines of demons", and Paul has attached the label "accursed" to them, who are you watching and listening to? Whose parking lot are you driving into on Sundays? What is their doctrine? Are you being persuaded by them, or are you also "searching the Scriptures...to see if those things are so"? (Ac17:11)

Is everything called "christian" truly CHRISTIAN? If Paul says,

"For not all those of Israel are Israel" (Ro9:6b)

Is everything called "church" the TRUE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST? It is -NOT-. Most of it is under God's curse. About to be "vomited" out of Jesus' mouth. (Re3:16)

And notice Paul's vehemence with which he says this. He repeats the curse. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the central theme through history. Jesus fulfilled the coming of the "Seed" of the woman. (Ge3:15) In the beginning -death- came to the human race. But God promised Salvation through the Seed. If people are not saved because the message they hear is distorted, it means the original curse of "death" is unforgivable, insofar as they don't hear the Gospel, to repent and receive Jesus' Grace. How can the messenger be forgiven such purposeful and deliberate rebellion and perversity. The messenger is not sent to make the hearers -feel-good.

Other than a few flickering lights here and there, today's messengers are all accursed! They proclaim a false 'gospel', they are false prophets, they are NOT Christians, their 'churches' are not Christian, their praise (with satan's rock music) is NOT to God, their 'visions' are nightmares from demons, and their destination, along with all who follow them, believing as they teach, is the everlasting Lake of Fire.

And if you are dragging your feet to obey and "Come out of her My people so that you not share in her sins, and so that you not receive of her plagues" (Re18:4) at what point will it have become TOO LATE for you and God pronounces, "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Re22:11a) Like in the days of Noah, the flood begins and the door is shut, and you are on the outside. And then, in that day, you cry out "Lord, Lord open to us!" and He replies "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you" (Mt25:11-12,7:22-23)

To you who think you are God's messenger; think of the awesome responsibility...

"So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear the Word from My mouth and warn them from Me. When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall die the death! and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand." (Ezk33:7-8)

Amen!

Paul's Call - (Galatians 1:11-24)

"But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but by a revelation of Jesus Christ." (vs11-12)

When churches look for a pastor, typically what do they seek? Years ago when the Lord was removing me from music, and making it clear that I was supposed to minister the Word, I wrote to Moody and got one of their 'lists' wherein was listed various churches looking for pastors. It seemed like one of the primary initial faults was my lack of 'letters' behind my name. From that list I visited and 'candidated' at a few places. As this ministry progresses, not so much lately, but years ago there would be the queries as to vw's "accountability"; and if I replied "God" ... No, I mean 'human'. To what -people- or -organizations- was I accountable and answerable, to keep me "in line"? After all, without -people-, how does one know they aren't drifting off into error? After all, doesn't "iron sharpen iron" as friends do to friends. (Pr27:17) This has been shared before: a customer who was an area youth director at a local church, we got into a conversation. As he was sharing the -title- of this book and that, that he was reading, he asks "what books?" I read. With my kind of schedule and personal tendencies I've never been much of a book reader, but suggested to him that the reading I do is in the Scriptures. Oh, let me tell you! His pontificated reply was quick and furious: THAT'S HOW PEOPLE GET INTO ERROR! He looks at me wide-eyed, angrily, points: How can we keep ON TRACK if we don't read the "church fathers"?? Uh... that's the "fathers" of the protestant reformation.

What did John say?

"But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will remain in Him." (1Jn2:27)

"I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your Testimonies are my meditation." (Ps119:99)

Jesus promised...

"However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all Truth; for He will not speak things originating from Himself, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will make known to you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will receive from what is Mine and make it known to you." (Jn16:13-14)

Notice that the Holy Spirit, even, doesn't speak from His own initiative. All authority has been given to Jesus Christ. (Re12:10)

So, let's take a look at Paul's story. Where did Saul (his Jewish name) get his start? He came out of Judaism. (vs13) Thus, later, when we start talking about the doctrines of Judaism, we know he has first-hand knowledge. He studied as a pharisee under the highly esteemed Gamaliel. (Ac5:34,22:3) Paul was diligent and "advanced in Judaism" beyond his peers. The way things go in this life, had he continued the way he started, he would likely have advanced to being a chief pharisee. And what was the theology? The -TRADITIONS- of the fathers. (vs14)

That youth director looked to the "church fathers" of the Reformation. The church of Rome looks to the "traditions" of their "church fathers" going back through Augustine and others, and they claim back to Peter, the "first pope". Those of Judaism go back through the Talmud, the writings of various -famous- rabbis.

God's Word came through Moses, Law, Prophets, Psalms. (Ac13:15, Lk24:44) The "holy men of God spoke as they were propelled along by the Holy Spirit" (2Pt1:21) That is God's -original- Word. But instead, people study the writings and commentaries of and about Martin Luther, John Calvin, etc for their doctrine. When some consider translations of the Bible into English, some (not all) who hold to the kjv-only as 'inspired', of more importance to them is that the translation is faithful to "traditional historic doctrines"; even more than copies of the original texts. If Scripture says one thing, but tradition says something contrary, Rome goes by tradition. If the pope says something unscriptural, the church obeys the pope, not God's Word. And Judaism has soooo rejected their Messiah, Jesus Christ, that they have banned one of the foremost passages that speaks of Him, Isaiah ch53. And this is the sort of background from which Saul began.

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus." (vs15-17)

When the Lord got his attention, as he was on his way to persecute more of the church, he finds himself talking to Jesus (as it were) face-to-face. "I am Jesus whom you persecute" and so he asks, "what do You have in mind for me to do?" (Ac9:5-6) And notice that he does not even go to the -real- "church fathers". When people speak of "church fathers" why is it that they never mention the 11 apostles of Jesus? But Saul doesn't even go there. Good thing, too, if he was to learn the TRUE GOSPEL. Some of that home bunch sometimes had problems following their own ideas... e.g. when did the Lord tell them to appoint Matthias to replace Judas? That was a recommendation of the "first pope"!!

So he goes into the wilderness for three years. Is there anything special about "3"? The disciples followed Jesus around for 3 years. The youth in

Babylon were trained for three years. (Da1:5) The Bible school I attended back in the 60s was a three year school.

However, if he is not studying under the tutelage of the apostles, how is he sure to learn correct doctrine? After all, the way modern wisdom goes, don't you need -people- to learn from? He calls himself an "apostle". What did the '11' know about being an apostle? They needed to be taught by Jesus and have witnessed His resurrection. (Ac1:21-22) Well, Saul spoke with Jesus face-to-face; did that not indicate that He was 'alive'. And when others like Moses and the prophets were given God's Word, where did they typically hear from God? Moses had been in the wilderness tending sheep. When he led Israel, he went up into Mt. Sinai. Where is that? Arabia. And for Jews 'authentication' was important. Moses, Elijah and various prophets did 'signs'.

"Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah has given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel, from Jehovah of Hosts who dwells in Mount Zion." (Is8:18)

And Paul says in another context, which we could document from Acts, but we don't need to take the time here...

"Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds." (2Co12:12)

So, Paul goes into the wilderness and learns from Jesus "by revelation". (vs12) As he travels, stops by to visit Peter a couple weeks. (vs18) And also visits with Jacob, the Lord's brother (vs19); who eventually seems to become the -leader- of the apostles in Jerusalem. (Ac12:17, 15:13, 21:18) And for about 14 years travels around in the Gentile world preaching the Gospel.

When the Hellenists wanted to kill him shortly after he was saved, and goes to Tarsus (Ac9:30), is that where this account begins? When Barnabas goes to Tarsus to look for him (Ac11:25), is that 14 years later? Or had he come back from Arabia and hooked up with Barnabas, and gone on some missionary journeys together as chapter 2 then begins? Not important to this study; but an interesting observation and query.

Whatever the case...Saul turned from a persecutor of the Church, into Paul through whom was -Glory- to God. That should be the desire of each Christian...to glorify God. Not for personal gain and glory, and not known for being a scholar after man's wisdom, but for knowing the Lord and learning from Him, through the Scriptures.

