

# THE YOKE OF BONDAGE

*“A verse by verse commentary on Paul’s epistle to the Galatians”*



*"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."*

*Galatians 5:1*

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(a verse by verse commentary on Paul’s letter to the Galatians)

**By Leroy Surface**

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Galatians 5:1*

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## Why was the Law of Moses given to Israel?

*It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made;*

*Galatians 3:19*

The words “*it was added*” are very important to our understanding of the Law of Moses, and why it was given. When God gave His “*commandments*,” He gave ten, and Moses said, “**He added no more**” (Deuteronomy 5:22). The six hundred and thirteen commandments and ordinances of Moses were “*added*,” not to the Law of God, but upon the children of Israel because of their rejection and transgression of the Ten Commandments of God. There has never been any connection between the Law of Moses and the Law of God. Moses made this very clear in the book of “*Deuteronomy*,” which even the title of means “*second law*.” In Deuteronomy 29:1, Moses says of his law, “*These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he (God; see Deuteronomy 5:2) made with them in Horeb.*”

Paul explains to Timothy “*...the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient...*” (I Timothy 1:9). It was not given to a righteous and holy nation, but to a rebellious people. It was never meant to be a “*blessing*” to the people, but Paul tells us in Galatians 3:10, “**as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.**” The “*Law of Moses*” is best understood as a “*prison*” in which the Jew was “*shut up*” (Galatians 3:23)” until Christ would come to redeem them from both sin and the Law.

This commentary will take you verse by verse through Paul’s letter to the Galatians in which he reveals this truth about the Law of Moses.

*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse:*

*Galatians 3:10*

*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*

*Galatians 3:13*

*For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.*

*Galatians 3:18*

*Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.*

*Galatians 3:19*

*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law...*

*Galatians 4:4-5*

*Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?*

*Galatians 4:16*

*Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?*

*Galatians 4:21*

*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*

*Galatians 5:4*

# Table of Contents

<b>Section 1: <i>Another Gospel</i> .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Section 2: <i>Revelation of Jesus Christ</i> .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Section 3: <i>The Jerusalem Conference</i> .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Section 4: <i>In Defense of the Gospel</i> .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Section 5: <i>Blessed with Faithful Abraham</i> ....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Section 6: <i>The Purpose of the Law</i> .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Section 7: <i>Redeemed from the Law</i> .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Section 8: <i>Zealously Affected</i> .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Section 9: <i>The Two Covenants</i> .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Section 10: <i>Standing in the Liberty of Christ</i> ..</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Section 11: <i>An Occasion to the Flesh</i> .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Section 12: <i>He that Sows to His Flesh</i> .....</b>	<b>97</b>



Section 1: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One  
“Another Gospel” Galatians 1:1-10

## Introduction to Section One

*In the first ten verses of this epistle, Paul gets straight to the purpose of his letter to the Galatian believers. He had preached the “gospel of Christ,” which is the “power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:17),” unto them, and they had been both “saved” and “filled with the Holy Ghost” in that first revival. When Paul wrote this letter to them, however, they were guilty of believing the message of certain Jews from Judaea who had “perverted” the gospel of Christ to bring the Gentiles under bondage to the Law of Moses. Paul understands that they have “fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4) and Christ has been made “of no effect” on them if they do not turn again to trust in Him only. Paul shows no mercy at all toward those who bring “another gospel,” saying, “Let them be accursed.”*

## Another Gospel

### Galatians Chapter One

**1-2 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:**

Due to the nature and purpose of his letter to the churches of Galatia, Paul immediately establishes that he is an “apostle.” Due to the fact that his apostleship was being disputed by certain men from the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1), he establishes the source of his apostleship. He admits that it is “not of men.” His authority did not come from the original twelve apostles who were the chosen “witnesses” of Jesus’ resurrection; neither did it come from James, who was the half brother to Jesus and the Bishop of the church at Jerusalem; nor did it come from either Peter or John, who were the only remaining

**Section 1: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One**  
**“Another Gospel” Galatians 1:1-10**

“*eye witnesses of His (Jesus’) majesty*” (II Peter 1:16-18). Paul was called and chosen “...*by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.*” Though he never saw Jesus in His flesh, he saw Him in His glory on the Damascus road, and immediately received a commission from Him (Acts 26:15-18), who now sits on the throne of heaven. It is by the authority given to him by Jesus Christ Himself that Paul writes this very serious and most important letter to the churches of Galatia.

**3 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,**

Having established that his apostleship is “...*by Jesus Christ, and God the Father,*” he now extends “*grace and peace*” to the believers in Galatia “...**from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,**” again indicating that his message is not his own, but the message of the one who sent him.

**4-5 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

Paul wrote this letter to the churches of Galatia because of those “*certain men*” from Judaea who taught the brethren in the Gentile churches, saying, “*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved*” (Acts 15:1). Both Paul and Barnabas were present in Antioch when these men taught this error, and the scripture records they “...*had no small dissension and disputation with them*” (Acts 15:2), and the church at Antioch was spared this heresy. Evidently there was no such defense when these teachers had come to Galatia, for their error was received by many in all the churches of that region, hence the nature of this letter from Paul.

**“...that He might deliver us from this present evil world...”**  
The urgency of this letter is seen in how quickly Paul gets to

**Section 1: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One**  
***“Another Gospel” Galatians 1:1-10***

the point of the letter. *“Our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world.”* It was *“...according to the will of God and our Father...”* that He *“...gave Himself.”* Nothing more was needed for salvation than to *“trust in Christ (Ephesians 1:12)”* who *“gave Himself.”* The words *“deliver us from”* are interesting. The two words *“deliver from”* are translated from the Greek word *“exaireo,”* which is derived from two Greek words meaning *“to take for oneself...from.”* If the purpose of Jesus’ giving Himself to die for our sin was to save us from this present evil world and gather us into Himself, nothing else was needed; not circumcision, not the keeping of holy days, or feast days, nor any other ordinance of the Law of Moses. In fact, all these things were *“detrimental (‘loss’; see Philippians 3:4-8)”* to all who would trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.

**6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:**

Paul’s letter to the Galatians is one of the first of his epistles, and it was written less than twenty years after his own conversion. Since Paul was the one who brought the gospel to the Galatians, we must assume the church was less than ten years from its founding at the time of this letter. Paul expresses amazement that they are *“so soon removed,”* for it was only about three years since he had last visited them. They were removed *“...from him that called you....”*

***“...him that called you...”*** The Greek words that are translated *“called you”* are used in combination only five times in the New Testament, and in every case it is obvious that it is God who calls the people when the gospel is preached. Paul preached the gospel, but it was God that called the Galatians into the grace of Christ for the salvation of their souls. It was enough that they moved away from Paul, who brought the gospel to them, but when they believed the message of those

## Section 1: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One

### ***“Another Gospel” Galatians 1:1-10***

who brought “*another gospel,*” they moved away from Jesus Christ, who “*...loved them, and gave Himself for them*” (Galatians 2:20).

**7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.**

Immediately upon calling it “*another gospel,*” Paul adds, “*...which is not another.*” It was not actually “*another gospel,*” but a perversion of the gospel of Christ that would require the Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses in order to be saved. In Romans 4:10 Paul says, “*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believeth.*” He will show that if anything is added to or taken from the “*gospel*” of “*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*” (I Corinthians 2:2), it will no longer be “*...the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth...*” (Romans 1:16). Instead, it would be no better than the many different “*philosophies of men,*” with no power to change the heart and nature of man.

**8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.**

Paul establishes that he was the one who first preached Christ to the Galatians. His defense of the gospel he preached was such that he said, “*...though we (Paul, or any of the brethren that were with him), or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel...let him be accursed.*” Literally, “*If I come to you preaching a different gospel than I first preached to you, do not receive me, but let me be accursed. If an angel from heaven should preach to you another gospel than what I preached to you, let him be accursed.*”

The word “*accursed*” is translated from the Greek word “*anathema,*” which is defined by “*Strong’s Greek Dictionary*” as “*a (religious) ban or (concretely) excommunicated (thing or*

**Section 1: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One**  
**“Another Gospel” Galatians 1:1-10**

person).” Paul instructed them to “ban” anyone, even “an angel from heaven” from preaching any other gospel than that which was revealed to Paul by Jesus Christ. If one of their own should begin to preach another gospel, they should be “excommunicated” from their fellowship.

**9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.**

Paul repeats himself, further strengthening his statement. “If any man...even Peter, John, or one of the eye-witness apostles...preach any other gospel, let him be accursed.” Paul could not speak to these Galatian churches in stronger terms than those he used.

**10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.**

The first question, “...do I now persuade men, or God?” is understood in the second question, “or do I seek to please men?” If Paul seeks to “please men,” he would be in the position of trying to “persuade God.” If, however, he pleases God, he will persuade men. Paul makes it very clear that he is not seeking the approval of man in this letter. He writes to them as the “servant of Christ,” defending the gospel that he received from Christ. There had been a time that Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, had sought the approval of his brethren in the Jews religion when he persecuted the church. Now he was seeking only the approval of God as the servant of Christ as he “persuaded” men.

**Section 2: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One**  
**“The Revelation” Galatians 1:11-24**

## **Introduction to Section Two**

*Paul uses the remainder of this first chapter to prove to the Gentile believers that the gospel he preached to them was not the message of a man, but the gospel he received by direct revelation of Jesus Christ. He lays out the timeline of the first seventeen years of his ministry from the time of his conversion, showing very limited contact with the apostles on one occasion, and spending fifteen days with Peter on another shortly after he, Paul, had received his revelation of the gospel. Neither Peter nor any of the other apostles had instructed Paul. His apostleship and his message were by direct appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

## **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**

**11-12 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

Paul gives his personal guarantee that the gospel he had preached to the Galatians was not the doctrine of man, and he had not received it from man, but directly from God “*by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” Saul of Tarsus knew the Old Testament scriptures as well as any man in his day, having been educated at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Immediately upon his conversion, Saul went to the synagogues of Damascus, proving by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. It was some time later, however, that Saul received the revelation of Jesus Christ, which is the message that turned the Gentile world “*upside down* (Acts 17:6)” in his generation.

**13-14 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted**

## Section 2: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One

### “The Revelation” Galatians 1:11-24

**the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.**

Having established his credentials as an Apostle of Christ who preached only the “*gospel of Christ,*” Paul also felt it necessary to remind them of his past “*credentials*” in the Jew’s religion. The fact that the apostle Paul was the same Saul of Tarsus that had once made havoc of the churches in Jerusalem and Judea was well known throughout the realm of Christianity. In the “*time past*” when he had “*wasted*” the churches throughout Judea, he had also “*profited in the Jews religion above many my equals...being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.*” No one understood the Law of Moses better than Paul. He did not resist their move toward Moses and the Law from a position of ignorance. Paul had been there; he had been “*far more exceedingly zealous*” of the Law than even those who were now perverting the gospel with the doctrine of circumcision. He knew firsthand the destructive nature of the Law of Moses.

**15-16 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:**

These two verses are a part of a “*compound-complex sentence*” which requires a little examination. The point Paul seeks to make is found in the last phrase, which says, “***I conferred not with flesh and blood.***” This is a theme he introduced in the first verse of this epistle, where he declared himself to be an apostle, “*...not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ....*” He developed the theme in the eleventh and twelfth verses when he said, “*the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it....*” The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to proving

**Section 2: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One**  
**“The Revelation” Galatians 1:11-24**

that Paul “...conferred not with flesh and blood.” The question arises, “When and why did he **not** confer with flesh and blood?” The answer to both questions is found in the first phrase and third phrases, “...when it pleased God...to reveal His Son in me...I conferred not with flesh and blood.” Everything else in these verses simply fills in the blanks.

**“...separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace...”** These two phrases answer the question of “which God.” The God that his parents had served under the Old Covenant at the time Saul of Tarsus was born was the same God that called him “by His grace” into the New Covenant. The “Christian God” is the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” He is the same God that Moses met at the burning bush and who destroyed Egypt to deliver the children of Israel. He is the God that opened the Red Sea, introduced Himself to the children of Israel at Horeb, and gave to them the land of Canaan. The “Christian God” is the God of David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all the true prophets of God that are found in the Old Testament. No other religion can rightly make the claim to worship the same God that the Christian knows, because He is also the “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” There is no other God who has a Son named Jesus. In fact, other gods vehemently deny that they have a son. Believe them in that saying, because they are not the true God who is “pleased” to reveal His Son, not only to His people, but also in them.

**“...to reveal His Son in me...”** Saul of Tarsus met Jesus when he was on his way to Damascus to arrest the Christians and destroy their churches. It was there that the Son of God revealed Himself to Saul of Tarsus. A miraculous transformation took place in Saul in that moment of time. Meeting the Son of God and discovering that his “Messiah” is the same “Jesus” he had hated and persecuted literally destroyed the old Saul of Tarsus. Blinded and cast down in the dust, he cries to Jesus, “Lord, what wilt thou have me do?” The full record of Saul’s conver-

## Section 2: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One

### “The Revelation” Galatians 1:11-24

sion is found in his own words in Acts 26:15-18, where Paul testified before King Agrippa: “*And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for **I have appeared unto thee for this purpose**, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*”

Only moments before, Saul of Tarsus had been “*breathing out slaughter*” against the followers of Jesus; now, he will follow Jesus. He had hated the name of Jesus, but now, he loves Him with a love that will take him through untold tribulations and persecutions to bring the gospel of Jesus to the heathen nations. This is the record of the day that the Son of God was revealed **to** Saul of Tarsus. It yet remained that Christ would be revealed **in** him.

Three days later Saul received the Holy Ghost and immediately entered the synagogues of Damascus to prove by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah). It wasn't long, however, before he had to flee over the wall by night to escape with his life. He fled to the church in Jerusalem for safety, but discovered that the disciples there did not trust him (Acts 9:25-26). He sought to prove to the Grecians in Jerusalem that Jesus is the Christ, but again had to flee for his life to Tarsus. His brief efforts to “*preach Jesus*” ended in near tragedy. Even though Saul had received a commission from Christ, he was not as yet prepared to fulfill it.

There were two specific commands that Jesus gave to His disciples on the same day He ascended to heaven. The first is

## Section 2: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One

### “The Revelation” Galatians 1:11-24

found in Mark 16:15: “**Go** ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” The second is found in Acts 1:4, where Jesus “...commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but **wait** for the promise of the Father...” These two commands, to “**go**” and to “**wait**,” seem to be diametrically opposed, but they are not. The second command given is the first to be obeyed. It is the command to “...wait for the promise of the Father,” which is “ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” After you have received the Holy Ghost, then “go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Even though Peter and John and the rest of the disciples had walked with Jesus for over three years, daily hearing His words and seeing His works, they were not prepared to reach the lost world for Jesus until they were baptized with the Holy Ghost. In Saul of Tarsus’ case, he had received the Holy Ghost, but he had not walked with Jesus or heard his words. He must have more than a “knowledge” of “who the Son of God is” before he can reach the heathen for Jesus. Jesus Christ, the Son of God must be revealed “**in**” Saul of Tarsus. There is a three year period in Saul’s life that we know very little about. It was during that time that Saul received the gospel “by revelation of Jesus Christ.” This was also the period of time in which he “conferred not with flesh and blood,” because it “pleased the Father to reveal His Son **in** Saul of Tarsus.” Only then will he be prepared...

“...that I might preach him among the heathen...” The word “that,” in this phrase, is translated from the Greek word “hina,” which means, “in order that.” Jesus Christ must be revealed **in** His people if they are to reach the lost world. God is never “pleased” to merely reveal His Son **to** us when it is His purpose to reveal His Son **in** us. We must have more than a knowledge of the “doctrines of the church” if we are to reach unbelievers. Even a scripturally correct argument can never convince an unbeliever because they do not believe the scrip-

## Section 2: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One

### “The Revelation” Galatians 1:11-24

tures. Notice the words of Paul to the Corinthians who lived among and were educated by the great philosophers of the Greek culture; “*And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*” (I Corinthians 2:1-5). It is for this purpose that Christ must be revealed **in** His ministers.

**“...immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:”** You may have been raised from your childhood in a good church. Wonderful! You may have come to Christ at an early age and attended a Sunday School and church that gave you the truth of God’s word. Again, that is wonderful. It is when God calls you to special service that everything changes. A godly Sunday school, church, and Bible college may help to reveal the Son of God *to* you, but none of them can reveal Him *in* you. This is the special time in your life and ministry that you must get alone with God. Saul of Tarsus literally disappeared from public life for an extended period of time. During that time he walked and talked with Jesus. It was during that time that he was “*caught up to the third heaven*” (II Corinthians 12:2-4), and received the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is no record that Saul of Tarsus ever saw Jesus in the days of His flesh, but after three years of walking and talking with Him in the Spirit, Saul of Tarsus knew Jesus Christ better than Peter, John, or any of the other apostles. He knew Christ “*after the Spirit*” (II Corinthians 5:16).

**17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.**

## Section 2: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One

### “The Revelation” Galatians 1:11-24

There is no contradiction between this statement and the record in Acts 9:25-26 which tells of a brief visit to Jerusalem shortly after his conversion. The time frame for verse seventeen is “...when it pleased the Father to reveal His Son in me...immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” Like so many today, Saul had believed he could obey Christ through his own abilities and zeal. After two attempts which ended in failure, Saul was literally “driven” into solitude just as Jesus had been “driven” into the wilderness (Mark 1:11-12). After forty days Jesus came out “...in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14), and after nearly three years, Saul reappeared in Jerusalem with the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ that would “turn the world upside down.”

**18-20 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.**

Paul confirms the three year time period during which he “conferred not with flesh and blood.” He stresses the importance of this time alone with the Lord, saying, “...before God, I lie not.” After three years during which none of the apostles had seen or communicated with him, Saul reappears with the revelation of Jesus Christ which was greater than the understanding of any of the apostles at Jerusalem. Peter acknowledged this in II Peter 3:15-16, saying, “...our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

**21-24 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea**

## Section 2: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter One

### “The Revelation” Galatians 1:11-24

**which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me.**

**“...they glorified God in me.”** When Saul of Tarsus had left Jerusalem three years before, they were relieved to see him go. Notice the account of his brief visit to Jerusalem in Acts 9:28-31: *“...and he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria...”* Those same churches that had found rest three years before when they *“sent him forth to Tarsus”* now *“glorified God”* **in** Saul of Tarsus. The Son of God was revealed **in** Saul. Oh what a difference it makes when Christ is revealed *in* His people.

**Section 3: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two**  
**“The Jerusalem Conference” Galatians 2:1-21**

## **Introduction to Section Three**

*In section three Paul gives a brief account of the conference he had with the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem over the issue of circumcision. He makes it very clear that He did not go to Jerusalem to **learn the truth**, but **in defense of the truth**. Had Paul wavered in the least point of the truth of the gospel in conference with those who “**seemed to be somewhat** (Galatians 2:6),” the church among the Gentiles might well have ceased to exist.*

## **The Jerusalem Conference**

### **Galatians Chapter Two**

**1 Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.**

There is much information about Paul that can be gleaned from his brief account of the first seventeen years after his conversion. Notice in the first chapter he spoke of the three year period in which Christ was revealed in him. This is confirmed by his mention of a second period of time of fourteen years. In II Corinthians 12:1-2 Paul tells of the “*visions and revelations of the Lord*” that gave him understanding of the gospel of Christ. In the second verse he said, “*I knew a man in Christ **above fourteen years ago**, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.*” Paul was speaking of himself in anonymous terms because he did not want to boast. He did not know if he physically went to heaven, or if it was only a vision, but he told of being “*caught up to the third heaven,*” which is the throne of God. In the fourth verse, he said he heard “*unspeakable words, which it is unlawful to utter.*” These “*unspeakable words*” were the words of the gospel of Christ. God did not tell Paul to “*conceal*” those words, but to “*reveal*” them; to “*go into*

### **Section 3: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two** **“The Jerusalem Conference” Galatians 2:1-21**

*all the world” and “preach them” to every creature. When Paul says the “unspeakable words” are “unlawful to utter;” he is speaking about the Law of Moses. The gospel of Jesus Christ is an “unlawful message” according to the Law of Moses. Paul spoke those “unspeakable and unlawful words” everywhere he went. Those “words” were the reason the Jews tried to kill him in every city.*

According to Paul’s statement in II Corinthians 12:1-2, he received the revelation of the gospel during the three year period which was before the fourteen year period. During the fourteen year period, Paul and Barnabas traveled extensively, establishing churches in the Gentile nations, preaching *“to the Jew first, and also to the Gentiles.”* During all this time, he was not in communication or fellowship with the apostles, or the church in Jerusalem. After fourteen years of fruitful ministry among the Gentiles a problem arose, and it came from the churches in Judaea, and probably from Jerusalem. The record is given in Acts 15:1-2: *“...certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.”* This was the occasion for another trip to Jerusalem after fourteen years absence.

**2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.**

Paul had received the gospel of Christ by direct revelation from the Lord. He had preached the gospel for fourteen years without *“confirmation”* from the apostles at Jerusalem. He did not go to Jerusalem for confirmation, but rather to defend his gospel and protect the Gentile believers from those who taught the necessity of cir-

**Section 3: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two**  
**“The Jerusalem Conference” Galatians 2:1-21**

circumcision for salvation. When he arrived in Jerusalem, he went directly and privately to the most honorable apostles and elders of the church to reveal the gospel he preached to the Gentiles. Paul was well aware of the “*false brethren* (see verse four)” that were among the saints at Jerusalem, and sought to avoid a confrontation that could greatly hinder or even stop his ministry among the Gentiles.

**3-4 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:**

The third verse has a very difficult sentence structure. The message in these two verses seems to be that the apostles and elders, who Paul and Barnabas met with in private, received them and would not have required Titus, who was a gentile, to be circumcised, except for an uproar caused by those who Paul called “*false brethren.*” The record of this event given in Acts 15:4-5 seems to confirm this view. “*And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.*”

**5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.**

Paul refused to even consider having Titus subject himself to circumcision. More than a defense of Titus, he stood in defense of the truth of the gospel. Again, the record given in Acts 15:6-7 will shed more light on this meeting in Jerusalem: “*...and the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up....*” Peter stood to remind the council of how

### Section 3: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

#### “The Jerusalem Conference” Galatians 2:1-21

Jesus had sent him by revelation to preach the gospel to the Gentiles at Cornelius’ house, and how God had given them the Holy Ghost “...even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8-9).

**6 But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:**

Paul indicates that he did not come to Jerusalem for confirmation or approval, but only to defend the truth of the gospel. Even though Paul had been both a believer and a minister for over seventeen years at this time, it should be understood that he had met the apostles only briefly after his conversion, and had abode with Peter for fifteen days on another occasion, during which he saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother. In the fourteen years since that time, Paul and Barnabas had established churches among the Gentiles in several nations, working out of the church at Antioch, which became a greater church than the one at Jerusalem. Paul did not recognize any one man or group of men as the “*head*” of the church on earth. He had been with Jesus in a far more intimate way than even those who had walked with Him in His earthly ministry. He ends this verse, saying, “...they...added nothing to me.” There was nothing that these apostles and elders in Jerusalem understood about the gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul had not received directly from the Lord.

**“...they who seemed to be somewhat...”** Paul’s ministry and message had developed without the input of the eyewitness apostles, just as Paul emphasizes in the first chapter. He preached the gospel as he received it by direct revelation from God. He did not come to Jerusalem at this time to attend a conference, but rather to lodge a protest against those ministers who came out from Jerusalem to require circumcision of the Gentiles in Antioch as well as in all the

### Section 3: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

#### **“The Jerusalem Conference” Galatians 2:1-21**

regions of Galatia where Paul had preached the gospel to the Gentiles. His desire had been to meet privately with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, those he said were “*of reputation*” (verse two), but after being challenged in that meeting by those he called “*false brethren*” (verses three and four), Paul’s estimation of those “*of reputation*” was greatly devalued. He says, “...*they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me.*”

**7-8 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)**

Paul continues the thought of the previous verse with the words “...*but contrariwise...*” “*They added nothing to me...but contrariwise...*” It is obvious that Paul understood things in the gospel that the other apostles had not understood. In Ephesians 3:4-6 Paul calls it “...*the mystery of Christ...that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.*”

The prevailing thought among the apostles and elders in the church at Jerusalem had been that salvation was for the Jew only. After the Holy Ghost fell upon the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-46), the elders accepted that a Gentile could come to Christ, but the prevailing thought was still that they would have to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. It was not until the “*conference*” that Paul and Barnabas had with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts, chapter fifteen) that the church at Jerusalem accepted that a Gentile could come to God through Jesus Christ by faith in the gospel alone, without the Law of Moses. It had been well over twenty years since Jesus died on the cross for the sin of the whole world, yet few, with the exception of Peter, believed that an uncircumcised Gentile could be saved until Paul con-

**Section 3: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two**  
**“The Jerusalem Conference” Galatians 2:1-21**

tended with them for this great truth at the conference in Jerusalem.

**“...when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter...”** The apostles and elders at Jerusalem were hearing first hand for the first time of what great things God was doing among the Gentiles through the gospel that Paul preached. God was moving among the Gentiles through Paul’s ministry in exactly the same way He had moved through Peter to reach the multitude of Jews who trusted in Christ in Jerusalem and Judea. They understood for the first time what Peter had first recognized at the house of Cornelius, that God “*...is no respecter of persons*” (Acts 10:34-35).

**9-10 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.**

**“...who seemed to be pillars...”** Out of all the apostles and elders that Paul had met with in conference, he singled out “*James, Cephas (Peter), and John*” as those “*who seemed to be pillars.*” They seemed to be men who would be unshakable in their defense of the gospel which Paul preached among the Gentiles. Even this estimation will change in the next verse.

**“...they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship...”** This is most incredible. Paul had been saved for over seventeen years. He had received the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and had been preaching it for the past fourteen years among the heathen nations. He and Barnabas, with the help of young Gentiles like Titus and Timothy, were well on the way to “*turning the world upside down*” (Act 17:6), before they finally received the “*right hands of fellowship*” from James, Peter, and John.

Section 4: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two  
“In Defense of the Gospel” Galatians 2:11-21

## Introduction to Section Four

*Section four gives the account of a confrontation Paul had with Peter in Antioch shortly after their conference in Jerusalem. This single incident between these two apostles may well have been the greatest threat to the truth of the gospel ever recorded. Peter had stood with Paul against the “**Judaizers**” while in the safety of Jerusalem, but now, facing them while living among the Gentiles brought great fear upon him. The other Jews at Antioch and even Barnabas stood with Peter in what Paul calls the “**dissimulation.**” Paul stood alone in defense of the truth that day, but the victory he won saved the church of Jesus Christ from being eventually absorbed into Judaism as a small sect of Jews.*

## In Defense of the Gospel

**11-12 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.**

This is a sad record given of Peter “*who seemed to be a pillar (verse nine)*” in the church at Jerusalem. When he first came to Antioch he had fellowship with the Gentiles, even eating with them until the day some Jews who were “*of the circumcision*” came from Jerusalem, being sent by James. When these arrived, Peter “*...withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.*” He “*feared*” that they would judge him to be a “*lawbreaker.*”

**13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.**

## Section 4: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “In Defense of the Gospel” Galatians 2:11-21

The church at Antioch had begun when the believing Jews, who fled from persecution in Jerusalem, preached the gospel “...to none but the Jews only” (Acts 11:19) in Antioch. There were also those believers that came to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene who preached the gospel to the Grecians, which were a people born and raised in the Greek culture. The scripture says, “...a great number believed, and turned to the Lord” (Acts 11:20-21). It was during this time that Barnabas brought Saul of Tarsus (Paul) to Antioch as a teacher of the gospel. The church at Antioch became perhaps the greatest of all churches, and the center of Christianity in the Gentile world. Its congregation was made up of both Jews and Gentiles, worshiping in harmony one with another. When Peter separated himself from the Gentiles upon the arrival of the Jews from Jerusalem, the end result was a division in the church, split along the line between Jew and Gentile. The Jews that had been in the church from its beginning followed Peter in the division, and the split became so great that even Barnabas, the constant companion of Paul, got caught up in it. The truth of the gospel and the future of the church were at stake that day, and had it not been for Paul, all would have been lost.

**14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?**

**“...they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel...”** The issue at hand was “*the truth of the gospel.*” It was not an issue of immorality or sin. There is no conflict between the Law of God and the truth of the gospel, for the “*Law of God*” is written on the heart of every gospel believer. There is, however, a conflict between those who are under the Law of Moses and the gospel believer. These “*believers*” from

## Section 4: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “In Defense of the Gospel” Galatians 2:11-21

Jerusalem were still under the Law of Moses which required all its men to be circumcised in order to be saved. The issue of circumcision had been dealt with at the meeting with the apostles and James in Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas had returned to Antioch with a letter from James that explained the position of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem concerning the Gentiles who believe. It reads as follows: *“Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well”* (Acts 15:24-29). This letter applied only to the Gentiles who believed. No such liberty was given by James or the elders to those who were Jews (Acts 21:21). Peter, who had eaten with the Gentiles, now feared to face those Jews who were of the circumcision because he could be condemned as a Law breaker. It was for this reason that he totally separated himself from the same Gentiles he had embraced just days before.

The prophet Isaiah spoke of such a day in Old Testament Israel, and said, *“...judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter”* (Isaiah 59:14). If someone does not stand in defense of truth, it will always fall in the streets. The truth of the gospel was in danger, and Paul rushed to its defense. Peter had stood with Paul for the truth in the controversy at Jerusalem, but now, in his first visit to Antioch he was afraid to contradict those Jews

## Section 4: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “In Defense of the Gospel” Galatians 2:11-21

from Jerusalem who were of the circumcision. Paul reproved him to his face, and he does this in the presence of all the people. Everything that is written in the remainder of this chapter is a record of Paul’s reproof to Peter. He speaks to him directly, man to man, apostle to apostle.

#### **15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,**

“...we who are Jews by nature...” Paul is speaking of Peter and himself in particular, as well as every natural Jew that trusted in Christ. He will continue to speak of “we” and “us” throughout this epistle when speaking of the Jewish believers. He will also refer to the Gentile believers as “you” and “ye.” We will see the importance of discerning who he is speaking of as we continue through the epistle.

“...and not sinners of the Gentiles...” The Jewish believers had not been “*law-breakers*” even before they trusted in Christ, thus they had never considered themselves to be “*sinners*” as the Gentiles were.

#### **16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**

“...Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ...” How did both Peter and Paul “*know*” that a man is not justified by the works of the Law? The answer is simple. Each of them had kept the deeds of the Law perfectly from the day they were circumcised at eight days of age, yet both of them knew they were sinful the moment they felt His (Jesus’) holy presence. With Peter, it had been the morning after he and Andrew had labored all night fishing, and had not caught a single fish, yet at the command of Jesus, they

## Section 4: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “In Defense of the Gospel” Galatians 2:11-21

let their nets down one more time and caught so many fish that their “*nets brake*” and their “*ships began to sink*” (Luke 5:6-7). Peter’s response is given in the next two verses, Luke 5:8-9; “*When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken.*” With Paul, it had been that day on his journey to Damascus to arrest and imprison the Christians that Jesus “*arrested*” him. Saul of Tarsus (Paul) had been blameless in keeping the righteousness of the Law all his life until that day, but after one moment in the presence of Jesus he knew he was “*chief of sinners.*” Above all people, these two men “*knew*” that a man is not justified “*by the works of the law.*”

**“...even we have believed in Jesus Christ...”** Both of these men had “*trusted*” in Jesus Christ, though at different times. Peter had “*trusted in Jesus*” over three years before Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection from the dead, but his “*conversion*” (Luke 22:31-34) did not come until he again “*trusted in Christ*” after the resurrection.

**“...that we might be justified by the faith of Christ...”**

Notice the wording of these two previous statements. “*...we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ...*” There is a powerful difference between the words “*in*” and “*of*” which I have highlighted in this text. Believing in Jesus Christ does not justify anyone. It is the “*faith of Christ*” that justifies the one who believes (trusts) in Jesus Christ. The “*faith of Christ*” is the message of all that was accomplished for the believer in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul reveals the “*faith of Christ*” in a few words in Romans 6:6-7; “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from*

## Section 4: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “In Defense of the Gospel” Galatians 2:11-21

*sin.*” It is a “*fact*” that Jesus was “*nailed to the cross;*” it is “*the faith*” that declares our old man of sin was “*nailed to the cross with Him.*” It is “*the faith*” that justifies all who believe it. Paul concluded the passage in Romans by saying, “*...for he that is dead (with Christ) is freed from sin.*” The Greek word that was translated “*freed*” in this verse is translated “*justified*” in every other place it is used. He that is “*crucified with Christ*” has been “*justified by the faith of Christ.*”

**“...for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified...”**

It is a mistake to assume that anyone has ever been justified by the Law, even if they kept it to perfection. As Paul says in Romans 3:20, “*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*”

**17-18 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.**

Remember that Paul is still speaking to Peter as he uses this unusual logic. We would easily understand what he says if he said it this way; “*...if, while we trust in Christ and profess that He lives in us, we are found to be committing fornication, is Christ a fornicator?*” We would understand Paul’s question if it pertained to transgressions such as lying, stealing, murder, or adultery, but instead, he warns Peter against “*building again*” the Law of Moses which had been “*nailed to the cross of Christ (Colossians 2:14)*” and destroyed by the preaching of the gospel of Christ. Paul concluded that if “*I build again the things which I destroyed (the Law of Moses), I make myself a transgressor.*” If either Paul or Peter were to begin again to preach the Law of Moses, the Law they preached would condemn them to death as transgressors because of the gospel of Christ they had already preached.

**Section 4: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two**  
**“In Defense of the Gospel” Galatians 2:11-21**

**19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.**

The Law of Moses ultimately condemns every man to death. Paul tells us in Romans 3:19-20, “...*we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*” Paul in particular was condemned to death by the Law because he no longer trusted in the deeds of the Law. He denied the necessity of circumcision, dietary law, religious ordinances, feast days, holy days, traditions of the elders, etc, and therefore he bore the death sentence of the Law which the Jews in every place sought to carry out against him. If he turned again to preach the Law, he could only condemn himself. The Law held nothing but death for him, so he counted himself to be “*dead to the law.*” Now, he is “*delivered from the law,*” through his death (with Christ) “...*to the law* (Romans 7:4-6), in order that he might “*live unto God.*”

Notice in this verse that Paul does not speak in terms of “*we,*” meaning both Peter and himself. Peter had not come under the condemnation of the Law until this time. The church at Jerusalem, after the great persecution and tribulation they had received for several years at the hands of the Jews, had actually settled down under the leadership of James, the brother of Jesus, to be a sect of Judaism that believed Jesus is the Messiah. They never made a full break from the Law of Moses since the days in which Stephen was condemned and stoned to death on the charge of “*speaking blasphemous words against the Law* (Acts 6:13-14),” and after which they suffered so greatly at the hands of Saul of Tarsus. At the present time, the church was worshipping in the Temple with the Jews, circumcising their children, and observing everything Moses had commanded. Just recently in the meeting at Jerusalem, Peter had denied the necessity of

Section 4: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two  
“In Defense of the Gospel” Galatians 2:11-21

circumcision for the Gentiles, but on this particular day in Antioch, he had come under great fear as a “*transgressor*” of the Law of Moses.