False Brethren - (Galatians 2:1-10)

"...because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield in submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." (vs4-5)

As we read these first few verses we get the idea that Paul is visiting the Church leaders at Jerusalem; for what purpose exactly? Some of the cause and effect gets a bit muddled. What comes before "because" in vs4 doesn't quite seem to match vs1-3. We can somewhat read between the lines. Is Paul visiting to verify with the leaders the Gospel he has been preaching? (vs2) But it seems that the Gentiles in his party are not being required to partake in Jewish circumcision. (vs3) Is this occurring before or after Acts 15; or perhaps it is -the- event; where Judaizers had come to Antioch, telling the gentile believers they needed to keep the Jewish rituals; and so the delegation goes to Jerusalem to verify and sort it all out with the Elder apostles and Jacob?

Where does false doctrine come from? From the academic intelligentsia of the world? Teachings of pagan cults? From out-n-out atheists? There's not much deception in that, is there. In lesson #2 I made mention of "softening", in relationship to the taunts of being "judgmental". What happened? How did it happen? It was not those who were openly against following God's holiness. It was not the taunting and open rebellion that did it. No, it was a former student from a highly regarded Bible school. Where I attended in Portland, OR I already saw signs of it going apostate. But there was this other school in Canada, when I heard their men's chorus, and saw the character of those men, I held that school in high regard. They had the reputation of the highest percentage of any school or seminary of its graduates going to the mission field. A fellow music major in college was a person who had attended that school. I had known of her sister at the Bible school where I went. And so, as 'friends', one Sunday we had gone to church together, and stopped for lunch afterward, sitting in my car eating lunch...and this person (from this highly esteemed school) suggested to me that I was viewed by other Christians as being much too 'critical', judgmental and unloving. That I wasn't open to hearing other opinions. She made the suggestion that people of other opinions are also "Christians". That God's kingdom is made up of people from all sorts of backgrounds and outlooks. That I needed to 'loosen up' a bit. And many other such words.

As of this writing (today), I don't know if she was truly a Believer. God knows. Back then I thought she was, and being from that school, I highly respected her. But today I have come to realize that -many- people, over the years, I thought were Christians back when I knew them...today I would have to say they were not. I listened to her -because- she was from a highly regarded school, and she was not of the same sort as the prevailing

'flower-child' females of the day. Not highly regarded by most of the world with their professors with the alphabet behind their names; to them this place was likely nothing in a backwoods prairie town; and sadly, in more recent years, I've heard that even it has gone the way of the rest. But from that one conversation I started down a path of compromise which lasted 20 years.

It was not representatives of the student -catholic- union that accosted me. It was not a representative of the local pentecostal or charismatic churches. It was not the Hare Krishnas, nor the Moonies (who were entrapping others). It was somebody from the same 'branch' of the "Church" I was in fellowship with.

"For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear it. It is not one who hates me who magnified himself against me, or I would hide myself from him; but it is you, a man my equal, my friend and acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng." (Ps55:12-14)

If I had done as Paul did, all those wasted years... well, what does it say? Paul...

"did not yield in submission even for an hour" (vs5)

And you see, Paul was not as impressed with credentials, as I was back then.

"But those who seemed to be something (whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal regard to no man), those who seemed to be important added nothing to me." (vs6)

Around the same time I had occasion to have a little one-on-one time with Luis Palau. You see... he was really a 'somebody'; a famous evangelist; and I treasured for many years some words of "wisdom" he shared with me. (I don't remember, now, what they were. So much for all his 'wisdom'!)

You see how Paul says it... "those who SEEMED to be SOMETHING". And Paul says, essentially...BIG DEAL! BIG WHOOP! You see, back a couple lessons ago to "accountability". Not only do people want to see a large part of the alphabet behind the names of people they learn from and follow, but those to whom they are accountable should have an equal amount of the alphabet behind their names, too; and be from the big/famous organizations. But are they "false brethren"? Are they "secretly BROUGHT IN" to SPY OUT and BRING INTO BONDAGE?

We should clarify something here. In this book the word "bondage" is used, because the false doctrine then was the matter of going back to LAW. When we speak of current-day examples, it is actually the opposite. Yes, Gospel is Grace. But today's apostasy is not content with Grace, but

they go a step further, turning the grace of God into LICENSE. (Ju1:4) "Anything goes". We can live like the world, with the world's immorality, and claim that "God accepts us JUST AS WE ARE". When we get saved we "DON'T HAVE TO CHANGE A THING". Whether it's going back to LAW, which we will start getting into soon, or today's lust for abandoning all morality and holiness... the concepts on how the "false brethren secretly" slink in to spy and pervert doctrine is the same.

Paul did not give them the time of day! (vs5)

Paul was not impressed with credentials. (vs6) (In fact, next lesson Paul is going to stand up to the chief honcho, Peter, and give him a chewing out. A tongue-lashing.)

Paul had been commissioned and taught directly by the Lord Jesus Christ. That was Paul's credentials. That was his accountability. And the "church fathers", Jacob, Peter and John, recognized Jesus' call upon his life and extended the right hand of fellowship, confirming his call to the gentiles (vs9, Ac9:15,13:46,18:6,22:21,26:17,28:28)

Hypocrisy - (Galatians 2:11-21)

"Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from Jacob, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision." (vs11-12)

Does this behavior by Peter seem at all strange? Peter is a Jew. Jews considered non-Jews to be "unclean", ceremonially. If a gentile wanted to worship with Jews, their males needed to be circumcised (Ex12:48) And as one reads through the Pentateuch, one sees the same laws for Jews and Gentiles. And certainly, Jews did not -eat- with Gentiles.

There had been a complaint about Jews fellowshiping with Gentile Believers. About whom was that complaint leveled the first time?

"And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, saying, You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" (Ac11:2-3)

Who first defended the practice?

"But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning..." (vs4)

Peter had been the first Jew to be sent by Jesus to Gentiles to preach the Gospel. And he says,

"And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the Word of the Lord, how He said, John indeed immersed in water, but you shall be immersed in the Holy Spirit. If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to be able to prevent God? When they heard these things they kept silent; and they glorified God, saying, Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life." (Ac11:15-18)

When he was being led by the Holy Spirit, Peter accepted that Gentiles were Believers, just as they (Jews) were. And from that experience Peter also learned to fellowship with Gentile Believers, when he is at Antioch surrounded by Gentiles, and he doesn't have to worry about his legalistic Jewish brethren. But now, 'fearless' Peter, when Jews come from Jerusalem to Antioch to see what's going on, spying, Peter freaks out when in the midst of the "false brethren" (vs4) He -knows- the new "liberty" of the Spirit-indwelt Church, but those old laws have been part of his makeup for so long, and what of the condemnation from the old JEWISH/HEBREW ROOTS?

It's somewhat like my upbringing. Our family was gentile, but my father held to a very strict "sabbath" concept about Sunday. Many conservative

christians did, also, back then. There was no working, playing, studying or anything beyond getting dressed, going to church, eating meals, and spending Sunday afternoon reading christian books, or whatever. He held to a similar strictness that punished the Israelite who gathered sticks for firewood on the Sabbath. (Nu15:32)

So, I grew up, finished college, got married, and we moved to live near my father for a time. In the middle of N.Dakota summertime can get hot and dry. When I became a 'man', now approaching 30, no longer under my father's daily permission-necessary regimen, I did not hold to the strictness of his "sabbath" laws. It was hot, the lawn was getting dry, I put out the sprinkler on that Sunday afternoon. And who happens to stop by to visit about something, but my father. He verbally scolds me for having the sprinkler running (on Sunday), and says, "That's not how I taught you!"

If I had been Peter, I would have cowered "Yes sir! Yes sir!" and turned off the sprinkler. But Paul "did not yield in submission even for an hour" (vs5) Later Paul is going to address the keeping of "days and months and seasons and years" (4:10)

But Peter was not like that! The Lord, through the coming of the Holy Spirit to the gentiles, had shown him that the Law had been fulfilled. It was no longer necessary to keep the former austerity measures. Everything was no longer unclean. (as the sheet of animals had been brought before him in the vision Ac10:15) God had given the earth to Adam and Eve...go live in it freely and have dominion. (Having "dominion" means they are the "boss" of the earth) They sinned, the Seed was promised, and until the Seed would come to fulfill the promise, God's people lived under strict guidelines. But then the Seed came and fulfilled the promise. Sin was atoned. There was again freedom. And yet Peter was listening to his 'dad'... That's not how I taught you!

So Paul confronts him (you can read his words): If you've discovered our new-found freedom in Christ, you have preached the Gospel to the gentiles, and are now -fellowshipping- with them, and we have matured to become grown-ups... WHY ARE YOU STILL LISTENING TO DAD??? Don't you remember those whoopin's we used to get in the woodshed? Dad is no longer our boss. We've got new wives, we are our own family. You are doing wrong, bringing others back to dad's house to be under his authority. His way didn't work.

If the Law, which we were saved out of, didn't work; why are you trying to make the gentiles keep the Law? That's like politicians with agendas, persuading people to pass laws that didn't work last time they were tried, and aren't working now; so they insist on passing more like them for the future.

Even David knew that it was not the sacrifices that atoned...

"For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." (Ps51:16-17)

As Paul writes in Romans,

"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God." (Ro2:28-29)

As Jews they knew how flawed the Law was. Israel couldn't keep it. Peter has blazed the trail to the gentiles for Salvation apart from the Law. Peter is the first from the Church to reach out to the gentiles, so why is he GOING BACK ON THE GOSPEL that he presented?

Either a person is under Law, or under Grace. Can't have it both ways. They are each mutually exclusive from each other. And in Adam and Eve's day there was no such thing as Jew and Gentile. The human race was the human race. When God sent Jesus it says that "God so loved the WORLD" (Jn3:16) It does not say: God so loved the Jews, but gentiles are scum. The promise was made to the world, and fulfilled for the world.

We are justified by the "faith of Jesus Christ" (vs16) Jesus fulfilled the promise of the woman's "Seed". The Law did not do that.

When we are saved we also "died to the Law" (vs19) God and the Law are opposites. When a person disobeys God, the Law kicks in to effect death. And so if we are to "live to God" the law must be dead to us. When Jesus died on the cross it was as if I was on that cross -with- Christ. And so then as Christ was "raised from the dead" we are raised with Him to "walk in newness of life" (Rom6:9,4) If we are -living- with Christ, why would we cling to the instrument of death, the Law?

Christ died to free us from death. If death is presided over by the Law, that means Christ died to free us from the Law.

So, if a person is going to fellowship with those who cling to the Law, while preaching Grace...it's as if one doesn't really believe they have been freed from the Law. They're not really saved. Ah yes...as we looked ahead before, to "fallen from grace" (5:4)

In other words, Peter: If you are going to preach -Freedom- in the Grace of Jesus Christ, then BEHAVE LIKE IT. Don't be one thing to one group, and another to the other. If you are free in Christ, why are you hiding it? We spoke of the "woodshed". Peter had already experienced the (literal) floggings from the hand of the Jews, and been in prison, waiting for execution the next day. Perhaps he was a bit shy of the 'dogs' that he

knew their growl, snap and bite? Paul knew it as well and gets on Peter's case. In Christ we're tougher than that!

Where's the... "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." (Ac5:41) ???

What is Right and True? Let's stick with it!

What did Jesus call you to do? As a result, what message are you preaching? Then...LIVE WHAT YOU PREACH!

Bewitched? - (Galatians 3:1-12)

"O foolish Galatians. Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, do you now perfect yourselves in the flesh?" (vs1-3)

What does it mean to "bewitch" somebody? It can mean a couple of things; but ultimately it has word origins in witchcraft and the occult. There are many different ways by which people gain 'control' over others. If a person submits to hypnosis, they go into a near-sleep state and the practitioner verbally makes suggestions, which then, when the person wakes up, they alter their behavior towards weight loss, or such things. In how many of those cases does it also involve demons and the 'patient' ultimately becoming demon-possessed? When I was a kid, at the boarding school for missionary children in Japan, some of my peers had this 'game' they would play. The "it" person would hold their breath real hard and pass out, and while in that passed out state the others would make verbal suggestions, and when the person woke up would 'do' the things suggested while they had been passed out. They thought it was the greatest fun. When I tried being "it", it didn't work on me. Is that because I actually knew the Lord, it was a demonic practice, and God's children are protected from "all the power of the enemy" when I was doing it in ignorance? (Lk10:19, Ac17:30)

Indeed! I learned more evil from other ('christian') missionary kids than I ever did from the 'pagan' Japanese!

Interesting that Paul uses such a term on the Galatians, to whom he has just given the warning about people bringing "another gospel" (1:8-9) What did he call them? "ACCURSED" Back at that lesson we concluded that such a person is in a state of "forever lostness". What is the source of a curse? Is it not an occult demonic expression? The witchdoctor curses somebody by uttering incantations, and "sticking pins" in a doll; or this, or that; whatever it is they do. A person who -is- "accursed" is in a sorry state. But in the strictest sense of the word, the "spell" is "cast" upon them by a demonic medium. To "curse" and to "bewitch" are essentially the same thing. The ones coming with the "other" gospel are accursed. They are like witches or warlocks... BEWITCHING their victims.

So, Paul is actually asking the Galatians: where's the witch/warlock that you've been paying attention to? What sort of witchcraft have you gotten yourselves mixed up with?

You see, folks, the GREAT DECEPTION TODAY! When somebody comes along presenting a different "gospel", some other doctrine, or as they say

today TEARING DOWN WALLS of doctrine; or when they have meetings to LEARN FROM EACH OTHER all the various -different- beliefs...it is NOT -merely- a different doctrine. It is witchcraft. It is sorcery. Oh, but they talk about "loving Jesus" and "making commitments" for Christ. What is the context of Paul's chiding: Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed...as crucified.

Some of the worst witchcraft today is the images of Jesus and Mary. If a person goes into a church of Babylon, and they portray Jesus "as crucified" IS THAT THE GOSPEL? -NO- They show him "perpetually bleeding". Is that the Gospel? NO! Witchcraft requires works and rituals. Judaism requires rituals and various -rote- 'prayers' that (today) they bob their heads and bodies. Whatever Judaism was back then, that was perverting the Gospel, over the years has become what it is today with its Kabala: its mystical teachings based on the Scriptures, which (as I understand it) also has its pentecostal/charismatic style events. Take today's catholicism and charismania, and go backwards a couple thousand years, and that's what existed in Paul's day. Paul would see today's "church" and ask: How come you're engaging in the occult?

But where did the Holy Spirit come from? When Peter was preaching in the home of Cornelius there were no rituals or prayers. No 'worshiping' with upraised arms and reciting mantras. There was no "laying on of hands". Just... as Peter was preaching, the Spirit -came- upon them. When a sinner is "born from above" (Jn3:3) the Holy Spirit simply -does- His work. (Jn3:8) Is that Law or Faith?

Where did the Gospel originate? With Moses and the Law? No! "Just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Therefore know that those who are of faith are sons of Abraham." (vs6-7)

While we can (and have done) go backwards from those officially called "jews" and label Abraham as 'father' of the Jews; technically Abraham was called, by his geographic peers and neighbors, the "Hebrew". The "outsider". There was no such thing called "Judaism" yet. Abraham was living according to the laws God gave after the Flood (Ge9) and offering animal sacrifices as tradition handed down from Adam and Eve (Ge3,4:4) Abraham lived "by faith", just as Abel, Enoch and Noah did. (Heb11) Just as the Gospel was given regarding the "Seed" of the woman (Ge3:15), after the flood the Gospel was further-clarified through Abraham (vs8) (Ge12,15)

If Salvation required the rituals of Judaism, how were the people saved for those couple thousand years from Adam to Moses? They had the animal sacrifice. But again, David, the 'Jew' "after God's own heart" says, "For You did not desire sacrifice" but the "broken and contrite heart" (Ps51:16-17) So...it was not 2500 years of animal sacrifices (prior to Moses) that saved those people. But those "who are of faith...with faithful Abraham" (vs9)

So, does the Bible contradict itself?

"..the just shall live by his faith" (Hab2:4)

"You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am Jehovah." (Le18:5)

Is it FAITH or STATUTE? If a person kept the Law, God said he would - live-.