**20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.**

In these few words, we find Paul’s wonderful confession of faith, beginning with the words, “*I am crucified with Christ...*” This relates directly to Paul’s words in Romans 6:6 where he says, “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*” In this Paul acknowledges that through crucifixion with Christ he is dead to sin, to the Law, to the world, and to himself. His faith is more than “*Christ died for me;*” it is “*I died with Christ...Christ liveth in me.*”

**“...the life which I now live in the flesh...”** When Paul speaks of the flesh in this verse, he is referring to his physical body, also referred to as his “*outward man*” (II Corinthians 4:16). Those who teach that the physical “*body*” is always sinful are mistaken. The body does nothing that the one living in the body does not do. Paul said, “*Christ liveth in me.*” In Colossians 3:4 he speaks of “*...Christ, who is our life....*” Christ cannot “*...be a part of our life,*” because He “*...is our life.*” Only those who understand this can also say “*The life I live in this mortal body, I live by the faith of the Son of God....*”

**“...the faith of the Son of God...”** It should be noticed that Paul again, as he did in the sixteenth verse, speaks of “*...the faith of the Son of God...*,” instead of “*...faith in the Son of God.*” I have often spoken of “*...the fact and the faith of Christ.*” The “*fact*” is, “*Christ was crucified for us.*” The “*faith*” is, “*I was crucified with Him that (in order that) the body of sin might be destroyed*” (Romans 6:6). Millions of peo-

**Section 4: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two**  
**“In Defense of the Gospel” Galatians 2:11-21**

ple believe the “*fact of Christ,*” but are still in their sin. No one who has the “*faith of Christ*” continues in sin.

**“...who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”** It is certainly worth pointing out that the “*love of Christ,*” when mentioned in the epistles, is always connected to His death at Calvary. The life Paul lived in the flesh was no longer the result of Moses and the Law, but of Jesus Christ and His grace toward man that was first revealed at Calvary.

**21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.**

The word “*frustrate*” in this verse is translated from the Greek word “*atheteo,*” which means “*to set aside.*” The fact that Paul did not “*set aside*” the grace of God is obvious. We should remember that this entire exhortation from verse fourteen through verse twenty one is directed to Peter. This verse is the closing statement of that exhortation, as though to say, “*Peter, do not set aside the grace of God.*” Certainly, the same exhortation is given to all who read it.

**“...for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”** If any could be made righteous (justified) by the deeds of the Law, then the existence of Jesus Christ would be nothing more than a “*good example,*” and absolutely nothing would be accomplished through His death on the cross. The truth is, everything for salvation was accomplished through His death, and proven by His resurrection from the dead. This final phrase of the second chapter sets the tone for the rest of Paul’s letter to the church at Galatia. He will prove that righteousness cannot come by the Law.

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

## Introduction to Section Five

*When God “swore by Himself” to bless Abraham and His seed, He included the Gentiles, saying, “...and in thy seed shall all the nations (Gentiles) of the earth be blessed...” (Genesis 22:16-18). The Gentiles had never been “under the Law of Moses.” God promised to bless them directly through His Son Jesus Christ, the seed of the promise.*

## Blessed with Faithful Abraham

### Galatians Chapter Three

The apostle Paul exhibits a unique writing style in all his letters to the Gentiles. This is seen as he deftly moves back and forth between the believing Jew and the believing Gentile, speaking of the former as “we” and the latter as “ye.” When Paul says “we” and “us,” he is most often referring to Jews who have now believed upon Jesus Christ, but were once under the Mosaic covenant of the Law. He addresses Peter in chapter two saying, “*We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.*” But, when Paul says “ye” and “you,” he is referring to the Galatian believers as a whole, which were mostly Gentiles and had never been under the dominion of the Law. This is important to understand if we are to fully grasp what and who Paul is speaking of in each verse as he explains the purpose of the Law.

**1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?**

Paul has just related the tragic incident that took place in the church at Antioch. At Antioch it was the Jews, led by Peter, who had been willing to “set aside” the grace of God, at least for a season. It is of them that Paul says, “...I saw that they

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

*walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel...*” (Galatians 2:14). Peter and the Jews at Antioch had moved away from the truth of the gospel when some men arrived from Jerusalem, who were sent by James to observe the order of the church at Antioch. These men were “*of the circumcision,*” meaning that they still held to the Law of Moses. James and the elders at Jerusalem had only recently acknowledged the liberty of the Gentiles from circumcision and the Law of Moses, but no such liberty was extended to the Jews who believed. Peter, since arriving in Antioch, had lived among the believing Gentiles, eating their food, and enjoying their liberty. Now, with the arrival of these men from Jerusalem, he actually feared for His life, as any “*law-breaker*” would. He knew the truth of the gospel as it had been revealed to Paul, but did not want to suffer for it, thus he, “*...walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel*” (Galatians 2:14) and did not “*obey the truth.*”

These believers at Galatia had never been under the Law. The Law held no power over them whatsoever, but they were bringing themselves under its yoke. Paul had thoroughly preached the gospel of “*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified,*” among them. They had believed and received “*the promise of the Father,*” which is the baptism with the Holy Ghost. The miraculous manifestations of God were among them, but now, they were turning from Christ to trust in the dead works of the Law of Moses which could not justify anyone. “***O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?***” For a short season, the Jews at Antioch had disobeyed the truth out of fear of those men of the circumcision, but now, “*...who hath bewitched you...you who are Gentiles and were never under the Law? You have willingly turned from trusting in Jesus Christ, who loved you and gave Himself for you, to trust in something that can only condemn you to death.*”

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

**“...before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you...”** The English translation of this statement is a little confusing. The words “*evidently set forth*” tell us that the message of “*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified* (I Corinthians 2:2)” had been fully preached by both word and letter to them. They knew the truth and saw the proof of it, yet they turned away to the error of those false brethren who were teaching, “*...except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved*” (Acts 15:1).

### **2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**

Paul is very direct in his questions and clear in his statements, because the life of this church is at stake. It is not a matter of their natural lives being taken away. No one is forcing them into the Law. It is their spiritual life they are in danger of losing. Those who profess “*once saved, always saved*” should read and understand Paul’s message to the Galatians. He feared for their souls. “*Answer this one question; ‘Did you receive the Holy Ghost by the works of the Law...?’*” Obviously not! They were Gentiles; they had never been under the Law. It was by the “*hearing of faith;*” they “*heard the gospel*” and believed it. They repented of their sin, turned from their idols, believed the truth, and according to the promise (Acts 2:38), they received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

**“...the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith...”** It is in this phrase that we begin to see the two covenants. **The first**, the “*Old Covenant,*” which is the “*works of the Law* (of Moses);” **the second**, the “*New Covenant,*” which is the “*hearing of faith* (of Christ).” It is under the New Covenant that they had received the Spirit. In II Corinthians 3:7-9, when speaking of the Law, Paul calls it “*the ministration of death,*” and “*the ministration of condemnation.*” Those who “*trust in the Law*” will receive nothing from the Law but condemnation

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

and death, for that is its ministry. When speaking of the New Covenant, he calls it “*the ministration of the Spirit,*” and “*the ministration of righteousness.*” Those who “*trust in Christ*” will receive both the Spirit and righteousness of God.

### **3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?**

According to the apostle Peter, the Old Testament prophets prophesied of “*the grace that should come unto you*” (I Peter 1:10). This, of course, is a reference to the “*covenant of grace,*” which is the New Covenant that has come to us through Jesus Christ. According to the prophecies, this “*grace*” would come to us in two different ways; “*...the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*” (I Peter 1:11), which is an obvious reference to both the death of Jesus at Calvary and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. The New Covenant is contained in both “*the sufferings of Christ,*” and “*the glory that follows.*” Jesus became the “*mediator*” of the New Covenant when He laid down His life for us at Calvary, and the Holy Ghost became its “*administrator*” on the Day of Pentecost.

In II Corinthians 3:5-6, Paul writes, “*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*” In this verse, Paul is speaking of the “*New Covenant*” which he calls “*the ministration of the Spirit*” in the **eighth verse**. In the **seventh verse**, he speaks of the Old Covenant, calling it “*the ministration of death.*” We need to understand, however, that even in the New Covenant, there is both “*the letter*” and “*the Spirit,*” of which Paul says, “*...the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*” Even the New Covenant will become nothing more than a dead legal document that is written on paper if it is not written in our hearts by

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

the working of the Holy Ghost in us. He (the Holy Ghost) is the “*administrator*” of the New Covenant.

It is impossible to have the New Covenant without the “*working of the Holy Ghost*,” and it is impossible to have the working of the Holy Ghost without the “*New Covenant*;” the two are inseparable. When Paul says in this verse, “...*having begun in the Spirit*...,” he is referring to both the New Covenant and its administrator, the Holy Ghost.

**“...having begun in the Spirit...”** Paul introduced the idea of “*receiving the Spirit* (the Holy Ghost)” in the previous verse. From that perspective we get a clearer picture of what he means in the statement, “...*having begun in the Spirit*.” In every place that God pours His Spirit upon man the results are the same; the Holy Ghost comes with great power, great grace, and great joy upon the people. In Acts 2:4, “...*they were **all** filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*” In Acts 4:31, “...*they were **all** filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*” In Acts 10:44-46, “...*the Holy Ghost fell on **all** them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.*” The common denominator in each of these places is the word “*all*;” they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. In Acts 8:5-8, Philip, a man who was a deacon in the church in Jerusalem and whom the scripture says was “*full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom*,” went to the city of Samaria, and “*preached Christ unto them.*” The scripture tells the result of his mission; “...*the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there*

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

*was great joy in that city.” This is revival, and this is the way true churches begin. The Galatian church was no different; they had “...begun in the Spirit.” It is a heavenly phenomenon that cannot happen outside of the “New Covenant.”*

**“...are ye now made perfect by the flesh...”** The contrary part of every person that is “*filled with the Spirit*” is their own human nature. This is what Paul refers to as “*the flesh*” in this verse. It is not a “*sinful*” nature in a child of God, because their “*sin*” has been nailed to the cross with Christ. It is the same “*human*” nature that was in Adam before the entrance of sin. Remember this: Adam had no sin in him when he walked away from the tree of life to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A “*sin nature*” was not required for Adam to “*disobey God,*” but it was through Adam’s “*disobedience* (Romans 5:19)” that sin entered and every descendant of Adam was born with sin in his nature. Adam and Eve were not attracted to sin: sin was not in the picture at that time. Instead, they were attracted to the “*nourishment,*” the “*beauty,*” and the “*wisdom*” of the forbidden tree. “*...and when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat*” (Genesis 3:6). These are the three desires of human nature that if fulfilled “*in the world*” and not “*in the Father,*” will cause the “*fall*” of a child of God just as it caused the fall of Adam and Eve. The apostle John said, “*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever*” (I John 2:16-17).

**“...made perfect...”** The words “*made perfect*” are translated from the Greek word “*epiteleō,*” which means “*to fulfill further*” or “*fulfill completely.*” Paul’s question is, “*Having*

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

*begun in the Spirit will you now trust in your own human nature to bring you to spiritual completion?”* The “*human nature*” in a child of God is not attracted to sin; instead, it is attracted to the nourishment, the beauty, and the wisdom of laws, principles, and carnal ordinances that are found in religion. Only the Holy Ghost can bring us to completion, which is found only in the New Covenant. The “*human nature*” is more attracted to the “*Old Covenant,*” because it is a covenant and ministry of the flesh. Just as Adam and Eve were moved away from the tree of life, the believers at Galatia were moved away from Christ to accept something that their human reasoning told them would make them more pleasing to God. Like Adam and Eve before them, they lost all they had received from God in their fleshly pursuit to become “*as God,*” and opened the door for sin to “*revive (Romans 7:9)*” in their heart and nature.

The Greek word “*epiteleo,*” which was translated as “*made perfect*” in this verse, also carries the connotation of “*performance*” as in “*to execute.*” They have been “*born again of the Spirit of God.*” They have received the Holy Ghost which is given to bring the church into the fullness of the inheritance that belongs to those who “*trust in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:12-13); will they now turn from Christ to trust in Moses and his Law (the Old Covenant) to do what the Holy Ghost is given to do in the New Covenant? This is a strong indictment, not only against the Galatian churches, but against every church that “*having begun in the Spirit*” is now dead, and trusting in the arm of flesh to do what God sent the Holy Ghost to do for us, in us, and through us. Millions of Christians today are following the same error the Galatians followed. Circumcision and the six hundred and thirteen commandments of the “*Law of Moses*” are not the issue today; instead, it is the thousands of so called “*principles of life*” which men claim will “*perfect holiness*” (II Corinthians 7:1). While holiness must be “*per-*

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

*fected,*” it is vain to believe that carnal obedience to carnal principles will ever do so.

#### **4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.**

The scripture is not clear concerning the things they suffered at the hands of unbelievers when they first trusted in Christ, but it was not uncommon that they would be cast away from their families and friends, cast out of their houses, and stripped of their inheritance. It is amazing to this writer that very often, many of the children of God who are “*born again*” in the fires of persecution flourish until “*peace and prosperity*” comes to them, at which time they wither and die.

#### **5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**

The apostle Paul was speaking of himself in this verse, though not calling himself by name. He had “*ministered the Spirit*” to them through the preaching of the gospel of Christ. The scripture speaks of the apostles in Mark 16:20, saying, “*...they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.*” Wherever they preached the gospel (the New Covenant) great miracles accompanied them. None of this happened under the Old Covenant; only under the New.

According to the terms of the New Covenant, there must have been others in the churches of Galatia who God anointed with miraculous gifts through the working of the Holy Ghost in them. Miracles, deliverance, and great healings must have been commonplace among them as long as they continued in the Spirit. Paul questioned them, did these miracles come by the “*works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith?*” The Law of Moses could not give life even to the Jews who trusted in it;

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

why would these believing Gentiles bring themselves under bondage to it at the expense of losing the manifest presence of God that had been in their midst? The only way they could continue in the Spirit was to continue in the New Covenant (abide in Christ) and not trust in their own human abilities to serve God.

**6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**

The Gentiles who believed the gospel had more in common with Abraham than the Jew who rejected Jesus Christ and the gospel message. Abraham was never under the Law of Moses. He had lived in an idolatrous land, in an idolatrous home, until he “*believed God.*” His “*faith,*” not the Law, was accounted unto him for righteousness.

**7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.**

In Romans 4:11 Paul says of Abraham, “*...he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised....*” It is only those who are “*of faith* (the faith of Christ)” that are the children of Abraham, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. They have “*believed God,*” because they have “*believed the record that God gave of His Son*” (I John 5:10).

**8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.**

The common belief of the Jew was that a Gentile must be circumcised and become a “*proselyte,*” keeping all the commands and ordinances of Moses in order to be saved. Paul points out that over four hundred years before Moses and the Law, God had promised Abraham, “*...in thee shall all nations be*

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

*blessed.*” The Greek word “*ethnos*,” which is translated as “*nations*,” is the same Greek word that was translated both as “*heathen*” and “*gentiles*” throughout the New Testament. The same is true in the Old Testament scripture. The same Hebrew word was translated as Gentiles, nations, and heathen. The promise to Abraham is better understood if we say, “...*in thee shall the Gentiles be blessed.*”

#### **9      So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.**

It is only those who have “*believed God*” in every age since the beginning of time that have been blessed by God. Since Christ has come and died to redeem us, it is those who believe “*the record that God gave of His Son*” (I John 5:10), regardless of whether they are Jew or Gentile, who are blessed with Abraham.

#### **10      For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.**

The Law curses those who are *under* it if they do not obey it in even its smallest detail. Every Jew was under the curse of the Law, as well as every Gentile who brought themselves under its curse through obedience to circumcision. Moses’ Law was not given as a basis for justification, but as a basis for condemnation. Paul establishes this saying, “*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin*” (Romans 3:20). We must understand that the Law never justified anyone. It could only curse those who were under it, because it was given for judgment and not for justification.

#### **11      But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.**

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

It is important to remember that the Law never justified anyone who was under it. Justification before God has always come by faith, that is, by “believing God.” The eleventh chapter of Hebrews lists many “*just*” men and women who lived by faith. Some, such as Enoch and Abraham, were before the Law. Others, such as David, Samuel, and the prophets lived during the dominion of the Law, yet all of these lived by faith. In the new covenant, these words, “*The just shall live by faith,*” take on an even greater meaning than they had when God first spoke them through the prophet Habakkuk (Habakkuk 2:4).

When Paul speaks of “*the just,*” he speaks of those who have been “*justified by faith.*” In this verse, he says they shall “*...live by faith.*” Read once more the commentary on Galatians 2:16 where Paul says we are “*...justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law.*” Now, read the commentary on Galatians 2:20 where Paul says, “*...the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.*” It is by “*the faith of Christ*” that we receive life, and it is by that same “*faith*” that we live day by day. Paul says “*...I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*” His meaning is simple; “*I am dead, and Christ lives. He lives in me, for He is my life.*” It is by “*the faith of Christ*” that we have life, and it is by “*the faith of Christ*” that we live.

**12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.**

The only life that the Law could “*give*” is the natural life you already have. Hebrews 10:28 says, “*He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses.*” The statement, “*The man that doeth them shall live in them*” does not refer to eternal life; instead it indicates that they would not be slain with those who broke the Law.

**Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two**  
**“Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18**

**13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:**

When Paul says, “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,*” he is speaking of those who were under the Law. The use of the word “*us*” indicates that he includes himself and every believing Jew as being those who are “*redeemed from the curse of the law.*” He does not speak of the Gentiles in this verse, for they were never “*under the Law.*”

The curse of the Law of Moses is the “*Law*” itself. The “*Law*” was not given to bless the people; instead “*...it was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made...*” (Galatians 3:19). When the Law of Moses was first given to the people in its complete form, Moses commanded the priests to place it in the Ark of the Covenant “*...that it may be there for a witness against thee...*” (Deuteronomy 31:26). The Law curses those who are under it. It even “*cursed*” Jesus Christ for dying on the cross, saying “*cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.*” There were those in Israel whose crimes were so heinous that after they were “*stoned to death*” the elders would hang their bodies on a pole or a tree in the belief that God would curse them for all eternity. Jesus accepted that curse, and was “*made a curse for us*” to “*redeem us from the curse of the Law.*” Jesus had no sin, and the Father did not “*curse*” Him, but raised Him again from the dead, thus the Law of Moses was broken beyond repair by God Himself, “*...nailing it to His cross*” (Colossians 2:14).