Abraham is the 'father' of Faith. Abraham "believed" God, and God accounted it to him as righteousness. But Abraham also offered periodic sacrifices. (Ge12:7,8, 13:18) So, was Abraham under Law?

What sort of person is going to keep God's law? Whether it be the law to "not murder" or to "offer sacrifices"? God promises that a Seed is going to come to atone for sin. God shows man how to offer a sacrifice as a 'type' of the sacrifice of the promised Seed. What sort of person is going to offer the sacrifice? One who -believes- the promise of the coming Seed, or an unbeliever? Why would an unbeliever go to all that trouble? He wouldn't. Thus, keeping of the Law before Jesus died on the cross was also an -act- of Faith. The -act- of Law might have been -works-, but the works would not be done if there was not Faith -motivating- the works. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn14:15) which was the principle of righteousness even under Law.

"..showing goodness/mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Ex20:6, De5:10)

The first Law, as Jesus recited, included...

"And you shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart, with all your soul, exceedingly in every way. And these Words which I am commanding you today shall be in your heart." (De6:5-6)

Love was first, followed by keeping God's commandments. However, something came before love. How does one 'love' God, if he doesn't 'believe' Him to be "One God". (De6:4)

-FAITH-

But now that Christ has "finished" the work, and God says the sacrifices are no longer applicable, one who is in faith; just as he kept the Law prior to Jesus' crucifixion, just as equally no longer does after Jesus' Resurrection. But, that's next lesson.

Redeemed from the Curse - (Galatians 3:13-18)

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (vs13-14)

This little section says, essentially, what we've already been saying. We have addressed it from the aspect of the woman's Seed, promised to Adam and Eve. (Ge3:15) Sin and death came about at the very beginning, and the promise of Jesus Christ, the Seed, was made way back then. But the Jewish mind does not embrace Eve like it does Abraham. When a Believer died they were said to go to "Abraham's Bosom" (Lk16:22-23) Where mankind had its start with Adam, the beginning of the Jewish mind was Abraham.

The "Seed" changed 'ownership' along the way through history. The promise at first was to Eve. Then it was Abraham. Then the prophecies were related to David, the Seed to sit on David's throne and rule in the kingdom. (We don't need references do we?) These were the 'channels' through whom the Seed was brought. As generations passed, the 'family' of the Seed's physical birth became in focus.

But for this discussion with gentiles, Abraham is the focus. When Jesus told the woman of Samaria that "salvation is of the Jews" (Jn4:22) the Jews lost sight of the Seed. Jesus -was- the Seed, and they rejected Him. (Jn1:11) And so Judaism, even today, is waiting for "Redemption". They have always rejected "this man" and presumed that Salvation was through themselves and Judaism. It had to be according to -their- presuppositions. And so a gentile might think they had to BECOME A JEW to be saved. Thus, we go back to Abraham.

Notice the argument. The promise is made to Abraham. At that time there was no such thing as Judaism, nor the prophet Moses. And yet, God made the promise. How long is God's promise? Regarding the land, "in perpetuity" (Ge13:15) In other words, as long as the earth exists, that land belongs to Abraham and his descendents. It is in that context that the Seed is promised. Any covenant or contract is an ongoing contract. God tells Abraham that Israel will be in bondage and delivered after 400 years. And the promises continue beyond that. Thus, the promise of the Seed is on-going...unending. This is a -permanent- deal. Other conditions may come and go, but this one remains.

Thus, when Moses comes along and God established the Law through Moses, this agreement about the Seed was not 'annulled' (vs17) Moses gives the Law, they build the tabernacle, the temple...but underneath all this is the persisting promise of the Seed. In fact, where Israel was looking at all the laws and statutes, Paul reminds that when the Rock gave life-

giving waters, "that Rock (that followed them spiritually) was Christ" (1Co10:4) When God tells Moses of "My Angel" that was going before them (Ex23:23, 32:34), that was Jesus Christ...the pre-incarnate Seed.

And when they would boast about Abraham, and He says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, Before Abraham came to be, I AM" (Jn8:58) they rejected Him and tried to stone Him.

The Law involves a curse. "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the Law, to do them" (vs10b) That would include disobedient Jews, as well as Gentiles who did not have the Law and thus did not keep it. The curse of the Law was death. The Gospel of Christ's Grace is that Jesus -became- a curse for us.

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2Co5:21)

Infraction of the Law required 'payment'. Death. Jesus made the payment, thus the infraction was atoned. The sinner is acquitted. And then Jesus proved His authority over life (Jn1:4) and death (Heb2:14) by rising from the dead.

Since the promise of the Seed was made to Abraham, it was not a Jewish promise, it was not a Law promise. Both Jew and Gentile, equally, can have redemption. The "simplicity" that is in Christ (2Co11:3) is not all bogged down in seeing if the leprosy is "skin deep", which lamb is picked from the flock, how the fat is burned on the altar, or is the meat ready to pull out of the kettle so the priests can eat, or this, or that.

This is the 'simple' Gospel: Eve and Adam sinned, spreading death to -all- humanity (not just Jew or Gentile) (Rom5:12) God, at that initial downfall of the human race, "so love the world" that He gave a promise. (Jn3:16) He didn't give details. But the promise was the Seed (of the woman).(Gen3:15) Abraham comes along and the Seed promise is reiterated. David comes along and the Seed promise is again reiterated. Then the Seed arrived, through the woman, the "handmaid of the Lord" (Lk1:38) The Seed died on the cross and proclaimed, "IT HAS BEEN FINISHED" (Jn19:30)

PROMISE FULFILLED..!!

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain (from the foundation of the world Re13:8, Ge3:15) to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Re5:12)

Purpose of the Law - (Galatians 3:19-29)

"What purpose then does the Law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator." (vs19)

Have you ever been in a situation where the stillness of a neighborhood is shattered by the sound of loud pipes, squeeling tires driving precariously through the narrow streets where little children are playing, and somebody shakes their head and proclaims: There oughta be a law. Some pristine wilderness area, abundant in wildlife, is discovered by the dirtbike crowd, whose bikes emit loud noises, and their knobby tires tear up the landscape, and wildlife are chased away to other areas. There oughta be a law! A country road comes out to where it intersects with a hiway; there's a stop sign; and for many years people have negotiated entrance onto the hiway without incident. Then one day some set of circumstances coincide, the driver of the car lacking due care comes out onto the hiway into the path of an oncoming car, and a bunch of people are killed. The local news of the death of those people is 'emotional'. They feature emotionally distraught people: there needs to be a flashing light there; there needs to be traffic controlling lights there; the stop sign needs to be bigger; and a committee of people gather signatures...there oughta be a law. For how many years did people negotiate that stop sign just fine; and since the accident people have continued to do so? At how many controlled intersections do people die? It's not that there wasn't a light. But no matter... THERE OUGHTA BE A LAW!

If we look at human history through the lens of 'dispensations': when God first put man in Eden, man not being aware of satan's existence, other than the command regarding the 'tree', man was oblivious as to right and wrong. There was no good or bad...just...this is life; let's live it. - INNOCENCE- Once sin entered the picture, man knew what he had done, and was now condemned; but with the promise of a coming Seed. But there was no 'list' and rules and regulations. He lived according to what his -CONSCIENCE- dictated. But man's conscience was full of evil, wickedness and violence. But as Paul writes in Romans, man did have a conscience apart from the Law, written in the heart. (Ro2:15) But with only conscience to rule, man's degeneracy came to where only a single man, Noah, was Godly. So God destroys everything with the flood, and as the earth is repopulated, mankind becomes organized. -GOVERNMENT- Some person becomes "in charge" of everybody else. And as they follow Nimrod and his mother, the Babel Madonna/Child religion begins to take shape. -RELIGION- So, in the midst of this, after God confounds the languages, the -PROMISE- is re-established. This, the stepping stone to -LAW-.

Before the Flood there was no law. People chose their own way. God could say that they were "wicked", and perhaps a person's conscience

would convict them of their evilness, but if no law was given, like the one that said "don't eat of that tree", how is judgment adjudicated? And so, as humanity gets itself firmly re-established with nations and governments, God now establishes a STANDARD....as we spoke of earlier, a - BASELINE- for righteousness. If sin results in death, what is the definition of "sin"? If the Seed was coming to pay the penalty, what was the list of decrees by which to know -what- the Seed was atoning? The Law became that BASELINE.

Years ago Montana did not have a daytime speed limit. Back when I used to drive back to N.Dakota from school on the west coast, I would drive along at 90mph. (with the light front end, that was about as fast as a person wanted to drive a Corvair) And no hiway patrol ever stopped me. Somebody might have made comments about "there oughta be a law"; but nevertheless there was NO LAW against driving that fast. And I was not the only one who drove those speeds. Even the Greyhound busses drove those speeds; I was playing 'tag' with one on one of those trips. But as soon as I would cross the borders into Idaho or N.Dakota, there were posted speed law signs, and a person had better watch it, or the hiway patrol -could- pull you over. And if the person opted to go to court, the books with the law could be pulled out, the law read in everyone's hearing, and the citation of infraction could be read. The law had been broken. The fine was to be paid.

Now, one winter a storm had gone through, so I 'slowed down' (for conditions) to 70mph (112kph). And this time on a 2-lane stretch that hadn't yet been made into the 4-lane interstate, and this Greyhound was on my tail...driving along on the sheet of ice at 70mph, right along with me. I was young and foolish. I don't know what the Greyhound driver's excuse was!

Supposing that my foolishness would have ended in sliding off the road, crashing, and me being killed; if there had "been a law" would it have "GIVEN LIFE"? (vs21) Well, it was daylight hours; the daytime speed limit would have been 70mph; so I would have been 'within the law'. But is there a law against 'stupidity'?

I was not breaking the speed law, but was breaking the law of stupidity. And what sorts of law/s would it take to protect against stupidity? A WHOLE BUNCH...governing every single last little aspect of driving and common sense. It would need to be detailed like... well... like the Law and statutes God gave through Moses.

Now, when I "became a man" and "put away childish things" (1Co13:11), today I would not go driving along at 70mph on a sheet of ice. I have become older and (hopefully) wiser. A person who is "full-grown" (Co4:12) with wisdom doesn't -need- all the little laws, because that wisdom is now a -part- of his makeup.

Until the Seed came to atone for our Salvation, we were corrupt and not fit hosts for the residing of the Holy Spirit. In comparison to what happened at Pentecost, I don't claim to understand, quite, what happened with OT Believers when the Holy Spirit would "cloth" them. (Jdg6:4, 14:19, 2Ch24:20) But with sin having been atoned, the Seed promised and sent the Holy Spirit (Jn16:13, Ac2) and it was the coming of the Holy Spirit at Cornelius' house when Peter preached, that indicated to the Jewish Church leaders that Gentiles were also part of the Grace of Jesus Christ. (Ac11:18) And that event happened without them having been under the Law.

Now, we can spin a lot of words with this. Paul gives his object lessons. I've shared a few. If you have the Holy Spirit, as you read the passage, you understand. If you don't have the Spirit you won't, and furthermore, without the Spirit a person "is not His" (Re8:9)

But to sum it up, the Law was like going to school. And when the studies are done, it is GRADUATION time. One no longer must be at their desk when the bell rings. If the graduate is out and about during school hours, they are not arrested for truancy. In fact, all those old school buildings? Burned to the ground. In America there would be -rejoicing-... WE DON'T HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL!!! I say "in America" because I remember in Japan when a school burned down one time near where we lived, my father told how students were observed crying their hearts out...They - COULDN'T- go to school.

And if not school, it's like families with small children, of which there are several within shouting distance of me. They have 'child-proof' fences. The one doesn't have a fence out front, so it used to be that the youngest one, before she would obey voice commands, often had to be chased down: Lilly, No! Don't go out into the street! Or if she wandered away sideways, sometimes quickly before anybody noticed she had gone, apparently their neighbors were used to dad or mom in their yards on 'retrieval' missions.

The confines of fences and commands are not for punishment; but for keeping the kiddies safe until they are old enough; where they obey; and can better enjoy the "freedom" of the outdoors, knowing they are sticking around the house and not wandering off. Lilly's a sweet little girl whose mind is always 'out there' to -explore-; "innocence". If I come by on one of my walks, and she's outside, she engages me like a little chatterbox. But she needs some "law" to keep her safe.

And if a small child disobeyed, ran into the street and was killed by a passing car? -DEATH- That's how the Law is both "death" -and- a "guard". (vs23) That's how, when the Law is broken it resulted in death. But in faith a person -keeping- the Law would "live in them" (vs12)

When the Seed atoned for sin, He created the ability for the Holy Spirit to reside...and with the Holy Spirit is all spiritual wisdom. His anointing

"teaches all things" (1Jn2:27) Like in the OT where certain ones were "clothed" with the Spirit, we now, in faith have "put on Christ" (vs27) As he writes elsewhere, we have "Christ -in- you, the hope of glory" (Col1:27) There is no Judaistic law. It is Jews and Gentiles, equally; male and female, slave and free. If we have the Holy Spirit, as God is, we also are "one in Christ Jesus" (vs28) As Jesus prayed would be the case, just before He went to the cross.

"that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." (Jn17:21)

And as such we are "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (vs29) An heir is one who receives an inheritance. We are currently "flesh and blood" and in that regard, we have "corruption" (1Co15:50) But we have the promise of the "redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph1:13-14) This is what we are waiting for now:

"...but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body." (Ro8:23)

NOW, BEFORE WE GO INTO THE NEXT LESSON, let's observe something from Peter:

"..and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable twist, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware also that you not be led away with the error of the wicked, and fall from your own steadfastness." (2Pt3:15-17)

Around the time I was about to begin this series a question came from a subscriber in an unrelated context; and I told him this series was to commence and I would address it.

The question: Who are the "angels" in vs19?

Simple answer: I don't know.

I'm glad this series is being done "walk-thru" style, not verse-by-verse, line-by-line. As we tend to do walk-thrus, we sometimes address words and phrases, and at other times we talk along "parallel" to the passage, much as we just did in this lesson. Paul obviously does not talk about ice-covered hiways in Montana. But if you also read Paul's writings, it truly -is- as Peter says, and not because Peter was a 'stupid' fisherman, Peter's

own writings are quite clear and laid out...the Lord wouldn't have had him - preach- before multitudes as he did, if he had been stupid. But he, who had followed the Lord around for three years, notices that Paul's writings are sometime hard to understand. One thing I am sometimes frustrated about is that, while he is logical, he doesn't always lay out his outline in a logical fashion. He says something, then something else, and then comes back to the first topic, then jumps over to something else, back-and-forth...sometimes, almost, as if he was the "absent-minded professor". And some thoughts seem to come to his mind, which are obviously 'deep', which he forgets to 'define' or 'explain'. He says them, and abandons them to 'dangle' around in the air.

Paul is the one who likens that rock in the wilderness to Christ. (1Co10:4) Where does the burning bush with Moses fit? An angel appears to Joshua with a drawn sword. (Josh5:13) One appears to Gideon. (Jdg6) One appears to Samson's parents. (Jdg13) Is it this sort of thing where these angels were manifestations of the pre-incarnate Jesus? Jesus is also known as the "mediator". (1Ti2:5) And He is the "mediator of the new covenant" (Heb12:24)

Perhaps he didn't cover this 'pearl' (Mt7:6) because he knows he's going to do some more "chewing" out? (4:8) They can't comprehend anything deeper than trying to fish them out of their Hebrew Roots muck. Whatever the case, I don't want to be guilty of speaking "of things they do not know" (Ju1:10) Sometimes I feel like a series such as this is a bit scatterbrained, that we talk round-n-round the subject. Well, isn't that sorta how Paul writes, too.

the Heir - (Galatians 4:1-7)

"Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father." (vs1-2)

This lesson will be short, because it is simple. Following from the previous lesson's neighborhood children: right now the little kids are, well, -little-. They are clearly the 'children' of their parents. Even to an untrained eye, they share features with their parents. They come from the same DNA - SEED. And so, as they grow up to adulthood and supposing they were to inherit the family business, the family house, the parents die and the truck and van become theirs. They are "HEIRS" By definition: one who inherits, one who is in line to succeed.