**14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

Abraham lived over four hundred and thirty years before the Law was added upon the Jews. The “*blessing of Abraham*” is the blessing that God “*swore by Himself*” to bring upon Abra-

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

ham and “*his seed.*” The Gentiles were included in that original blessing when God said, “...*in thy seed shall all the nations (Gentiles) of the earth be blessed*” (Genesis 22:18). God sought to bring the children of Israel into the blessings of Abraham in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus when He gave them the “*Ten Commandments*” in an audible voice, which the people refused to hear. The Law of Moses, which is a separate covenant from the Law of God (Deuteronomy 29:1), was “*added*” because of their transgression of the Law of God. The Law of Moses became a wall of separation between the Jews and the Gentiles, and as long as it continued, the Gentiles had no covenant, even though they were included in the promise of blessings to Abraham and his seed. The “*Law of Moses*” had to be abolished before the blessing of Abraham could come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.

Many people erroneously believe that the “*blessing of Abraham*” is found in Deuteronomy 28:1-13, which is the blessing promised to those who keep the Law of Moses to perfection. Israel never received that blessing, but they did receive all the curses of Deuteronomy 28:15-68. If Israel had “*believed God*” as Abraham did, they would have received the “*blessing*” of God’s law rather than the “*curse*” of Moses’ Law. The blessing of Abraham is found in Exodus 19:5-6; “...*if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*” These same blessings did come on the Gentiles through faith in Jesus Christ, as Peter wrote in his letter to the Gentile believers, “...*ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God...*” (I Peter 2:9-10). It is in this that

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

God’s promise to Abraham is fulfilled; “...*in thy seed* (Christ) *shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*” (Genesis 22-18).

**“...that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”** This fourteenth verse speaks of the wonderful results for both Jews and Gentiles when the Law of Moses was “*abolished* (Ephesians 2:15)” through Jesus’ bearing its curse on the cross. Now, the blessing of Abraham could come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. Now, the Jews could receive the promise of the Spirit “*through faith.*”

The term “*the promise of the Spirit*” in this text speaks of the promise that God made to Abraham. We receive the promise “*by faith*” and not “*by the works of the Law.*” It cannot, however, be a “*dead faith.*” Those whose faith is “*dead*” often live in an imaginary world. They “*confess*” that they have everything that God promised, but it is not manifest in them. To this they say, “*It is only in the eyes of God that I have this, when in reality I am still a sinner.*” It is the “*possession*” of a thing, and not merely the “*confession,*” that brings great joy to the church. In Acts 13:32-33, Paul said, “...*we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again....*”

**“...the promise of the Spirit...”** The same Spirit (of God) that gave the covenant promises to Abraham and his seed is the same Spirit (the Holy Ghost) that will work in us who believe to bring us into the fullness of His promises. God “*swore by Himself*” when He gave the promises, and now He has “*given Himself*” to fulfill the promises.

**15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.**

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

When Paul says, “*I speak after the manner of men,*” he is giving a natural example to help us understand something that is spiritual. The contracts made among men are valid and binding after they are signed. No one can add to or take away from such a contract. Paul is applying this principle to the promise that God gave to Abraham, which He confirmed with an oath, saying, “*By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice*” (Genesis 22:16-18). This is God’s covenant with Abraham and his seed. No one can cancel it, add to it, or make it of none effect to those who “*trust in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:12).

**16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.**

Paul points out the fact that these promises of blessing were made to both Abraham and “*his seed.*” He further shows that God did not say “*seeds, as of many;*” instead, the promise to the “*seed*” was speaking specifically of “*one seed ...which is Christ.*”

**17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.**

The “*covenant of blessing*” with Abraham and His seed was given at least four hundred and thirty years before the Law of Moses. God “*confirmed*” the covenant when He “*swore by Himself,*” and it became a covenant contract that could not be broken, amended, or disannulled by the Law, which came by

## Section 5: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Two

### “Blessed With Abraham” Galatians 3:1-18

Moses four hundred and thirty years later. Notice that the covenant “...*was confirmed before of God in Christ.*” This “*covenant*” which was ratified with Abraham, would not come into effect until Christ came and shed His precious blood for the remission of our sin.

**18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.**

In Romans 4:4, Paul said, “...*now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*” If the inheritance (the reward) is of the Law, it is a “*debt*” that God owes to everyone that obeys the Law of Moses. Instead, it is the result of the promise God made to Abraham when He “*swore by Himself*” in Genesis 22:16-18. It is given by “*grace*” and is received “*through faith.*” Israel dwelt in the “*land of promise*” under the Law for nearly fifteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, but they never received the “*inheritance*” that God had promised to Abraham and his seed.

Section 6: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Three  
“The Purpose of the Law” Galatians 3:19-24

## Introduction to Section Six

*In verses nineteen through twenty four, Paul tells why the Law of Moses was given, how long it would be in effect, and what it is to those who are under it. He has already told us in Galatians 3:10 that those who are “...of the works of the Law are under the curse.” He will expose the Law of Moses as a cruel taskmaster (the schoolmaster who could beat the student with impunity), and a prison (kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith...). In the fourth chapter He will expose the Law as being “Hagar” and her children as “Ishmael.” In the fifth chapter, the Law will be seen as the “yoke of bondage” that Jesus died to deliver us from.*

## The Purpose of The Law

**19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.**

**“...wherefore then serveth the law...”** Due to the fact that the inheritance cannot be received through the Law, the question arises, “wherefore then serveth the law,” or literally, “what is the Law for? ...and why was it given?” It is a simple question, and Paul gives a direct and simple answer. There can be no confusion as to the meaning of what Paul says.

**“...it was added because of transgressions...”** When Paul speaks of “the Law” that was “added because of transgressions,” it must be understood that he is speaking about the “Law of Moses,” and not the Law of God. The words, “...it was **added**...” are very important to our understanding. They refer to the **fifteenth verse** where Paul speaks of a “covenant” saying, “...if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or **addeth**

## Section 6: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Three

### “The Purpose of the Law” Galatians 3:19-24

*thereto.*” When God made His covenant of blessing with Abraham, He “*confirmed it by an oath*” (Hebrews 6:13-18). Nothing can be added to or taken away from the covenant promises which God made to Abraham and “*his seed.*”

In the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus, when God came down on Mount Horeb to speak to Israel, His intent was to bring the “*blessing of Abraham*” upon them because they were the natural “*seed of Abraham*” through Isaac and Jacob. Before speaking to them from the mountain, He sent a message to them by Moses, saying, “...***if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation***” (Exodus 19:5-6). When God “*swore by Himself*” to bless Abraham and his seed, He concluded the promise by saying, “...*because thou hast obeyed my voice.*” Now, He was expecting the natural descendants of Abraham to do likewise; “*obey His voice.*”

The “*Law of God,*” more commonly known as “*The Ten Commandments,*” was given to the children of Israel as a “*covenant of blessing*” on the condition that they would “*obey His voice, and keep His covenant*” (Exodus 19:5-6). Forty years later, when Moses is reviewing all six hundred and thirteen commandments of his “*Law*” with the people, he “*pauses*” for the entire **fifth chapter of Deuteronomy** to relate the events of the day God came down on Horeb to speak His Ten Commandments to the people. In the **second verse** he reminds them; “*The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.*” In the **fourth verse** he says, “*The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire.*” Then in Deuteronomy 5:6-21, he quotes the Ten Commandments in full detail, concluding in the **twenty second verse** with, “*These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more.*” These “*ten com-*

Section 6: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Three  
“The Purpose of the Law” Galatians 3:19-24

*mandments*” were a part of the covenant of blessing with Abraham and “*his seed*,” a covenant of which it was said, “...*no man disannuleth or addeth thereto.*”

Moses plainly told the people of Israel that his “*Law*” and the Ten Commandments were two different covenants. After giving the “*blessings* (Deuteronomy 28:1-14)” and the “*curses* (Deuteronomy 28:15-68)” of Moses’ Law, he said, “*These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, BESIDE the covenant which he (God) made with them in Horeb*” (Deuteronomy 29:1). Pay close attention to this verse. God gave His covenant (The Ten Commandments) in Horeb. Moses made a covenant with the children of Israel in Moab, which Moses said was “*beside the covenant which God made in Horeb.*” Clearly, they are two separate covenants.

The blessing of Abraham is found in God’s covenant with the people; “...*if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation*” (Exodus 19:5-6). Neither God nor man could have added to or taken away from the words God spoke to Israel in Horeb. If they would have “*obeyed His voice, and kept His covenant,*” there would never have been a “*Law of Moses,*” which was “*added because of transgressions;*” But the people did not “*obey His voice;*” they refused to even “*listen*” to His voice. When God came down on Horeb, a thick darkness covered the mountain; the atmosphere was charged with thunder and lightning, and the earth shook under their feet. God spoke to them “*out of the midst of the fire,*” and “...*when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die*” (Exodus 20:18-19). Then they turned their backs and fled from the mountain. They refused to even listen to what God said,

## Section 6: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Three

### “The Purpose of the Law” Galatians 3:19-24

but they promised to hear and do all that Moses would command them. Within six weeks of that day, the people had turned away from Moses also, and were found worshipping an image of a calf made of gold.

The “*Law of Moses*” would never have been given if the people had “*obeyed* (Strong’s Gr. Def. - *to hear intelligently; implies attention and obedience*)” the voice of God. There would never have been a “*Levitical priesthood*,” and they would have never, ever, offered an animal sacrifice. God Himself confirms this truth in Jeremiah 7:22-23; “*...I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people....*” Jeremiah brought the conclusion of the matter in the twenty eighth verse saying, “*...this is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God....*”

“**...added because of transgressions...**” It was not the transgression of Adam that caused the Law of Moses to be added; instead, it was the transgression of the children of Israel at Horeb, where they first rejected God and His covenant of blessing, and later rejected Moses, and fashioned (and worshiped) a golden calf to go before them. Paul will prove the implications made in this verse (Galatians 3:19) in the **remainder of the chapter**, and in the **fourth chapter** also. The fact that Moses’ Law was “*added*” proves that it was not part of the covenant which God made with Abraham and His seed, because that covenant cannot be “*disannulled, or added thereto*” (Galatians 3:15).

“**...till the seed should come to whom the promise was made...**” Several things are implied by this single phrase. **First**, the Law of Moses had a beginning and an ending. It came into effect in the generation that rejected the voice of God

**Section 6: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Three**  
**“The Purpose of the Law” Galatians 3:19-24**

and worshipped the golden calf; it would be in effect until *“the seed should come to whom the promise was made,”* which Paul confirms in the **sixteenth verse** to be Christ. It ended when Jesus Christ *“...abolished it in His flesh”* (Ephesians 2:15), and *“nailed it to His cross”* (Colossians 2:14).

The **second** thing implied in this verse is earthshaking; the children of Israel were *not* the *“...seed to whom the promise was made.”* Their *“transgressions”* had disqualified them from the promise, and brought them under the *“curse”* of Moses’ Law. Moses understood this before his death. It was in the last day of Moses’ life that he gave the final reading of his Law, after which he commanded the priest to *“...take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness **against thee**”* (Deuteronomy 31:26). This was the *“law”* that Jesus *“blotted out,”* as Paul said in Colossians 2:14; *“...blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was **against us**, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”*

**“...and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.”**

Moses was the mediator of the Law of Moses. It was *“ordained”* because of Israel’s transgression, and delivered to Moses by angels. God told Moses in Exodus 23:20-21, *“Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and **obey his voice**, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him.”*

**20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.**

This is an obscure text, the meaning of which is not easily seen, but when it is seen it becomes very clear. It was written to show that Moses is not the mediator of the *“covenant of promise”* which God gave to *“Abraham and his seed,”* because the sec-

## Section 6: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Three

### “The Purpose of the Law” Galatians 3:19-24

ond party of the promise (Christ) had not yet come. The Law of Moses could not add to, nor could it cancel, the promise which God confirmed to Abraham and his seed “*by an oath*” when He “*swore by Himself*” (Hebrews 6:13-17). Instead, it was added to the nation of Israel who had heard and rejected both the voice of God and the covenant of promise when it was offered to them. Moses stood between God and the children of Israel to mediate the Law which “*...came by Moses*” (John 1:15), and they were required, by penalty of death, to obey it in every detail. The “*covenant of promise*” was made with Christ Jesus, and when it was confirmed by the shedding of His precious blood in His death, He and He alone became the mediator between God and man in His resurrection and ascension to the throne (I Timothy 2:5).

**21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.**

**“...is the law then against the promises of God...”**

The Law of Moses is neither for nor against the promise. It has no relationship with the promise whatsoever. The “*promise*” is not the “*source*” of the Law, nor is the “*Law*” the “*source*” of the promise. When Paul said the Law was “*...added because of transgressions,*” he did not mean that the Law was “*added to the promise;*” instead, it was added to the transgressors. Paul tells Timothy, “*Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine*” (I Timothy 1:9-10).

Section 6: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Three  
“The Purpose of the Law” Galatians 3:19-24

“...for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law...” In Hebrew 7:18, the apostle speaks about the “*disannulling (cancellation) of the commandment (Law of Moses)*” because of the “*weakness and unprofitableness thereof.*” The “*weakness*” of the Law was that it could not give life to those who trusted in it. The Law could only slay the sinner; it could never justify him, thus it could never make him to be “*righteous.*”

**22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.**

In Romans 3:9, Paul makes this statement: “...we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are **all under sin.**” In the **following nine verses**, he offers *his “proof”* in a litany of scripture verses from the Old Testament.

Romans 3:10 **As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one...**

Romans 3:11 **There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God (Psalms 14:2).**

Romans 3:12 **They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one (Psalms 14:3).**

Romans 3:13 **Their throat is an open sepulcher (Psalms 5:9); with their tongues they have used deceit (Psalms 78:36); the poison of asps is under their lips (Psalms 140:3):**

Romans 3:14 **Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness (Psalms 10:7):**

Romans 3:15 **Their feet are swift to shed blood (Isaiah 59:7):**

Romans 3:16 **Destruction and misery are in their ways (Isaiah 59:7):**

## Section 6: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Three

### “The Purpose of the Law” Galatians 3:19-24

Romans 3:17 **And the way of peace have they not known** (Isaiah 59:8):

Romans 3:18 **There is no fear of God before their eyes** (Psalms 36:1).

Paul’s “*conclusion*” is found in the next verse, Romans 3:19: **Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.**

Everything that is written in these scriptures was written concerning the children of Israel, God’s “*chosen people*.” Paul says in Romans 2:12. “*For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.*” The Gentiles, who were never under the Law of Moses, had no claim to righteousness whatsoever. Their sin was “*without the Law*” so they would perish without the Law. Israel, on the other hand, was under the Law and claimed righteousness, so when Israel was found to be unrighteous, the entire world then stood guilty before God.

**“...that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe...”** If even one person could have been found that was not “*under sin*,” Christ would not have died to “*...take away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29), because that one person would have been proof that a man could justify himself. Notice that it is “*by faith of Jesus Christ*” that the promise is given “*...to them that believe.*” The “*promise*” is given to “*them that believe*,” whether they are Jews or Gentiles. The “*difference*” between a Jew and a Gentile was taken away when God “*concluded them all* (both Jew and Gentile) *under sin.*” The term “*faith of Christ*” speaks of all that Jesus did through His death and resurrection for our full salvation. Before Christ came into the world to redeem us from our sin, this “*faith*” did not exist.

Section 6: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Three  
“The Purpose of the Law” Galatians 3:19-24

**23 But before faith** (the faith of Christ) **came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.**

**“...before faith came...”** The scriptures tell us in Hebrews 11:39-40 of men and women of faith who obeyed God and did mighty exploits “*through faith,*” yet all of them lived and died before “*the faith of Christ*” came. The term, “*before faith came,*” speaks of the duration of the Law of Moses spoken of in the nineteenth verse; “*...till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.*”

**“...we were kept under the law...”** When Paul uses the word “*we*” in this verse, he is speaking specifically of the Jew, because the Gentile was not under the Law of Moses.

**“...shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed...”** According to the Greek wording in this phrase, Paul speaks of the “*Law*” as a “*prison*” in which the Jew was shut up and kept under guard until the “*faith of Christ*” came. In Romans 7:6, Paul says, “*...we are delivered from the Law, that being dead (unto that) wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*” In the seventh chapter of Romans, Paul portrays the Law as a harsh husband from which the only escape is through death. In Galatians he portrays the Law as a prison from which only Christ can redeem (Galatians 3:13; 4:4-5).

**24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.**

The Greek word “*paidagogos,*” which was translated “*schoolmaster,*” actually refers to a “*boy leader*” which was a slave whose duty was to take the children to and from school. Interestingly, the Greek word for “*boy*” is “*pais,*” which Strong’s Concordance defines as “*a boy (as often beaten with impunity).*” In this verse, the “*schoolmaster*” was not a teacher,

## Section 6: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Three

### “The Purpose of the Law” Galatians 3:19-24

but a “*disciplinarian.*” Though a slave himself, he could “*beat*” the son of his master “*with impunity,*” which means he was “*exempt from punishment*” when he disciplined the child. The Law of Moses was added upon Israel to discipline the nation until “*the seed (Jesus Christ) should come to whom the promise was made.*” Those who “*despised*” the Law “*died without mercy before two or three witnesses,*” and those who stoned them to death were exempt from prosecution. Such was the power of the Law over the people until Christ came.