But while they are young, they do not have the ability to function on their own. They are -told- what to do, where to go, what they cannot do, where they cannot go. That's the same state of affairs as a slave. A slave follows orders. Children follow orders. The only difference, at that point, is DNA. SEED.

But children grow up to -INHERIT-. Slaves do not.

As if the point hasn't already been made, let's give this another go-round. That's the whole point of the Law. Somehow the history of humanity is likened to growing children. Abraham -believes- God and it is accounted for Righteousness. That's the Gospel: Faith - Grace. And so, at Salvation the Promise is made of the Seed. The DNA. The Inheritance. As Paul explains: the "Holy Spirit of promise...the earnest of the inheritance...until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph1:13-14) Even for us, saved Christians, presently living in these bodies, we are not fit for Heaven (1Co15:50) We are waiting for the (promised) "redemption of the body" (Ro8:23) That will happen at the "change" (1Co15:51-52, Job14:14) at the Resurrection and Rapture of those who are "in Christ" (1Th4:16-17)

Don't let anybody tell you that Salvation isn't ultimately 'progressive'.

- 1) Promise of the Seed (Ge3:15, 22:18)
- 2) Coming of the Seed (Ga4:4-5)
- 3) Redemption of the body (Ro8:23, Eph1:13-14, 1Th4:16-17)

Don't let the false teachers persuade you that there is NO RAPTURE. (Forget whether it's "pre", "mid", "post", or whatever. There are some who are teaching that there isn't even going to -be- a Rapture!) Without a Rapture, there is no Salvation. UNDERSTAND THIS CLEARLY! - EVERYONE- (everyone) EVERYBODY who is In Christ will be raptured. Certainly, the ones who die will first be resurrected. But then those resurrected, and those alive, will be Raptured "at the same time" If there is

no Rapture, all there is is the Promise and Atonement. But if there is no Rapture, God did not keep His promise. That's what the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is. He is the Promise of the Redemption.

Just as there needed to be the Resurrection to show forth Jesus' power over death (1Co15:54-56); without the Resurrection, there is no salvation; so, too, without the Rapture the Promise and Crucifixion were all wasted effort on God's Part. Without the Rapture the Christian does not get to Heaven. The Rapture is -physically- the 'means' whereby we get there. If there is no Rapture, when this earth is burned up, we get burned up, too...forever lost!

OK...so, how did we transition to talking about Rapture? Well, it is the next step. The Promise, the Seed fulfilling the promise...and then the next phase. Rapture.

Now...transferring from childhood to adulthood is likened by Paul to "adoption". While we are certainly adopted from satan's realm into God's Kingdom...

"...who has delivered us from the authority of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col1:13)

In this context it actually speaks of the Roman traditions of the time it was written. Fathers were not very 'fatherly' (Eph6:4) in those times, but would pawn off the little brats to "guardians and stewards" (vs2) until the father would proclaim them 'his heir'. It was just a bratty kid until the day the father would proclaim heirship. Then there was the 'adoption' ceremony where the father's 'ownership' of the heir was made official. Only then could the child call his father "father".

The time under guardians and stewards was like the period under Law. But since the Seed has fulfilled His promise, we are now able to have direct access to the Father, as heirs, on His "throne of grace" (Heb4:16) That was the symbolism when the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom when Jesus was on the cross (Mt27:51) Under Law the average person could not go into the Holy of Holies (Heb9:8), signifying God's presence.

When the Seed fulfilled the Promise made to Eve and Abraham...

"...we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." (Heb4:14)

In Bondage Again? - (Galatians 4:8-20)

"However, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. But now, knowing God, or rather being known by God, how is it that you turn again to the feeble and worthless principles, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored among you in vain." (vs8-11)

This passage could be speaking equally of Judaism or paganism. The overall epistle might be about Judaism where some were trying to Judaize them, but the Galatians originally were gentiles and were saved out of paganism. It would be interesting to know which came first: the keeping of dates by Israel, or by paganism? Since Nimrod and Semiramis came about before the promise to Abraham, perhaps the pagan dates came first? Satan certainly knew about the Seed as well as anybody, and what better way to draw humanity away from God's promise than by devising counterfeits that have many similarities. And just because Rome didn't become "christian" until the 3rd century didn't mean that all the pagan symbols, that became "christianized", weren't already in place by the time Paul was writing these things. Certainly December 25 is NOT a Biblical date. Whatever date "easter" falls each year is not Biblical. When people greet me with the various seasons, I have become bold and simply tell them, "I don't celebrate ??? XXX ???". In these politically correct days, they don't reply further; and I'm obviously now older and curmudgeonly. You know, Baa-Humbug. But there was a time when the response would have been, "Oooooohhh???" And the reaction was quite clear: If a person doesn't celebrate X-??? or Eggs, such a person must be a "pagan". They are not celebrating these traditional "christian" holy days. And if they "zealously pursue" (vs17) the person, with the continual bombardment, the person eventually caves and follows along to 'fit in'. And if bombardment doesn't work, then they "exclude", to make the person feel like they no longer 'belong' and have been ostracized. And who wants to be 'alone' while everybody else is fellowshiping together in camaraderie.

On the other hand, if pagan dates were devised to 'imitate' the dates God commanded Israel in the Law, but now since the Seed fulfilled the promise, why are Believers sticking to new moons, sabbaths, etc? As Paul writes elsewhere

"So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Col2:16)

Is it wrong to set out the lawn sprinkler on Sunday? If it is, then if a rain shower came through on Sunday, would God be 'guilty' of breaking His own Sabbath?

The Sunday 'sabbath' people used to be quite "zealous", as are those of Babylon. I know of a person over 40 years ago who, when the rituals were followed to "become a Christian", and they withdrew their 'membership' from one of Babylon's churches, but weren't 'joining' in any other Babylonish church, their staunchly Babylonish family mercilessly hounded with, "DON'T YOU WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN???" Satan had actually called this person to a different demonic mission, so in the end it didn't matter. (That's why I worded their 'conversion' as I did) But as far as that family was concerned, they "zealously pursued" this person.

Was persecution also involved? I don't quite understand the -context- of vs12-15 to the passage. Obviously Paul had some sort of a problem with his eyes. Was it the leftovers of when he was blinded on the road to Damascus? Although, it doesn't seem quite like God's ways to blind him, and then heal him, but NOT QUITE fully. Or was it from persecution where he was beaten or stoned? When he says, "I am as you are" (vs12), had the Galatians also experienced persecution? (3:4) Was this persecution causing them to draw back from boldness due to fear of reprisals?

Today there are many who call themselves "Christians" who have one foot in the [C]hurch, and the other foot in the [c]hurch. They -claim- "faith in Christ", but then fellowship with Babylon, whether it comes in the various flavors: catholic, lutheran, baptist, presbyterian, calvary chapel, etc.etc.etc. Where Paul exhorted...

"...brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be completely fitted together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1Co1:10)

people are calling themselves by Paul, Apollos, Peter. But if they are not 'denominational', they are "none of those things". They are the "church of christ". And if something like blah-blah-blah TOGETHER is convened, those claiming to be "Christian" fellowship with the Mormon satan worshipers, the ones from Babylon, and most recently the latest blasphemy: "chrislam" The joining of "christian" with "islam". And about the time this is being compiled the newest translational abomination, being done by the likes of Wycliffe, where in, what they purport to be the "bible", they have replaced "God" with "Allah"

Around here when suggestion is often made that not everyone calling themselves "Christian" -is- one, there will be the taunts that: According to this mentality, unless a person is a follower of PB, they are not going to Heaven.

Notice Paul's words:

"My little children, for whom I travail again until Christ is formed in you, I would like to...change my tone; for I HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT YOU" (vs19-20)

Two Covenants - (Galatians 4:21-31)

"Tell me, you who desire to be under the Law, do you not hear the Law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise" (vs21-23)

As we mentioned earlier, Paul is taking the excursion broad and wide. As if this topic of Law vs Grace was an -object- to be picked up, looked at, flipped over and look at the bottom, turn it around and look at the back, open the lid and peer inside, shake it around, tap on it, etc.

The argument has been addressed from many perspectives. Last lesson, even, from the -pagan- perspective. While, when discussing God's promise of the Seed, I like to start at Eve; Paul is discussing Israel's perspective, because it is Jews who are trying to "Judaize" the Church. And so, the final argument in this debate goes to the "beginning" with Abraham. We like to think, and Judaism assumes, that the debate begins with Moses. But it is truly -at- Abraham where the argument will end, and should stop all mouths.

Remember that the whole argument from beginning to end is about the Seed. Judaizers do not understand "freedom" because they are stuck on Moses and -statutes-. But bondage vs freedom is actually a whole-nuther concept. Remember how we discussed the children of my neighborhood. The children discussed are from a fully 'caucasian' and blond hair race and DNA. Now, to the other side of me is another family with children, and being right across the driveway, it is fun to watch them play, and grow. And they are of the American Indian race and DNA. There is no mistaking 'where' the children belong, and 'whose' families they live with. Nobody would ever see a child from one household out someplace, lost, and take them by the hand and lead them to the 'wrong house'. In similar fashion, there is no similarity between Law and Grace. Certainly, to those who are not living in Grace, Law has the -appearance- of Righteousness; much as both sets of children are 'humans' in that they have hair, faces, bodies, feet and both speak English and go to the same school. But skin tones and hair color are not the same; not even close.

Same thing with the Seed of Law vs Grace. Sarah was a long-time conceiving. They want children, so they contrive, contrary to promise, to have a child by Hagar, the Egyptian slave woman. God -promised- that Abraham would have a child through Sarah. But when things weren't going as quickly as presumed necessary, they had a son through -works-. Notice how Paul links Hagar with Sinai. (vs24) Sinai was the same place Moses went to receive the Law and Statutes. The -Promise- was not through Hagar/Sinai, just as the -Promise- was not through the Law/Sinai.

Now, notice something else: When God gave circumcision, -who- was circumcised? Ishmael was one of the first to be circumcised. (Ge17:23) Isaac was not yet born at that time. But circumcision did not create the covenant, because the promise was:

"Truly, Sarah your wife shall bear a son, and you shall call his name Isaac...I have established My covenant with him for a perpetual covenant, WITH HIS SEED AFTER HIM." (Ga17:19)

It's not about the statutes. It never was. Ishmael was also circumcised. It has -always- been about PROMISE and FAITH. To those who presume that Judaistic -statutes- is what brings salvation, remember that Ishmael was circumcised, but that did -NOT- make him the heir of Promise.

When Israel was in apostasy God loathed their 'keeping' of the Law. They kept rituals and statutes, but were in disobedience in their hearts.

"I hate, I despise your feast days; and I will not savor your solemn assemblies." (Am5:21)

To repeat: David, the one "after God's own heart", he -knew- God intimately; when he sinned and repents...

"For You DO NOT DESIRE SACRIFICE, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A BROKEN AND A CONTRITE HEART, O God, You will not despise." (Ps51:16-17)

As Paul concludes:

"Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteousness of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? ... For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God." (Rom2:26,28-29)

But the Galatians were succumbing to pressures. With Abraham it was Hagar and Ishmael. To the Gentiles it was Judaism. Same struggle. They both originated from Sinai, they were both instruments of death, and they both persecuted the Heir of Promise. And today the Arabs persecute Israel.

But...

"we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free" (vs31)

Stand in Liberty - (Galatians 5:1-15)

"Stand firm therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." (vs1)

As you read the passage for yourselves, is Paul saying NOT TO BE circumcised? He says, if you rely on one ritual, then you need to keep the whole law. And if a person is keeping the Law, they are seeking to do what Christ has done, and such a person has "fallen from grace" (vs4) Is he saying they have lost their salvation?

First of all, Paul is not saying NOT TO be circumcised. While it was not required of Titus (2:3); he did have Timothy circumcised (Ac16:3) because he was of mixed parentage. I expect, in the spirit of being "all things to all men", being a "Jew to the Jews" (1Co9:19-22) Even though he was -free- in Christ, he made himself a servant to all, in order to win as many as possible for the Lord. In fact, being a Jew, himself, he kept the Jewish rituals (Ac21:24), and went to Jerusalem for the feasts. (Ac20:16)

However, if a person is looking for "profit" (benefit) (vs2), if a person -relies- on the keeping of Law for "justification" (vs4), what Christ did "WILL PROFIT YOU NOTHING"(vs2) The work of Jesus Christ, the Seed, as we've been saying one way and another, is NOT ABOUT circumcision. Keeping the Law (as a Jew) or not (as a gentile) is not what Grace is about. Salvation from sin is not related to statutes. If it was, then Salvation is from works. But Salvation is -NOT- from works. It is the fulfillment of the Promise of the Seed, received in FAITH. (vs5-6)

So, why are you listening to those who bring these "other" Gospels? (vs7) This is not from God (vs8) Not only are they accursed, they are "leaven" (vs9) Leaven permeates and spreads through the whole. But the accursed one will "bear his judgment" (vs10)

And another argument: If a person was keeping the old laws, just to avoid being hassled, well, as we just saw... Paul observed some of the Law, and yet when he was persecuted, -who- was doing the persecuting? The Romans? No, they wanted to let him go free. (Ac26:31-32) It was the "unbelieving Jews" who "stirred up" the crowds. (Ac14:2) It wasn't because Paul preached anything one way or the other about the Law, but it was because he preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (1Co2:2) It was the "offense of the cross" (vs11)

However, now that we have liberty, we do not turn grace into "license" (Ju1:4) When Jesus was asked about the "greatest commandment" He says...

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the

second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Mt22:37-40)

Jesus was asked about "commandment" and He answers "LOVE". Love for God, and love for fellow-man. After all, this is what the law of statutes was all about. Remember how we reviewed how when humanity had no law, but was living according to conscience, that man became evil and violent. When a couple fall in love, do they need "law" to tell them how to behave? If they truly -love- each other, they will behave according to the other person's desires, needs and good will. To people, in general...

"And as you would have men do to you, you also do likewise to them."
(Lk6:31)

Would I want somebody to steal from me? Then, I won't steal from them. I won't lie, because I don't like being lied to. ...in the most simplistic of terms...

And if we say we -love- God, will we also not do those things that please Him!

We are "free" in Christ, -free- to do what is good and right.

Walk in the Spirit - (Galatians 5:16-26)

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." (vs16-18)

If Grace is life and Law is death, then by the same token being of the Holy Spirit is life, and the flesh is death.

"For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin which were through the Law were at work in our members to bear fruit unto death." (Ro7:5)

"For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit" (1Pt3:18)

This is what Jesus did. The Seed came in the flesh and died, and was raised a "spiritual body" (1Co15:44) We were "by nature" "children of wrath/death" (Eph2:3) But when we were "born from above" of the "Spirit" (Jn3:3,8) we have life. It doesn't do much good to speak in theoretical/theological terms, if Truth does not find its way into our lives WHERE WE LIVE. And this is why the whole question of Judaization even exists. If a Believer is in the Spirit, it is a non-issue. But when a person has all the labels and trappings, -claiming- to be a Believer, but the reality of the Spirit is not present, what else is there? The flesh. In that case how is one 'pleasing' to God? By keeping the Law...so he thinks. But the fact that he does not have the Spirit, that very statement announces that he is not truly Saved.

"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Rom8:9-10)

And so naturally, the "gospel" he preaches is the only one he knows (being minus the Holy Spirit), a gospel of works. Law. And he goes around to those who have been liberated, trying to make them keep the law...like he claims to do.

But the fact that he is of the flesh is manifest by its works. (vs19-21) And if you see a person who claims to be a Christian, but their life and essence consists of those deeds listed...as one looks at those, isn't it pretty much what characterizes the unregenerate world of whom it is said

"...because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." (Eph5:6, Col3:6)

Here he says...

"...those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God"
(vs21)

BUT...

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. Against such there is no law."
(vs22-23)

Now, when I was maturing into adulthood, I was around the college crowd. The same crowd I've mentioned, who labelled me "judgmental" for sticking to what God's Word -SAYS-. In those days there were two favorite Scriptures:

"By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, IF YOU HAVE LOVE mutually with one another" (Jn13:35)

and Ga5:22-23, of which they tended to quote only "Love, Joy, Peace"

Of course, they never studied, much less talked about vs19-21. And they also never went as far as "meekness, self-control" (vs23) It was all Love, Love, Love... and, Peace, man.