“***...to bring us unto Christ...***” We should notice that the words “*to bring us*” are written in italics in the Bible, indicating that they are not in the Greek text. If the purpose of the “*Law of Moses*” had been to “***lead***” the people to Christ, then those who trusted in the Law the most would have gladly received Christ, but such was not the case. The apostle John said, “*He came unto His own, and His own received Him not...*” (John 1:11). It was those who were most zealous of the Law that plotted the death of Jesus, and who also persecuted the church. If any came to Christ because of the Law, it was because they were “*driven,*” hence, as Jesus told the chief priests and elders, “*...publicans and harlots go into the kingdom before you*” (Matthew 21:23-31). In Luke 18:10-14, Jesus tells of a “*publican*” who went to the temple to pray, but was harshly condemned by a Pharisee who also prayed. The publican could not even “*lift his eyes unto heaven;*” instead, he “*smote his breast*” and prayed, “*God, be merciful to me a sinner.*” Jesus said, “*This man (the publican) went down to his house justified rather than the other (the Pharisee).*”

The “*Law of Moses,*” which was “*added because of transgressions,*” had never been the plan of God for His people. It was given as a “*cruel disciplinarian*” to beat the people into obedience and as a “*prison*” to “*shut them up*” and “*keep them*” till Christ would come. It was a curse upon the nation of Israel, and is unto this day to all those of any nation who “*trust*” in it.

## Section 6: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Three

### **“The Purpose of the Law” Galatians 3:19-24**

Notice in **the thirteenth verse of this chapter** that “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.*” In the **fifth verse of the fourth chapter**, Christ came to “...*redeem them that were under the law.*” If there are any who continue to think that the “*Law of Moses*” is the answer to the sin problem, consider the words of Paul in I Corinthians 15:56, “*The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*”

## Introduction to Section Seven

*It took the death of the Son of God to redeem us from sin, because we were slaves to sin and could not deliver ourselves. God sent His Son to die on the cross to “take away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), and we were made “free from sin” (Romans 6:7). It took no less sacrifice to redeem the Jew from the Law of Moses. Those who are “under the law” cannot deliver themselves because they are “slaves” to the taskmaster and “shut up” in the prison.*

## Redeemed from the Law

**25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.**

“*Faith*,” as used in this verse, could not come until after Christ died for all, because the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is what constitutes “...*the faith of Christ*” (Galatians 2:16). The word “*faith*” is used as a noun and encompasses all that Christ did for man through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. It is a “*fact*” that Christ **died for us**. It is the “*faith of Christ*” which declares that **we died with Him**, unto sin (Romans 6:6), unto the world (Galatians 6:14), and unto the Law (Romans 7:4). The Law of Moses would be in effect upon the children of Israel until “...*the seed should come to whom the promise was made.*” That “*seed*,” according to Paul **in the sixteenth verse**, is Christ.

**“...we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”** The “*we*” Paul speaks of in this passage are the Jews who believe upon Jesus Christ. They had been under the schoolmaster, the Law of Moses, ever since their fathers rejected the voice of God in the wilderness. But now, having been redeemed through the shed blood of Christ and filled with the Holy Ghost, they stood as

## Section 7: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter 3-4

### “Redeemed from the Law” Galatians 3:24-4:7

the sons of God and were no longer under the schoolmaster, the Law. The Law of Moses had been added because of Israel's transgressions at Mount Horeb, and would continue upon them until Christ came to redeem them. In Daniel 9:24, there is a prophecy of the Messiah, who would “*finish the transgression,*” and “*make an end of sins.*” This Christ did through His death on the cross. Those Jews who trust in Him are not transgressors as their fathers were in the wilderness because their old man of sin has been nailed to the cross of Christ. The believing Jew is no longer under the administration of that one who could “*beat them with impunity* (i.e., the Law).”

The Gentiles had never been under the dominion of “*the schoolmaster*” (the Law), but were being drawn into it by those who came preaching circumcision. Paul is warning of the cruel and damnable nature of that which the Galatian believers were embracing. Paul speaks of the “*Law of Moses*” as both “*the ministration of death*” and “*the ministration of condemnation*” (II Corinthians 3:7-9). In the same text, he speaks of the “*New Covenant*” as “*the ministration of the Spirit*” and “*the ministration of righteousness.*” It is a shame that almost two-thousand years later many who profess faith in Jesus Christ have chosen “*the ministration of death.*”

### **26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**

In this passage, Paul actually sets the believers at Galatia forth as proof that the dominion of the Law has come to an end for those who trust in Christ. They had been saved and delivered from sin without the Law. They had been baptized with the Holy Ghost without the Law. The ministry of the Spirit and miracles had been working in their church body without the Law. It was evident that these were in fact the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Paul uses this undeniable reality as another glorious proof that the Law of Moses was neither required

## Section 7: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter 3-4

### “Redeemed from the Law” Galatians 3:24-4:7

nor needed for anyone, whether Jew or Gentile, to become a child of God. Peter expresses this same conclusion during the council meeting that was held in Jerusalem over the question of whether the Gentiles needed to be circumcised and keep the Law. After reminding the elders and other apostles of how God saved the household of Cornelius by purifying their hearts by faith and filling them with the Holy Ghost without circumcision or the Law, Peter says, “...we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ **we shall be saved, even as they**” (Acts 15:11). Peter was not saying that he believed the Gentiles could be saved like a Jew who had been under the Law of Moses for all his lifetime. Instead, he was saying that the Jews could be saved like the Gentiles, that is, without the Law of Moses and all of its deeds! They had been saved in spite of the Law and not because of it. Salvation for the Jews is through faith alone, just as it is for the Gentiles.

### **27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**

In Romans 6:3 Paul asks the question, “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*” In II Corinthians 5:17, Paul makes an absolute statement; “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*” Everyone that is “*in Christ*” is a “*new creature,*” and “*old things are passed away.*” It is only through “*baptism into His death*” and “*crucifixion with Him*” that this can be true of “*all who are in Christ.*” The baptism in this verse cannot relate to water baptism. Water baptism can bring a person into fellowship within the visible church structure, but it can never bring them “*into Christ.*”

“**...have put on Christ...**” The wording from the Greek language literally means they are “*clothed with Christ.*”

## Section 7: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter 3-4

### “Redeemed from the Law” Galatians 3:24-4:7

**28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Paul does not say that neither Jews nor Greeks, bond nor free, male nor female can be saved. Instead, they all lose their identity. If the “king” is saved, he is not a “king” in Christ. Neither is the “pauper” that is saved a “pauper” in Christ. The redeemed are all “one in Christ.”

**“...for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”** To understand the importance of this phrase, we must look again at **verse sixteen**; *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”* There is only one “seed of Abraham.” Obviously, Abraham has many descendants, because he is the “father of many nations.” He was the father of eight sons; one by Hagar, one by Sarah, and six by Keturah. In Galatians 4:22, Paul calculated that Abraham had “two sons.” In Genesis 22:2, God counted that he had only one son, which was Isaac, the “child of promise.” It is by God’s count that Abraham has but one “seed of promise,” and that seed is Christ. As many as are “in Christ” are one, as Paul explains in I Corinthians 12:12-13, *“...for as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”*

**29 And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

The hypothetical in this verse is an extension of the last phrase of the previous verse, and should be understood as *“...and if ye be one in Christ, then are ye Abraham’s seed....”* Jesus Christ alone is Abraham’s seed, but all who are “one in Him”

## Section 7: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter 3-4

### “Redeemed from the Law” Galatians 3:24-4:7

are also Abraham’s seed as they are “*one with Him.*” They are the rightful heirs to the promise God made to Abraham.

### Galatians Chapter four

**1-2 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.**

The last verse of the previous chapter introduced us to the “*heirs*” of the promise. In these two verses, Paul gives an analogy based upon the “*heirs*” of this present world. The infant son of a great king, who is the heir to his father’s throne, is no different from a servant while he is a child. He is under the absolute control of those his father has placed over him. These have dominion over him to discipline, train, and teach him until the time appointed of the father.

**“...until the time appointed of the father...”** At the time appointed the heir would be released from the dominion of the tutors and governors and take his place as a son in his father’s house. No longer would he be subject to the demands of the tutors and governors. It is most important to understand that this analogy is given to explain the Jew’s condition under the Law of Moses, and has absolutely nothing to do with the state or condition of any child of God, whether young or old.

**3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:**

When Paul speaks of “we” in this verse, he is referring to himself and the other Jews who had once served under the Law, but now believed upon Jesus Christ. He is showing that the Jew (the child of Israel) was in bondage under the Law of Moses until Jesus Christ came. They were nothing more than slaves, and no better than the Gentiles (Romans 3:9), with every detail of their life ordered by the six hundred and thirteen command-

## Section 7: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter 3-4

### “Redeemed from the Law” Galatians 3:24-4:7

ments of the Law. The analogy goes no further than this. Many teachers of religion use verses one and two to bring people under their absolute control, telling them they are preparing them to reign in life. Those who follow those teachers will be in bondage all the days of their life. The “*Law of Moses*” was **not** a proper preparation for the coming of Christ. In fact, those Jews who were most dedicated to the Law were the ones who most rejected Christ when He came.

#### **4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,**

The Law had a course to run. It had been “*added because of transgressions until the seed should come to whom the promise was made.*” That seed is Christ. We may not fully understand the timetable of God, but we do know that the angel Gabriel was sent to Daniel to tell him the exact year the “*Messiah*” would appear in His ministry (Daniel 9:24-27). According to that prophecy, the “*fulness of the time*” came when Jesus was thirty years old, the very year the Holy Ghost came upon Him and He entered into His Messianic ministry. That was the same year that the Jews sent priests and Levites to John the Baptist, enquiring if he was the Messiah (John 1:19-25). They knew by the prophecy of “*seventy weeks*” in the writings of Daniel that the “*fulness of time*” had come.

**“...God sent forth his Son...”** The words “*sent forth*” are translated from the Greek word “*exapostello*,” which means “*to send forth on a mission.*” Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was “*made of a woman*,” and “*made under the Law.*” While He was a child and until He became thirty years of age he was subject, both to His parents and to the Law of Moses. The “*fulness of time*” came precisely the same year the prophecy foretold that Messiah (Christ) would come. The event is recorded very briefly in Luke 3:22-23; “*...and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice*

## Section 7: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter 3-4

### “Redeemed from the Law” Galatians 3:24-4:7

*came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age....”* This was the day that God “*sent forth His Son.*” From that day He was no longer subject to either his earthly parents or to the carnal “*Law of Moses.*” He would “*obey the voice of His Father.*”

#### **5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.**

The Gentiles had never been under the Law. The Jews, however, had served under the Law for fifteen hundred years, but they would never be any different from the servants (unbelieving Gentiles) until they were redeemed from being under the Law. Remember that in Galatians 3:13 Paul said, “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law...*,” indicating that the “*mission*” had been accomplished when Jesus died on the cross to “*...take away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

**“...that we might receive the adoption of sons.”** The word “*adoption*” is translated from a compound word in the Greek which means “*to place as a son.*” Paul literally said in this verse, “*...to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive our place as sons.*” As long as anyone is a servant to either sin or the Law they can never be placed in Christ as a son of God. Jesus said, “*...the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*” (John 8:35-36). The Jews could be nothing more than the servants as long as they were under the Law. Jesus Christ, however, is the “*redeemer;*” He “*redeems*” His people from both sin and the Law. As John says, “*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God*” (John 1:12). Paul was writing these things to the Gentile churches in Galatia. They were being deceived by false teachers who coerced them into circumcision and obedience to Moses’ Law. Those who had been redeemed

## Section 7: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter 3-4

### “Redeemed from the Law” Galatians 3:24-4:7

from sin were now bringing themselves under the dominion of the Law. Paul was showing that even the Jews had to be redeemed from the Law before they could become the sons of God.

### **6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.**

In this verse, Paul turns back to the believing Gentiles. He has already established in Galatians 3:26 that they are “...*the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.*” It is based upon this fact that he says to the Gentiles, “...*because ye are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts....*” The “*Spirit of His Son*” in this verse speaks of the “*Spirit of Christ.*” We who have repented and believed the gospel have “*received Christ by faith.*” It is on the basis of this “*faith*” that God sends the “*Spirit of His Son*” into our hearts. Notice that the Spirit of the Son comes into our hearts crying, “*Abba, Father.*” This is not “*baby talk*” as some may suggest; it is the upward cry of the Son to the Father. It is the “*Spirit of the Son*” calling for the “*Spirit of the Father.*” In John 14:23 Jesus said, “*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*” It is the spiritual norm for those who have received the Son to receive the Father also. This is the “*promise of the Father*” (Acts 1:4-5), which is the baptism with the Holy Ghost.

**“...Abba, Father.”** “*Abba*” is the Chaldean word for “*father,*” while “*pater*” is the Greek word that was translated as “*father.*” It appears to be repetitious until we consider that the word “*abba*” defines a father as one who is due the utmost in respect, love, and submission. The only place it is recorded that Jesus used these two words in combination was in the Garden of Gethsemane where He prayed, “*Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt*” (Mark 14:36). The

## Section 7: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter 3-4

### “Redeemed from the Law” Galatians 3:24-4:7

Syriac Bible translates this as Jesus saying, “*My Lord, my Father...*,” indicating His full submission to the will and purpose of His Father, whatever it might be. The same is true of the children of God. God sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying “*Abba, Father,*” indicating full submission to the will and purpose of God in us.

#### **7      Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**

The Gentile was never a “*servant*” to the Law of Moses. He was, however, a servant to sin. Jesus said, “*He that committeth sin is the servant of sin...if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*” (John 8:34-36). We whom Christ has redeemed from the bondage of sin are not to come under the bondage of the Law. It does not matter what we were slaves to in our past, we are no longer slaves, but sons; sons of God and heirs with Christ. We have been delivered from all bondage to serve God in “*newness of spirit,*” as sons of God. His children “*obey His voice,*” which the children of Israel refused to do (Exodus 20:19). In Romans 8:14-17, Paul wrote these same things in greater detail as we will see. “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God (obey His voice), they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.*”

**Section 8: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four**  
**“Zealously Effected” Galatians 4:8-20**

## **Introduction to Section Eight**

*The apostle cannot comprehend why anyone who was delivered from the bondage of sin and idolatry would desire to surrender themselves to the bondage of the Law of Moses. He found, however, that the Gentiles in the church at Galatia had been “zealously affected” by teachings of the false brethren from Jerusalem. They were “excited” about circumcision and obeying Moses. They did not understand, as Paul did, that bondage to the Law of Moses was no better than their previous bondage to idols.*

## **Zealously Affected**

**8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.**

The word “*howbeit*” is translated from the Greek word “*alla*,” which means “*contrariwise*.” Connecting with the last phrase of the previous verse, Paul told them, “...*you are sons, and heirs of God through Christ. To the contrary, before you knew God, you were slaves to dumb idols which are not gods.*” He reminded them of the bondage they suffered under the demands of those heathen religions.

**9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?**

These believers were no longer slaves. They had been delivered from bondage to idols through faith in Jesus Christ, but now they were returning to bondage of their own free will. They would never have returned to idols. They knew firsthand the nature of that bondage. Instead, they were turning to the “*weak and beggarly elements*” of the Law of Moses. Paul’s words indicate that he considers bondage to the Law to be

**Section 8: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four**  
**“Zealously Effected” Galatians 4:8-20**

equivalent to the bondage of idols. He said, “*how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements,*” as though they were the same “*elements*” they had been delivered from.

**10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.**

Paul identifies the *observance* of days, months, times, and years as the “*weak and beggarly elements*” these Gentiles were turning to. These “*holy days, times, and seasons*” were highly revered by the Jews who remained under the dominion of the Law, but Paul understood that they were nothing more than “*dead works*” that could never give life to those who observed them. In Colossians 2:16-17 he says, “*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*”

**11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.**

Paul understood what the end result would be if these Gentile believers began to trust in circumcision and the Law of Moses for righteousness. He feared for their souls.

**12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.**

The phrase “*ye have not injured me at all*” is probably a mistranslation. The entire phrase is translated from two Greek words; the first is “*oudeis,*” which means “*not even one,*” and the second is “*adikeo,*” which means “*to be unjust,*” or, “*to do wrong.*” Paul could well be saying, “*Be as I am; for I am as ye are: Do not be unjust or do wrong in even one thing.*” This would relate to his words in chapter five, verse nine; “*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*”

**13-14 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my tempta**

**Section 8: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four**  
**“Zealously Effected” Galatians 4:8-20**

**tion which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.**

Much has been written concerning Paul’s “*infirmity of the flesh*” which is mentioned in this text. Some believe it was sickness, or some physical handicap, while others have suggested that he was nearly blind, and had to be led about by the hand. This writer believes on the basis of numerous references in his writings, that Paul’s vision may have been farsighted, and he needed help only in reading the scriptures and writing his letters. This is a common occurrence with people above forty years of age which we correct with reading glasses. We know that Paul dictated most of his letters with the exception of this one to the Galatians, and his very short letter to Philemon. In Galatians 6:11 he said, “*Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand.*” He needed reading glasses, but they would not be invented for many hundreds of years. The proof that Paul was not nearly blind is found in Acts 18:3 where we find that Paul worked with his hands as a tent-maker. His eyesight hindered him only when he would read or write, both of which were most important to his work in the ministry.

Paul’s enemies were spreading ridicule against him. He tells us what they were saying about him in II Corinthians 10:10: “*For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.*” Paul’s response to those who believed this in Corinth was “*...such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present*” (II Corinthians 10:11). Whatever his infirmity was, it was overshadowed by the presence and power of God that was with Him. Only in his absence could the enemies of the gospel ridicule Paul.

In I Thessalonians 1:5 Paul says, “*...our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and*

**Section 8: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four**  
**“Zealously Effected” Galatians 4:8-20**

*in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.*” When the Galatians first heard the gospel and witnessed the power of the Holy Ghost working through Paul, whatever his infirmity was, it became as nothing. They received him “...as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.” No higher honor could they bestow upon any man than this.

**15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.**

Paul reminds them of the “*blessedness*” of the time they first trusted in Christ. Where is that blessedness now? How blessed they had been. They had told others of the blessings that had come upon them through Paul’s gospel.