Oh, and to "crucify the flesh with its passions and lusts"? (vs24) Are you kidding? Passions and lusts was what they wanted; like that IVCF couple I -happened- upon as I was walking by, sleeping outside the dorm on the lawn in the (single-wide) sleeping bag

Being in the Holy Spirit is not a feel-good mantra. It is not emotions. It is an 'essence'. It is the character. It is the morality. It is Righteousness and Holiness. It -is- Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If a person claiming to be a Believer does not want to crucify the flesh, by definition they are not In Christ. They have not been born "from above" (Jn3:3) If they have the Holy Spirit, BY DEFINITION they are characterized by vs22-24. That is the character of their essence.

If we are in the Spirit "there is no law". (vs23) If no law? No condemnation. No condemnation? No death. Thus...

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (vs25)

Bearing Burdens - (Galatians 6:1-5)

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself that you not also be tempted." (vs1)

What are some responses? You're not s'posed to judge. You know: judge not lest ye be judged. How 'about lookin' in the mirror before casting aspersions! Take the beam out of your own eye before looking for twigs in a brother's eye. Or when the messenger exposes a famous public figure, publicly; but this public figure holds to the same apostasy as the one criticizing: Have you gone to the person "in private first" before 'criticizing' them publicly? And many variations...

And since we are talking about "law" in this series, there are some who, clinging to a slight mistranslation about "appearances" (1Th5:22kfv), go around looking for everybody with their lawn sprinklers running on Sunday, tape measure to measure the hem length of every female, or this or that; and if they find something that doesn't fit within -their- parameters of right or wrong, will confront the person. They, of course, are the "spiritual" one, and they are confronting the "trespass".

Jesus also commanded: "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (Jn7:24)

What is this passage talking about? It's not about somebody from their lofty throne cracking the whip against "another's servant" (Rom14:4) It's NOT about one Believer being -above- another. It's more like the preacher says...

"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his companion; but woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he does not have another to help him up." (Ec4:9-10)

Notice that Paul says nothing about "punishing" the one in trespass, but about "restoration". It is not about commanding and punishing, but about "bearing one another's burden" (vs2) It's been many years since I've read Bunyan's "Little Pilgrim's Progress", but isn't there an aspect in the story line where Pilgrim has this terrible 'load' he is carrying. Sin and trespass is the "weight and sin which so persistently harasses us". We are to "lay aside" sin. (Heb12:1) And so, the person has been progressing with this load strapped to the back, and they wish to "rest" in Jesus (Mt11:28), but they are so tired they cannot even 'wiggle' their shoulders around to let the straps slide off. There is some sort of tangle between the clothing and napsack... so another, seeing the struggle, comes along: Here, let me help you with that. Thanks!

On the other hand, we are not carrying the load 'between' us. When Jesus died for sin He died to save -individuals-. He spoke with Nicodemus, Zachaeus, woman of Samaria, Peter, etc. When He spoke with the crowds, the crowds clamored over Him, but also yelled out, "Crucify Him!" He "did not commit Himself to them because He knew everyone" (Jn2:24) When the master returned from his trip, he calls the servants one-by-one to ascertain what they had done with their talents. (Mt25)

On the one hand we "bear one another's burdens", like the two paired up to set chokers in logging: the one pushes the cable through, the other one grabs it on the other side, and together they buckle the cable together to form the choker. But, if the one is sluffing off, not doing his fair share, the other one has to exert more effort climbing round the log. One -can- do it alone, but with two together it more-than halves the labor. If a person sluffs off in electronics assembly, they don't get as many pallets of circuit boards worked on, compared to their neighbor. The whole assembly plant's output is totalled from -everybody- pulling their full load.

If one stumbles, another comes along to help. As Paul says in another context, that there is 'equality'. (2Co8:14) Regarding righteousness and the pure Church arriving before Christ 'without spot or wrinkle' (Eph5:27), to the guy: Hey dude, your tie's crooked. Or as women used to: Pst! Your slip is showing.

Helping one another, while also pulling our own weight.

Reap What You Sow - (Galatians 6:6-18)

"Let him being taught the Word share in all good things with him who teaches." (vs6)

Following in the train of "those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel" (1Co9:14) there are those who spend entire hours (on TV) inviting people to "plant their seed" in order that they can "reap a harvest" (vs7) If you're faithful with a "thousand dollar seed" (sent, of course, to them) God will return it to you and just POUR IN THE BLESSING that you won't be able to contain it. (Mal3:10) And they preach that "God is not mocked" regarding financial support of His servants.

While this is true, notice that Paul is following up the theme of the entire epistle with...

"For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap eternal life." (vs8)

What is money? It is the fruits of this world, the flesh. Haven't we learned by now that the flesh is death? There are some who preach a 'gospel' of "trading in gold" so that when the world economy collapses, they won't be stuck with boxes full of paper money. But what is the Gospel of Christ? Is it the "love of money" (1Ti6:10), or is it the Spirit and Eternal Life? There is a saying: You can't take it with you. Like the story that is told of the man who sold all his paper money and bought up all the gold he could get his hands on, and at death his bags were packed, and meets "St.Peter" at the Pearly Gates and wants entrance into Heaven. And so, as the myth goes, Peter sits at the gate, either allowing entrance, or rejecting. So "St.Peter" asks the man: What's in your suitcases? All my earthly riches! Well, let's have a look. So he opens the bags and proudly displays his gold, and Peter scratches his head and asks quizzically: YOU BROUGHT PAVEMENT?!?! "And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass." (Re21:21) The theme of this book has been about the Spirit. You that are familiar with Paul's writings: he typically spends the bulk of the first part talking Doctrine. Then, in the few closing verses he will cram a whole bunch of stuff about 'living' the doctrine. In this book he doesn't, so much. He has mentioned the "fruit of the Spirit". (5:22-24) If the Believer is living in the Spirit, all the little nitty gritty details don't need to be spelled out. If a person is living in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is guiding the life. Is that not what the book has been about...the "FREEDOM" of not being under man-made statutes. So, even the topic, over which many wax eloquent to cajole people into sending in their offerings...it isn't needed. Everything a Spiritual Believer does will be according to the will of God...even how much he gives, and to whom.

And so, as the leaders in Jerusalem said to him about "remember the poor" (2:10), he also reminds us. Ministers are supported. But also

(something one of the presidential candidates got into trouble for 'belittling' the poor), for the Believer, to help fellowbelievers. (vs10) We help one another in all things...spirit, soul and body. (1Th5:23)

Closing Thoughts:

The big complaint against Paul was that he was

"...teach[ing] all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs." (Ac21:21)

That was the main reason the mobs would come together to try to kill him, that he was "not fit to live" (Ac22:22,25:24) It was at such a kill-fest that the Romans rescued Paul. So, as he exhorts, he knows what he's talking about, when he blames Believers who want to keep the law...

in order "that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (vs12)

That's what this book has been about. It's NOT ABOUT circumcision or the customs. It did not make Ishmael into a Seed of Promise. It did not keep Israel obedient to God, nor the Jews of Paul's day. (vs13) It's about the Seed, Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the Promise to Abraham when He died on the cross. But Israel asked for Jesus to be crucified. And anybody else who represents Jesus they persecute. Even in Israel today, anybody who is a missionary on behalf of "this man" is rejected, and they warn each other to stay away from them...and for sure, to 'guard' their children against the Gospel.

When the Believers heard the prophecy that Paul would be bound when he went to Jerusalem, and were crying, trying to urge him not to go, what was his reply?

"What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Ac21:13)

That is his boast here

"But may it never be that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (vs14)

It's not about Law or No Law... it's about Promise and the Seed.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a -NEW-CREATION-; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (vs15, 2Co5:17)

And for those who still think it's about bringing the Jewish Roots back into the Church because the Church is (allegedly) rooted in Israel?

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify these things to you, to the churches. I (Jesus) am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." (Re22:16)

The Church is rooted in the Seed of Promise, Jesus Christ.

Amen!