**“...for I bear you record...”** Paul is not fabricating the things he is reminding them of. He said, “*I bear thee record.*” Some must have publicly testified that “...if it were possible...” they would have given Paul their own eyes. Now, at the time Paul wrote this letter, all that had changed. They were turning away from both Paul and the gospel of Christ which he preached, to receive that “*which is no gospel*” (Galatians 1:6-7).

**16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?**

The believers at Galatia had rejoiced when Paul first brought the gospel to them. Now, they were drawing away from him when he defended that same gospel. It is a phenomenon of human nature that man often does not want to hear the truth, even when they know it is the truth. These Galatians wanted to believe something that would utterly destroy them both spiritually and morally.

**17 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.**

**Section 8: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four**  
**“Zealously Effected” Galatians 4:8-20**

**“...they zealously affect you, but not well...”** Paul is speaking of those who came from Jerusalem preaching circumcision and the Law of Moses. They are called “*judaizers*” because their intent was to convert Gentile believers to Judaism. Paul said, “*...they excite you about something that is not good,*” that is, “*they give you great zeal that is not according to knowledge*” (Romans 10:2). Paul knew more than most about the danger of misplaced “*zeal.*” In Philippians 3:5-6, he gave a list of things which were to his advantage when he trusted in the Law. He concludes that list saying, “*...concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless*” (Philippians 3:6). It was his great “*zeal*” for the Law of Moses that caused Saul of Tarsus to “*make havoc of the churches*” (Acts 8:3), and “*...breathe out slaughter against the disciples of the Lord*” (Acts 9:1).

**“...they would exclude you...”** The message of the Judaizers was “*Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved*” (Acts 15:1). They “*excluded*” Paul’s converts from salvation because he did not command them to be circumcised. Jesus had told the Pharisees in Matthew 23:13, “*...ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men....*” This is exactly what the Judaizers were doing. They taught that circumcision was the door into the kingdom, denying Jesus Christ, who said, “*I am the door*” (John 10:9). They would “*shut out*” the gentile believers until they submitted to circumcision and the Law of Moses. All those who were thus deceived shut themselves out from Christ.

It was the Judaizers themselves that were actually in a very precarious position. Even though they were very bold to preach their doctrine, they were well aware of the fact that if the Gentiles could be saved by faith without the deeds of the Law, then it would be themselves who would “*suffer the loss*” of the Law of Moses they had trusted in. It would be their doctrine, and not the gospel that Paul preached, that would be found to be

**Section 8: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four**  
**“Zealously Effected” Galatians 4:8-20**

nothing more than “*dung*” (Philippians 3:8). If I believe that you must be circumcised in order to be saved, then I must also believe that no one is saved if they have not been circumcised. The same “*rule*” applies to doctrines of baptisms, church membership, etc. If I believe that you must be baptized in water in any certain method or ceremony in order to be saved, then I must also believe that no one is saved if they have not been baptized in water with that method or ceremony. If I find even one person that is a “*new creature*” in Christ who did not come through my method or ceremony, I am faced with a dilemma. If I acknowledge that someone received salvation without my method or ceremony, then I suffer the loss of what I trusted in, and it is my salvation that becomes suspect. If I continue to cling to my method or ceremony, then I must destroy the faith of those who were saved without my method in order to defend my method. The Judaizers chose the latter course, preaching everywhere, “*Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.*” They destroyed the faith of many.

**“...that ye might affect them...”** The exclusion of the uncircumcised Gentile believers actually strengthened the Judaizers in their zeal. It is a case of making your light shine brighter by putting someone else’s out. The more they were able to destroy the faith of the uncircumcised believers, the more spiritual the Judaizers appeared in their own sight.

**18 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.**

It was in Paul’s absence that the “*believers*” of Galatia were turning away from faith in Christ to trust in circumcision. We recall that it was in the absence of Moses at Mount Horeb that the children of Israel turned to worship a golden calf. Neither of these events would have happened except in the absence of the man of God. Had these believers held the same “*fervor*”

**Section 8: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four**  
**“Zealously Effected” Galatians 4:8-20**

for the gospel of Christ in Paul’s absence as they manifested in his presence, they would never have turned to circumcision.

**19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,**

This single verse seems to be a cry that escapes from the apostle’s heart, which was broken for the Galatian church. His affection for them is as if they were his own children, which they were in the Lord. He had brought the gospel to them. They had received the gospel with great joy, and Paul himself as if he were “...*an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus*” (verse fourteen). Now he was experiencing great sorrow and pain for them as a woman in childbirth feels. There would be no relief until “...*Christ be formed in you (again).*”

Christ is not “*formed*” in an individual. He is “*received by faith,*” and “*dwells in our hearts by faith*” (Ephesians 3:17). Christ is “*formed*” in the church by the working of the Holy Ghost in each member in particular. In I Corinthians 12:13 Paul says, “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...*,” which “*forms*” the “*body*” of Christ. The churches at Galatia were turning away from faith in Christ to trust in circumcision and the Law of Moses. The Holy Ghost was “*grieved*” by their actions, and no longer worked in them. In Galatians 5:4, Paul will tell them, “*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*” Paul’s great travail was for Christ to be formed in the churches of Galatia once more by the working of the Holy Ghost in them. For this to be, they must turn away from Moses and trust once more in Christ alone. They must “...*worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*” (Philippians 3:3).

**Section 8: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four**  
**“Zealously Effected” Galatians 4:8-20**

**20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.**

Paul longed to be with the Galatians in person, and to know firsthand where they stood. He stood in doubt, not knowing for certain how far the error had penetrated the congregation. Perhaps his attitude would change if he was present, but judging from the reports he had received, he must “*prepare for the worst, and hope for the best.*”

**Section 9: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four**  
**“The Two Covenants” Galatians 4:21-31**

## **Introduction to Section Nine**

*Those who desire to be “under the Law” should carefully study this section. The analogy that Paul gives is shocking, but it is true. When Jonah says, “They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy” (Jonah 2:8), he described perfectly those who seek to please God through the Law of Moses, or any “law” of religion.*

## **The Two Covenants**

**21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?**

Paul speaks directly to those among the Galatian believers that wanted to be under the Law, questioning them, “do ye not hear the law?” He will give them an “allegory” designed to awaken them to the nature of the Law of Moses, and to understand its effects.

**22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.**

Paul lays the groundwork for his allegory by calling to their attention the two sons of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, and their mothers, Hagar, the “bondwoman,” and Sarah, the “freewoman.”

**23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.**

Ishmael, the child of Hagar, was “born after the flesh.” This simply means that he was born through “procreation,” just as every other child had been from the beginning of time. Abraham desired a son that his wife Sarah could not give him because her “womb” was “dead.” Abraham married “Hagar,” Sarah’s hand maid, and she became his “wife (Genesis 16:3).”

## Section 9: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four

### “The Two Covenants” Galatians 4:21-31

Hagar conceived by Abraham, and Ishmael was born through the natural processes of child birth. When Abraham was ninety nine years old God gave him a promise that Sarah, his barren wife, would bear him a Son. By this time Abraham’s body was “*dead*” to natural reproduction. Fleshly processes alone could not produce Isaac; therefore, he alone was the “*child of promise*.”

**24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.**

It is in this verse that Paul introduces his “*allegory*,” which must be followed very closely if it is to be understood. First, the two “*mothers*” represent the two covenants. Hagar, the bond woman, represents The Old Covenant, which had its beginning at Sinai, and “*gendereth to bondage*.” The term “*gendereth to bondage*” means that those “*born of the Law*” are servants, just as Hagar, their mother was a servant. Sarah is not the “*mother*” of those who are under the Law.

**25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.**

Paul explains Hagar’s part in his allegory even more clearly. “*Agar (Hagar) is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to* (‘corresponds to’, or, ‘represents’) *Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.*” This is earthshaking! Paul says that “*Jerusalem which now is* (natural Jerusalem, which rejected Jesus, her Messiah)” and “*Hagar the bond woman*” are the same. Further, both Jerusalem and “*her children* (the unbelieving Jew)” are in bondage, as represented by Hagar and her slave son, Ishmael.

**26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.**

## Section 9: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four

### “The Two Covenants” Galatians 4:21-31

“*Jerusalem which is above* (the New Jerusalem)” is represented by Sarah, the “*freewoman*,” who is “*the mother of us all*,” speaking of all who are “*born of the Spirit of God*.” We who believe are “*Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise*” (Galatians 3:29). “*Jerusalem which is above*,” represented by Sarah, speaks of the “*New Jerusalem*” and the “*New Creation*.”

**27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.**

Imagine the hurt and the pain that Sarah experienced while Hagar had her husband for more than thirteen years. Hagar was not a “*one night stand*,” because Abraham took her for his wife (Genesis 16:3). There is a thirteen year time span between the last verse of the sixteenth chapter of Genesis and the first verse of the seventeenth chapter. This period of time began with the birth of Ishmael, and ended with the promise of a son through Sarah. Even then, Abraham pleaded for Ishmael in Genesis 17:18, saying to God, “*O that Ishmael might live before thee*.” Sarah was the desolate woman in this verse. Abraham had invested over thirteen years in Hagar and her son, Ishmael. Abraham fully believed that Ishmael was his heir of promise, and through Ishmael he would be made the “*father of many nations*.” When God rejected Ishmael, who was thirteen years old at the time, Abraham returned his attention and affection to Sarah, the wife of his youth. Through a miracle Sarah conceived and brought forth the child of promise, out of whom would come seed “*as the stars of heaven for number*” (Genesis 15:5-6). Now, the “*desolate*” Sarah would have many more children than Hagar, the bond woman. Paul will tell us in the next verse who those “*children*” are.

**Section 9: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four**  
**“The Two Covenants” Galatians 4:21-31**

**28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.**

At this point in his letter, Paul begins to speak of “*we, brethren.*” This is a change from previous references to “*we*” where he was speaking specifically of himself and the other Jewish believers. Now he begins to speak of “*we*” and “*us*” as all the brethren in Christ. We who believe, who are “*born again*” of the Spirit of God, are the seed that God promised to Abraham. We are the “*children of promise*” that God has brought to himself through Jesus Christ. We are “*heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ,*” according to Romans 8:16-17.

**29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.**

In this verse, “*flesh*” and “*Spirit*” represent the two covenants; “*flesh*” being the old covenant of law, and “*Spirit*” being the new covenant of grace that came through Jesus Christ. In Genesis 21:9-10, the teenage Ishmael mocked the little child Isaac. Paul related this to the persecution the believers suffered from those who trusted in the law. Those who are “*born after the flesh*” will always persecute those who are “*born after the Spirit.*”

**30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.**

When Sarah saw Ishmael mocking, she demanded that Abraham “*cast out the bondwoman and her son.*” She refused any notion that the son of the bondwoman would be an heir with her child, Isaac. In the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses, Hagar represents both the Old Covenant and “*Jerusalem that now is.*” These were “*cast out*” when Jesus died on the cross. The “*old man*” of sin was crucified with Him (Romans 6:6-7), and the Law of Moses was “*nailed to His cross* (Colossians

**Section 9: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Four**  
**“The Two Covenants” Galatians 4:21-31**

2:14). Those who “*trust in the Law*” are not the heirs of promise, and will never be accepted by God.

It should be noted that the “*Jerusalem that now is*” that Paul spoke of was destroyed in the year 70 A.D. along with the generation of unbelieving Jews that were guilty of the blood of Jesus Christ. In Luke 21:20-24, Jesus spoke of this destruction as the “*days of vengeance*” and “*wrath upon this people.*” Those “*days of vengeance*” are long since past. Today, the Jew that does not believe is no different than any other unbeliever. Paul said it this way in Romans 11:32: “*For God hath concluded them all (both Jews and Gentiles) in unbelief, **that he might have mercy upon all***” who will believe.

**31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.**

Paul’s concluding thought in his allegory is to reassure the Gentile believers that we are the children of God through the New Covenant, and not by the Law.

Section 10: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five  
“Standing in Liberty” Galatians 5:1-12

## Introduction to Section Ten

*It is in this section that Paul describes the Law of Moses as a “yoke of bondage.” Our yoke as Gentiles was the “yoke of sin.” The “yoke” the Gentiles at Galatia were delivered from was the yoke of idolatry. When he says to the Galatians “be not entangled again...,” he is not warning them against backsliding into idolatry and sin, but against trusting in and obeying the Law of Moses.*

## Standing in the Liberty of Christ

### Galatians Chapter Five

**1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.**

The Greek word that is translated “liberty” in this verse is “*eleutheria*,” which Strong’s Greek Dictionary defines as “*freedom*.” It is derived from the Greek word “*eleutheros*,” which Strong’s defines as “*unrestrained (to go at pleasure), i.e. (as a citizen) not a slave (whether freeborn or manumitted)*.” The “*liberty (freedom) wherewith Christ hath made us free*” is twofold. **First**, it is “*freedom*” from sin, as Paul said in Romans 6:22, “*...but now being made free from sin.*” **Second**, it is “*freedom*” from the Law of Moses as revealed in Romans 7:6; “*But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*” This “*glorious liberty (Romans 8:21)*” is obtained only through “*death with Christ*” (Romans 6:7). We are “*baptized into His death*” (Romans 6:3) and we are “*...crucified with Him*” (Romans 6:6). In Romans 6:7 Paul says “*For he that is dead (with Christ), is freed from sin,*” while in Romans 7:4 he says “*Wherefore, my*

## Section 10: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five

### “Standing in Liberty” Galatians 5:1-12

*brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”* Christ “*died for us*” (Romans 5:8) and it is through His death that we are dead to both Sin and the Law. Being dead “*with Christ*” to sin, the believer is freed from sin. Being dead with Christ to the Law of Moses, the believer has no obligation to come under the dominion of The Law, but is rather given the admonition to “*...be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*”

Sin and law are irrevocably connected one to another as constant companions even among those who have never been under the Law of Moses. Those who seek to serve God by “*law,*” whether it is The Law of Moses or any other law of religion will continually struggle with sin and fail, because, as Paul says in I Corinthians 15:56, “*...the strength of sin is the Law.*”

**“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...”** Jesus Christ has “*liberated*” us, and we are free. He did so through His death on the cross, the shedding of His precious blood, and His glorious resurrection. He “*confirmed*” a “*new*” and “*better*” covenant in His bloody death and resurrection, and it is the “*New Covenant*” that Paul calls “*...the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.*” We did not win the victory over sin by our own efforts through either the Law of Moses or human principles. All of our human resources employed to serve God only serves to make our bondage greater. God has given us the victory through “*the victory*” of our Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary. (I Corinthians 15:57). We are to “*stand fast* (be stationary)” in the New and better Covenant.

**“...and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”** The “*yoke of bondage*” that Paul is warning against is the

**Section 10: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five**  
**“Standing in Liberty” Galatians 5:1-12**

*“Law of Moses.”* The Gentiles were never *“under the Law.”* The *“yoke of bondage”* they had been delivered from was their service to those *“...which by nature are no gods”* (Galatians 4:8). They had worshiped images and idols, and even the cruel *“demon gods”* of the heathen nations. They were *“sinners of the Gentiles (Galatians 2:15)”* and worshipers of idols. It is astonishing to see that Paul views the bondage of being brought under the Law of Moses as being equal to the bondage of idolatry which the gentiles had previously been delivered from.

We who are Gentiles today have never been under the Law of Moses. Neither have most of us been worshipers of strange gods. Our *“yoke of bondage”* was a *“sin nature,”* which every person, whether Jew or Gentile, was born into this world with. Jesus died on the cross to *“redeem us from all iniquity (Titus 2:14)”* and make us *“free from sin”* (Romans 6:6-7). If a person has indeed been made *“free from sin,”* it is not *“sin”* that will ensnare that person; instead, it will be their natural tendency to trust in the moral law to keep them from sin. If, on the other hand, it was the bondage of legalistic religion a person has been delivered from, their great danger lies in taking a light view of sin. We must understand that sin and law are constant companions with those who are *“under the law.”* There are those who were never under the Law. To these, Paul says, *“...as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law”* (Romans 2:12). Those who continue in sin are condemned whether they are under the Law or not. It is, however, those who are *“under the Law”* who are most attracted to sin, because, *“...the strength of sin is the Law.”* The answer is not to war against sin or to obey the Law; it is simply to *“stand fast in the liberty (the New Covenant) wherewith Christ hath made us free.”*

**2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.**

**Section 10: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five**  
**“Standing in Liberty” Galatians 5:1-12**

Paul speaks to the Galatian believers in no uncertain terms. All they had received and hoped to receive through faith in Christ would be forfeited if they joined themselves unto the Law of Moses. The Gentile believers at Galatia had been delivered out of idolatrous religions. They had been “*sinners*” in every sense of the word, for even their “*worship*” often involved them in every manner of unclean and perverted activity. They had no desire to return to the shame they had come out of; instead, they were drawn to the Law of Moses by those Jews who preached “...*except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved*” (Acts 15:1). Paul countered their message with the warning, “...*if ye be circumcised (trust in the Law of Moses for righteousness), Christ shall profit you nothing.*”

**3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.**

Circumcision, for those who practice it religiously, is their initiation into the Law of Moses. For Abraham, who lived over four hundred years before the Law, circumcision was a “*sign*” of his righteousness, the “*evidence*” that he “*believed God.*” Under the Law however, it initiated the people into the “*righteousness of the Law*” if they kept the Law blamelessly. Paul warns those who trust in circumcision that they are surrendering themselves to a lifetime of bondage in something that can never give them life, but can only condemn them in this life, and damn them in eternity. They have become a “*debtor to do the whole Law.*”

**4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.**

Christ, and all He did for us at Calvary, is totally without effect for those who trust in the Law for righteousness. Paul said in Galatians 2:20, “*I am crucified with Christ...Christ liveth in me.*” Those Gentile believers who turned to the Law of Moses no longer had Christ to live in them or the grace of God to keep

**Section 10: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five**  
**“Standing in Liberty” Galatians 5:1-12**

them. They had “...*fallen from grace*,” literally, from the “*New Covenant of grace*.”

**5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.**

The Greek wording in this verse is better understood as “*For we through the Spirit have the full expectation of righteousness by faith*.” It is the words “*through the Spirit*” that we must understand. The Spirit is obviously the Holy Ghost, but it is the Holy Ghost as the “*administrator* (II Corinthians 3:8)” of the New Covenant that Paul speaks of in this verse. Just as we have seen in the commentary on the **first verse** that sin and law are inseparable companions, in this **fifth verse**, the Holy Ghost and the New Covenant cannot be separated. It is the New Covenant as ministered by the Holy Ghost that brings righteousness by faith.

**6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.**

It should be an obvious truth that neither “*being circumcised*” nor “*not being circumcised*” has any advantage before God. In verse fifteen of chapter six, Paul will tell us, “...*neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature*.” When we stand before God as a “*new creature in Christ Jesus*,” He will not check to see whether we were circumcised, whether we kept the ordinances, or even if we were baptized in water. Our wonderful salvation is all about what God has finished in Christ and what He does through the working of the Holy Ghost to make a new creation in Christ Jesus. In this verse, Paul says that what really matters is “...*faith which worketh by love*.”

**“...faith which worketh by love...”** Paul makes it very clear in Galatians 2:16 that we are justified by “*the faith of Jesus Christ*.” This term speaks of all that Jesus did in His death,

Section 10: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five  
“Standing in Liberty” Galatians 5:1-12

burial, and resurrection to save those who would believe. It was at Calvary that Jesus fulfilled the terms of the God’s Covenant with Abraham (Genesis 22:16-18), and thus abolished the Old Covenant, and established the New Covenant (Hebrews 10:9). We trust in what Christ did for us at Calvary in order to be justified by what He did for us. This is the “*faith of Christ*” (Galatians 2:16). It is the “*faith*” that works only by love.

In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus was teaching the two great commandments. “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*” Jesus’ message to the Jews was that if they kept every commandment and ordinance of the Law and the prophets to perfection, but did not love God with all their heart, and love their neighbor as themselves, everything they did to please God was in vain. Paul brings this same message to us today. If the “*New Covenant*” has become nothing more than a dead letter that we are to believe, then the new covenant itself has become the ministration of death. Paul makes it clear that the New Covenant must not become a “*dead letter;*” it is a vibrant, living faith to the believer. It is a “*faith*” however, that “*worketh by love.*” If the “*believer*” does not love God with “*all their heart,*” and love their neighbor “*as their self,*” the New Covenant will do no more for them than the Old Covenant; it is “*the faith*” which “*worketh by love.*”

**7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?**

They had “*begun in the Spirit*” (Galatians 3:3); who or what was the reason they did not continue in the Spirit? Why were they no longer persuaded by the truth?

**Section 10: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five**  
**“Standing in Liberty” Galatians 5:1-12**

**8 This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.**

They had been persuaded by “*another gospel* (Galatians 1:6-7)” which was a perversion of the gospel of Christ which Paul preached. They were being persuaded into circumcision and the Law of Moses. Paul makes it very clear, their “*persuasion*” did not come from God, neither was it the gospel Paul had preached to them.

**9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.**

When Jesus had told His disciples to “*beware of the leaven of the Pharisees*” (Matthew 16:6-12), he was speaking of their doctrines. Paul seems to use this analogy in reference to circumcision. In **verse one** he says that Christ will profit them nothing if they become circumcised. In **verse three** Paul tells them that if they are circumcised they become debtors to do the whole Law. Yet in **verse six** he says that not being circumcised has no more value than being circumcised. If “*not being circumcised*” is no more profitable than “*being circumcised,*” one must ask, “*Why was Paul so opposed to the Gentile believers becoming circumcised?*” The answer is simple. Paul knew that Jewish circumcision does not stand alone, but it is an act of submission to a fleshly religious system that would totally consume the believer and the church at Galatia, and in doing so the truth of the gospel of Christ would become totally ineffectual to them. Even today the church world is filled with many initiation ceremonies, baptisms, rituals, and ordinances whose sole purpose is to bring the believer into submission to some particular fleshly religious system.

**10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.**

In the midst of numerous stern warnings to the Galatian believers, Paul expresses his confidence in them that they will ulti-

## Section 10: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five

### “Standing in Liberty” Galatians 5:1-12

mately hold to the truth of the gospel. His indignation is reserved for those false teachers who had come among them. They will suffer the consequences of those who “*defile the temple of God*” (I Corinthians 3:17).

**11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.**

The persecution that Paul suffered at that present time was coming from the Jews, who held that circumcision “*after the manner of Moses*” was necessary for salvation. Paul confirmed to the Christians at Galatia that he did not preach the circumcision of Moses, for if he did, he would not have been persecuted. Paul preached the circumcision of the heart, made without hands by the “*circumcision of Christ*” (Colossians 2:11). The evidence that a believer has been “*circumcised*” with the “*circumcision of Christ*” is that the “*body of the sins of the flesh*” has been cut out of their heart. This is accomplished “*without hands*” through crucifixion “*with Christ*” (Romans 6:6), thus the continuing “*offence of the cross.*”

**12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.**

This is a rather crude play on words on the part of Paul. The false teachers that had come to Galatia were of those he called the “*the concision*” in Philippians 3:2. The word Paul labels (*the concision*) them with actually means “*to cut off.*” Their goal in Galatia was to “*cut off the foreskin of the flesh*” of those who received their doctrine. Paul’s immediate remedy for the confusion that had come to the churches at Galatia was expressed as “*...oh that they which trouble you were ‘cut off’,*” using the same Greek words as their name implied.

Section 11: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five  
“An Occasion to the Flesh” Galatians 5:13-26

## Introduction to Section Eleven

*Adam did not have a “sin nature” when he walked away from the Tree of Life and approached the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (the Law). He did have a “human nature” that was attracted to the “beauty,” the “nourishment,” and the “wisdom” of the forbidden fruit. It was his “human nature” that was seduced by the serpent to disobey God. Paul will show that if we use the wonderful liberty from sin and the Law as an occasion to “walk in the flesh (our human nature), and not in the Spirit (led by the Holy Ghost),” we are headed for a fall.*

## An Occasion to the Flesh

**13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.**

This verse is somewhat difficult because the translators gave us the wrong sentence structure and punctuation. The word “only” is translated from the Greek word “*monon*,” which means “*merely*,” and should be placed before the word “*liberty*.” The word “*use*,” which is in italics, is not in the Greek text, and should be deleted. This verse is better understood as, “**For, brethren, you have been called unto mere liberty; not liberty to live after the flesh, but to serve one another by love.**”

Paul reaffirms the truth he introduced in the first verse; “...*Christ hath made us free.*” Jesus Christ suffered and died to redeem us from both “*sin*” and “*the law*,” and we are “*free*.” According to the Greek wording of this verse, we have been called to “*mere liberty*,” which means that nothing can be added to it or taken away from it. It indicates that “*Christian liberty*” is limited, and does have limitations. Our “*liberty*”

## Section 11: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five

### **“An Occasion to the Flesh” Galatians 5:13-26**

does not free us to “*continue in sin* (Romans 6:1),” nor are we free to “*live after the flesh* (Romans 8:13).” The believing Jew is not “*free*” to continue in the Law of Moses, nor is the believing Gentile free to continue in idol worship, **or** to come under the dominion of the Law of Moses. This explains what Paul means when he says, “*...not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.*”

**“...not liberty for an occasion to the flesh...”** The word “*occasion*” comes from the Greek word “*aphorme*” which means “*a starting point.*” For most of this chapter, Paul has dealt with Jewish circumcision as an initiation, or entrance, into the bondage of the Law of Moses. The Galatian believers had been brought into the liberty of Christ from the bondage of heathen religions. They were freed from sin and Satan to serve God through Jesus Christ, and to “*serve one another in love*” as they walked in the Spirit of God. The Galatian believers were free to eat meats or not eat meats. The truth is that they were also at liberty to be circumcised or not be circumcised (Galatians 5:6), but Paul knew that if they submitted to Jewish circumcision, it would be a starting point, or occasion, from which flesh would gain full control of their walk with God.

**“...an occasion to the flesh...”** When Paul speaks of flesh, he is speaking of human abilities, human intellect, and human desires. This is what is often referred to as “*human nature.*” The human desires of the children of God are not sinful, but neither are they spiritual (of the Spirit). The same is true of their natural abilities and intellectual reasoning. To this point in his epistle, Paul has been dealing with flesh in the sense of human abilities and intellect by which men seek to serve God under the law. This is why he asked, “*are you now made perfect by the flesh?*” Can you, through your intellect and natural abilities to keep the law, complete the work that began in the Spirit of God? Paul let it be known that such thinking is absolute foolishness.

## Section 11: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five

### “An Occasion to the Flesh” Galatians 5:13-26

Every person born into this world is born with a “*human nature*” that is polluted and controlled by sin. This is what is commonly called “*the sin nature.*” In salvation, our “*old man of sin*” is crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6). Jesus came into this world as “*the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29), and all who trust in Him are saved from the sin that polluted our heart and controlled our human nature. A child of God (one truly born of God) has no sin in their heart and human nature, but have become like Adam and Eve before they disobeyed God. As long as they abide in Christ, He is in control of their human nature, and thus, Christ lives His life in them. The danger to a child of God is not that sin will draw them away. Instead, it is that they will follow their human nature with all its “*good intentions,*” which will always lead them away from Christ to trust in something else, whether the “*Law of Moses,*” as in the case of the Galatians, or the “*principles*” and “*step plans*” of man’s philosophy, as in the case of the modern church. A child of God is not attracted to sinful things, but they are attracted to the things of the human spirit. Paul tells us not to use “*liberty*” as an occasion for the human nature to gain control of our walk. In Romans 8:13, Paul says, “*If ye live after the flesh (human nature), ye shall die....*”

Human nature is attracted to law exactly as Adam and Eve were attracted to the forbidden “*tree of knowledge of good and evil.*” In fact, what is “*law*” but the “*knowledge of good and evil?*” Adam and Eve had been created in the image and likeness of God. It was the deceiver that offered them the forbidden fruit to make them to be “*as gods, knowing good and evil.*” That which promised to make them “*as gods,*” actually took from them the “*image and likeness of God*” they once bore. They did not need the knowledge of good and evil (a law) until they were alienated from the life of God (Ephesians 4:17-18) through partaking of the “*forbidden fruit,*” the “*knowledge of good and evil.*” If a child of God walks after their “*human na-*

Section 11: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five  
“An Occasion to the Flesh” Galatians 5:13-26

ture,” it will always lead them away from Christ to trust in other things, which in the case of the Galatians was the Law of Moses.

**14-15 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.**

It seems that one of the first, and possibly most common, evidences of a walk in the flesh is contention and division in the house of God. Those who walk in the Spirit will “*serve one another through love*” and have fulfilled all the law. Those who use liberty as an occasion to the flesh often become critical and condemning of one another. Paul dealt with this problem in the Corinthian church: “...ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and **walk as men?**” (I Corinthians 3:3). The ascendancy of human nature has done more damage in the house of God than any demon could ever hope to accomplish.

**16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.**

It is of the utmost importance that we see what Paul did not say! He did not say “*subdue the flesh and you will walk in the Spirit.*” Some believe that if they can subdue their flesh enough, their walk will become spiritual. The truth is that each effort to subdue the flesh serves only to strengthen the flesh. How can this be? The Law, which sought to subdue the flesh, was “*weak through the flesh*” (Romans 8:3). Its “*weakness*” was that flesh was in charge of subduing itself. Flesh is like a two headed serpent, one head is religious and one head is worldly, but they are both the same flesh. The religious “*head*” is given charge to subdue the worldly “*head*,” so that flesh must be strengthened in an attempt to overcome itself.

## Section 11: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five

### “An Occasion to the Flesh” Galatians 5:13-26

What then is the answer for flesh in the life of a child of God? Paul says, “*Walk in the Spirit!*” Be filled with the Holy Ghost! Be renewed day by day in the Spirit of God and you **will** walk in the Spirit; you **will not** fulfill the lusts of the flesh!

“**Walk in the Spirit...**” The Galatians had “*begun in the Spirit,*” but they had not continued in the Spirit. If they had continued in the Spirit, they would never have moved away from Christ to trust in Moses and the Law, because the Holy Ghost works only as the administrator of the New Covenant (II Corinthians 3:8). Those who “*walk in the Spirit*” will live their lives in the “*spiritual blessings*” of the New Covenant.

“**...and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.**” The words “*ye shall not*” were translated from two negatives in the Greek language. These do not create a “*positive*” as double negatives often do; instead, they strengthen the phrase to be understood as “*...ye absolutely will not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*”

“**...the lust of the flesh.**” It is commonly understood that Adam and Eve were drawn to the forbidden fruit by “*...the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*” (I John 2:16). Genesis 3:6 says, “*...when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eyes), and a tree to be desired to make one wise (pride of life), she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*” We also understand that they did not have a “*sin nature*” when all this took place. It was their “*human nature,*” that is, their “*flesh*” that moved them away from the tree of life to the forbidden fruit. Paul says, “*...if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*” (Romans 8:13). God said, “*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*” (Genesis 2:17). In each case, it is when human nature gains control of our walk that we die the spiritual death.

Section 11: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five  
“An Occasion to the Flesh” Galatians 5:13-26

**17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.**

It is a strange but true phenomenon that many who profess to “*know Christ*” also “*resist the Holy Ghost.*” I cannot make the case that they did not “*receive Christ*” into their hearts by faith, nor can I prove that they do not “*love Jesus*” who saved them from their sin. I do know, however, that their “*human nature*” has gained ascendancy in their Christian walk, and resists any challenge to its supremacy. Because of their erroneous belief that they “*received the Holy Ghost*” when they first believed, they have mistaken their “*human nature*” for the “*divine,*” and truly believe they are “*led by the Spirit*” even when they are doing “*their own thing.*” These people very often believe themselves to be “*more mature*” than others who may feel their desperate need to be “*filled with the Holy Ghost.*” It was the seventy elders of Israel, the “*Sanhedrin,*” that stoned Steven to death after he had told them, “*...ye do always resist the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 7:51).

The desires of the human nature are opposite of the desires of the Spirit of God, and vice versa, as Paul said, they are “*contrary (opposite, adverse) the one to the other.*” The tendency of human nature is to set up rules to regulate its own actions just as Adam and Eve moved away from the “*Tree of Life*” to partake of the “*Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.*” These only aggravate the problem further in the same way that a person on a very strict diet is always thinking about food. They have a “*law*” against eating fattening foods, but there is always the internal warfare over them. In the same way, those who are forever trying to “*please God*” through their natural ability to deny themselves will never know the peace and rest of walking in the Spirit. They will question every action, “*Should I do this*” or “*Is it wrong to do that.*” Whether it is a spiritual thing or a carnal thing, they “*cannot do the things they would.*”

Section 11: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five  
“An Occasion to the Flesh” Galatians 5:13-26

**18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.**

Flesh reigns in those who are under the Law, and its desires run rampant in their hearts. This is not the case for those who walk in the Spirit. It is an absolute statement of fact that if you “*walk in the Spirit*” you are “*not under the Law*,” because “*the Spirit* (the Holy Ghost)” is the administrator of the New Covenant and not of the old. In John 16:13, Jesus tells His disciples, “...*when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.*” The Holy Ghost, whom Jesus referred to as “*the Spirit of truth*,” is our guide into the New Covenant, and will “*administer*” the covenant in us. We are not “*under the Law.*”

Proverbs 3:5-6 says “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding (human nature). In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*” Those who “*lean unto their own understanding*” are those who end up “*in the flesh*” and not “*in the Spirit.*” They think they can please God and do His work through the abilities of their “*human nature*” without the working of the Holy Ghost in them. We remember the warning Paul gave in the thirteenth verse, that our “*liberty*” is not “...*for an occasion (starting point) to the flesh (human nature).*” The “*starting point*” for the flesh to take control of a child of God is never through sinful desires. Instead, a “*starting point*” is given to the flesh when a child of God begins to “*lean to their own understanding.*” In the Galatian experience, the starting point for the flesh was when they believed the message of the Judaizers. They believed they could become more pleasing to God through their human abilities. Their “*human nature*” gained control of their walk in religious things and led them to a place where they trusted in the Law rather than in Christ for righteousness. The only possible result is that which Paul speaks of in Romans 7:9, “...*when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*” Paul makes it very clear that Jewish circumcision is a starting

Section 11: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five  
“An Occasion to the Flesh” Galatians 5:13-26

point, or entrance, into a walk in the flesh. In the verse below he gives the destination of everyone who embraces such a walk.

**19-21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

The works of the flesh cannot be manifested in a child of God who “*walks in the Spirit*” and trusts only in “*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*” (I Corinthians 2:2). It is “*when the commandment comes*” that “*sin revives*” and the one who is moved away from Christ “*dies*” a spiritual death. It was not sin, but their human nature that moved them away from Christ. Paul says in Romans 6:14, “*sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace.*” When sin “*revives,*” however, it will have total domination over its subject. Instead of bringing a child of God closer to God, the human nature will always move them away from Christ to trust in its own abilities to serve God. The result is always the same; Sin revives, the person spiritually dies, and the human nature is filled once more with every sinful and ungodly thing. These are what Paul has labeled in this text as “*the works of the flesh.*”

**“...the works of the flesh are manifest...”** When Sin has revived, it cannot be hidden. It is true that not everyone is an adulterer, fornicator, or lascivious in outward action, but there are other works of the flesh that cannot be hidden, such as “*...hatred, variance (quarreling), emulations (to be ‘red hot’ with jealousy or malice), wrath, strife (scheming), seditions (dissension), and heresies (disunion).*” Paul ends his list of “*works of the flesh*” with the words “*...and such like.*” There

## Section 11: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five

### “An Occasion to the Flesh” Galatians 5:13-26

are many other evidences for all to see when sin has revived in one who once trusted in Christ.

**“...of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past...”** These words from Paul almost seem to be a riddle. It is by these words, however, that we know Paul is not speaking only of the works of the unbelieving world, nor is he speaking of the works of the children of God who have been “*freed from sin*” (Romans 6:6-7). These three verses on the “*works of the flesh*” are given as a warning to those in the Galatian churches who are turning from Christ-crucified to trust in Moses and his Law. **“I tell you before...”** Understand Paul’s words in this way; **“I tell you before you submit yourselves to circumcision and the Law of Moses that it will not bring you to greater holiness as you think; instead, it will bring you once again under bondage to the same sins, and others even worse than those you served before Christ delivered you. I have also told you in time past, even before you first trusted in Christ, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”**

**22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.**

A good tree has no struggle bringing forth its good fruit. Jesus said, “*I have ordained you to...bring forth fruit...*” (John 15:16). Those who “*walk in the Spirit* (sixteenth verse)” have no struggle to bring forth fruit. “*Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*” It follows, if you “*walk in the Spirit, you will bring forth fruit,*” which is called in this verse, “*the fruit of the Spirit.*” It is sad to see men and women “*trying to be Christians*” through trying to turn “*hatred into love, misery into joy,*” and “*torment into peace.*” Jesus said it best in Matthew 7:18; “*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*”

## Section 11: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five

### “An Occasion to the Flesh” Galatians 5:13-26

#### **24 And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.**

No one has crucified his or her own flesh as this verse may seem to indicate. To rightly understand this verse we must notice that Paul is speaking about “*they that are Christ’s*,” that is, those who “*belong to Christ*.” How does a person become a child of God? Jesus said “*Ye must be born again*.” This cannot be accomplished through our own efforts or struggles; neither can it be through following any of the various “*philosophies*” of life. Paul says that those who are “*in Christ*” are “*baptized into His death*” (Romans 6:3). They are “*...crucified with Him...*” (Romans 6:6, Galatians 2:20), “*...buried with Him...*” (Romans 6:4) and “*...begotten again (born again) unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...*” (I Peter 1:3). They have been “*freed from sin* (Romans 6:7, 6:18, 6:22),” and their freedom is an “*occasion (starting point)*” to walk in the Spirit and enjoy all the blessings of the New Covenant of promise. Not only have sinful actions been nailed to the cross along with their “*old man*” (Romans 6:6), but even the inward affections and desires for sinful things have been nailed to the cross with Christ.

#### **25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**

“**If we live in the Spirit...**” All who have been truly “*born again*” have received the life of Christ into their spirit. This verse, however, speaks of life in the Holy Ghost; “*If the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead dwell in you...*” (Romans 8:11).

“**...let us also walk in the Spirit.**” The Greek word that is translated “*walk*” in this verse is different than that which is used in the sixteenth verse. In this verse, we find the Greek word “*stoicheo*,” which means “*to march in rank; to keep step*.” Paul exhorts those who have received the Holy Ghost to “*keep step*” with the Holy Ghost. Do not stray away on your

## Section 11: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Five

### “An Occasion to the Flesh” Galatians 5:13-26

own. Do not walk to your own cadence, but walk in step with Him. The Holy Ghost will never “*lead you*” into the Law of Moses or into the “*principles*” of man. He is the administrator of the New Covenant, and all those who walk in the Spirit also walk in the love of Christ as revealed in the New Covenant of grace.

#### **26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.**

The words “...*let us not...*” are translated from the Greek word “*me*” which Paul uses numerous times in his writing. It means “*lest*” and is used as a conjunction, connecting verse twenty six with the last phrase of the twenty fifth verse. A correct and literal translation of what Paul said in these two verses is, “*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit, lest we become vain glorious (self conceited), provoking one another, envying one another.*” Sadly, there are those in the church who have at one time “*received the Spirit,*” but who do not “*walk in the Spirit,*” but they believe they are “*spiritual*” even as they walk in the flesh. These often seek to be seen and heard, seeking to glory in the praises of men, and not of God.

**“...provoking one another, envying one another...”** One who is “*vain glorious*” will be an “*irritation (provoking)*” to others in the body, and will also be “*jealous (envying)*” of those who seem to receive the glory they believe they deserve. What a “*thorn*” this can be to the body of Christ.

Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six  
“He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

## Introduction to Section Twelve

*The sixth chapter of Galatians is an exhortation to those “who are spiritual” among the Gentile believers at Galatia. Verses seven and eight include a dire warning to those who “sow to their flesh.” Proverbs 3:5-6 says, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” The person that “leans to his own understanding” is the one who “sows to his flesh.” The end result will be an evil harvest, even in this present life.*

## He that Sows to His Flesh

### Galatians Chapter Six

**1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.**

**“...if a man be overtaken in a fault...”** The Greek word “*paraptoma*,” which is translated as “*fault*,” is used nineteen times in the New Testament. It is translated seven times as “*offence*,” six times as “*trespasses*,” three times as “*sin*,” two times as “*fall*,” and one time as “*fault*.” It is defined as a “*side slip (lapse or deviation), that is, (unintentional) error, or (willful) transgression.*” Such a thing is possible among the children of God if they have first been “*moved away*” from total trust in Christ to lean to their own understanding. This verse, however, is not dealing with the error of the transgressor so much as it deals with the response of the “*spiritual*.”

**“...ye which are spiritual...”** It is only the “*spiritual*” who are to be involved in the “*restoration*” of a transgressor, and they are to do so “*in the spirit of meekness.*” The term “*ye*

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

*which are spiritual*” refers to those he spoke of in the previous chapter; they “...walk in the Spirit (**verse sixteen**);” they are “led of the Spirit (**verse eighteen**);” they manifest “the fruit of the Spirit (**verses twenty two and twenty three**);” they “...live in the Spirit (**verse twenty five**),” and perhaps above all, they are not “...desirous of vain glory (**verse twenty six**).” In short, they are “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” (Acts 6:3).

**“...restore such an one...”** The word “restore” is translated from the Greek word “katartizo,” which Strong’s Concordance defines as follows: “to complete thoroughly; that is, to repair or adjust.” The word “katartizo” is derived from two Greek words; “kata,” which means “down,” and a derivative of “artios,” which means “fresh.” To “restore such an one” does not mean to immediately return them to a “role model” position in the church, such as teaching, special singing, or preaching. Neither does it mean to put them through months or years of “psychological counseling,” whether “Christian” or otherwise. When “godly sorrow” is apparent in the one who transgressed, they are to be “restored (refreshed)” in Christ. Let the “restoration” be at the altar of repentance, where they will be “restored” to their first love (Christ). They will be restored to righteousness, and to freedom from the sin that destroyed them. Let the “spiritual” forgive them because God has forgiven them, and restore them to fellowship because God has restored them. Notice that Paul addressed the “spiritual” concerning the restoration of the fallen. The “carnal” will always take one of two courses; some will “forgive” and “restore” while the transgressor continues in sin; others, on the other hand, will never forgive or restore. Let it be the case, that when God has forgiven the transgressor, we will forget the transgression.

**“...in the spirit of meekness...”** There are those in the churches who are spiritual, and there are those who “think”

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

they are spiritual. Many of those who think they are spiritual have lost their way and fallen into temptation through their merciless condemnation of others who have failed in their walk with Christ. We are not told to condemn, but to “*restore such an one.*”

**“...considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted...”** Our attitude towards those who have failed is most important. A young Christian man had been wonderfully saved from his sin and baptized with the Holy Ghost. Several years later, he heard of a man in the church that had fallen into a most grievous sin of immorality. Hearing the talk about the “*details*” of the affair, the young man spoke up and said, “*I wish that devil would come to me! I would really put him on the road in a hurry.*” This “*boast*” came out of pride and self confidence; not out of a “*spirit of meekness.*” It was about fifteen years later that the young man also “*fell*” into the same sin he had so brutally condemned in the past. There is something that every child of God needs to know; “*Every boast shall be tested.*” That is what Paul means when he says “*...restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted (tested).*”

### **2 Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**

The “*law of Christ*” is revealed in the words of Jesus Himself in John 15:12-13, “*This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*” This “*commandment*” of Christ is not fulfilled in the “*warm feelings*” that we may have for one another. Love is an “*action word*” which requires action on the part of those who love. John says, “*...whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not*

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

*love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth”* (I John 3:17-18).

The Greek word that is translated “burden” in this verse is “*baros*,” and means “*weight*.” It speaks of those things that weigh people down, whether they are spiritual or natural. Jesus spoke of the “*ministry*” of the scribes and Pharisees under the Law of Moses, saying, “*For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers*” (Matthew 23:4). Isaiah prophesied of a better way; “*...to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free...*” (Isaiah 58:6).

We must not forget the exhortation of James 2:15-16; “*If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?*” There are those among us who are “*...of the household of faith* (verse ten),” who are also poor and weighed down with impossible circumstances of this present life. To “*bear their burden*” is to “*...feed them*” with *our* food, to “*cover them*” with *our* clothes, and to “*bring them who are cast out*” to *our* house (Isaiah 58:7). Such action on the part of the children of God gives clear meaning to the words of Jesus to His disciples; “*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*” This is the “*law of Christ*” which is fulfilled when we bear one another’s burdens out of the love of Christ that is in us.

**3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.**

This verse refers to those who are “*vain glorious* (self-conceited)” whom Paul spoke of in **verse twenty six** of the previous chapter. They believe that they are “*spiritual*,” because of their “*high opinion*” of themselves, and impute greatness to

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

themselves. They may try to do spiritual things even though they have never received the “*approval of God* (the Holy Ghost)” to do them. Such people can join in group prayer and believe that God answered only because they prayed. Notice the attitude of the apostle Paul, one who was tremendously used by God: “*I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase*” (I Corinthians 3:6-7). Paul literally says, “*I have only planted the seed, Apollos has only watered the seed; all glory belongs to God who causes the seed to grow.*” Paul was not pretentious when he said these things. He was the greatest of the apostles and the greatest among the saints, but he made himself to be “*the servant of all*” (Mark 10:44, I Corinthians 9:10). His attitude toward himself was that he was “*less than the least of the saints* (Ephesians 3:8),” and the “*least of the apostles* (I Corinthians 15:9).” He did not “*think himself to be something*” other than a servant of Christ. Those who are “*vain glorious*” are deceived, because they impute greatness to themselves, and wonder why others cannot see it.

**4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.**

In I Corinthians 3:8 Paul says, “*Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and (but) every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.*” While Paul, Apollos, and every other minister of Christ are “*one*” in Christ (John 17:11), each shall be rewarded individually according to their own work. You may be a member of a church that is doing great things in the kingdom of God, but your reward will be based upon whether you as an individual have accomplished what God has committed to you. Your rejoicing in that day will not be in what “*we*” have done, but each member in particular of the body will rejoice in their own reward. It is for this reason

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

that Paul says, “...let every man prove (examine) his own work.”

**“...let every man prove (examine) his own work...”** As ministers we must “*prove*” our own ministry for our own sake as well as for the sake of the congregation. We are to never compare ourselves with others and find ourselves to be “*superior*,” but to examine ourselves according to the word of God and the example of Christ. This verse can only be properly understood in the light of the next verse, which says...

#### **5 For every man shall bear his own burden.**

There is no connection between this verse and verse two, which exhorts us to “*bear ye one another’s burdens* (heavy load).” Instead, it speaks of the time that every person will stand before Christ to give account. Paul said, “...we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. **So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God**” (Romans 14:10-12).

In Matthew 25:14-30 we read the parable of the “*talents*” which Jesus taught his disciples. Every servant received according to his ability. The servant that received five talents presented ten talents at the day of reckoning. The servant that received two talents now had four to present to his lord. Both of these servants were commended by their lord, who said to each of them, “*Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord*” (Matthew 25:23). The third servant had received only one talent. He was afraid, and hid the talent for fear of losing it. In the day of reckoning, he presented his talent to the lord exactly as he had received it, but his lord was angry, and said, “*Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put*

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

*my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Matthew 25:26-30).

Every child of God will give account for the ministry that God has committed to them. This is certainly good reason that “every man” should “*prove his own work*” (verse four).

#### **6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.**

This verse is addressed to those in the church who have been “*taught*” by Christ. According to the Greek text it should begin with the word “*but,*” which would indicate the counterpart of those in the third verse who “*think themselves to be something when they are nothing.*” In Ephesians 4:17-19, Paul warns against those “*Gentiles,*” such as those at Galatia, who “*walk in the vanity of their mind.*” Their “*understanding is darkened;*” they are “*alienated from the life of God...because of the blindness of their hearts.*” Paul continues in Ephesians 4:20-21; “*But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus.*”

Verse six literally says, “*But let those who are taught the word (logos) share with others those things of God they have been taught.*” It should be noticed that the definition of the Greek word “*logos*” is “*something said (including the thought); by implication a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive; by extension, a computation; specifically (with the article in John) the Divine Expression (i.e. Christ).*” According to this definition, “*a logos*” can be

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

“something said,” or merely a “topic” of discussion. This sixth verse, however, speaks of “*the logos*,” which is always “*The Divine Expression of God*,” which is, “*Christ*.” Let those who are taught by Christ share with others those good things they have learned of Him.

**7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.**

“**...be not deceived...**” Paul is coming to the conclusion of His letter to the Galatians. With this verse, he begins a short summary of the things he has spoken. The Galatians were deceived, which is the reason Paul wrote the letter. In this verse, however, he is warning them of another deception; that of believing they could continue in their present course and not bring upon themselves a most horrible harvest, even in this present life.

“**...God is not mocked...**” If they continued trusting in the Law and their own abilities to keep it, they could only bring the “*curse of the Law*” with all its “*curses*” upon themselves. In turning from Christ to trust in Moses and his Law, they were “*sowing to their flesh*,” they believed that they could please God through their human efforts, and the abilities of their human nature (flesh). Again, they were deceived.

“**...for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap...**” This is certainly an undeniable truth that God established in the third day of creation; “*Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind...*” Whether in natural things or spiritual things, the kind of harvest a person receives is determined by the kind of seed they plant. Every farmer understands this simple truth, and works with it to bring forth the best possible harvest upon his land. He would never plant a thistle and expect to harvest figs. Sadly, many who profess to know Christ have no understanding at all of the

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

relationship between the seeds they plant and the harvest they receive.

**8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.**

In order to correctly understand this final warning Paul gives to the Galatians, we must determine what he means by the terms “*his flesh*” and “*the Spirit*.” To do so, we must remember the question he asked them in Galatians 3:3; “*Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh.*” The question is, “*Which of these two are you going to trust to bring you to completion? Will it be the ‘Holy Ghost,’ which is the minister of the New Covenant, or will it be your ‘human nature’ that can only minister law?*” One is the ministration of life; the other is the ministration of death. Which will it be.

It was when the “*believers*” at Galatia first believed the lie of the Judaizers that they began to sow seed to “*their flesh*,” believing they could please God even as they walked “*in the vanity of their mind* (Ephesians 4:17).” The Holy Ghost was immediately grieved, and soon took His flight from that church. Christ became of no effect to them, and they “*fell from grace.*” Their “*church*” was no longer the living “*body of Christ*,” but a “*corpse*” which was covered and decorated with all manner of religious activity. Their “*excitement*” over Moses and the Law was so great that they did not know that the Spirit of God was no longer with them. In II Corinthians 3:7, Paul tells us “*...the ministration of death (the Law) was glorious so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance.*” In II Corinthians 3:3:13-14 he tells us that Moses “*...put a vail over his face, that the children could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished,*” because “*their minds were blinded.*” This is amazing! The Law of Moses was a ministration of death, but

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

they were so blinded by the “*glory*” of it that they could not see that it was death to them. Their eyes were blinded by the glory in the face of Moses, and their minds were blinded by the veil that Moses put on his face. They could not see to the “*end*” of that law, which was, in fact, the ministration of death to them.

**“...he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption...”** The believers at Galatia would not have believed that the seeds they sowed in the Law of Moses would bring the horrible harvest of “*adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like* (the works of the flesh: Galatians 5:19-21), but that is exactly what happened. It is what will happen without fail when people trust in their human abilities to serve God through either “*laws*” or “*principles.*” These “*sinful things*” that both the law and the principles forbid will not only work in the secret recesses of their heart, but it will become the environment they must live in as well. How many older men and women of God have tried hard to obey all the “*rules*” of religion, truly wanting to please God, but have come to the last days of their life living in the harsh environment of the works of the flesh with ungodly children and grandchildren?

**“...but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting...”** What does it mean to “*sow to the Spirit?*” When a sinner, convicted of sin, repents, and surrenders his heart and soul to Jesus Christ, he is “*sowing to the Spirit.*” When he places his trust totally and only in Jesus Christ and all He accomplished for us in death and resurrection, he is sowing to the Spirit. When he “*asks, seeks, and knocks* (Luke 12:9-10)” to receive the Holy Ghost (verse 13), he is sowing to the Spirit. Having received the Holy Ghost, he is sowing to the Spirit when he comes into the presence of God daily for nourishment and renewal. At any time that same person sees no

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

need to pray and fellowship the Lord daily, he has begun to sow to *his* flesh, and will, in short order, “...*grieve the Holy Spirit of God* (Ephesians 4:30), *whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*”

Those who sow to the Spirit will also walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). Their walk will be in the New Covenant of grace which alone can keep them from falling. They do not trust in the Law, because it “*is weak through the flesh*” (Romans 8:3); it is dependent on the abilities of the human nature to obey it. Their harvest in this present world will be the fruit of the Spirit, “*love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*” (Galatians 3:22-23). These things will not only be working in them, but will become the environment they enjoy in this present life with “*life everlasting*” in the world to come. The “*fruit of the Spirit*” are not dependent on natural circumstances. Persecutions and tribulations may come, but those who “*sow to the Spirit*” will also “*finish their course with joy*” (Acts 20:24).

**9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**

There is a period of time between “*seedtime*” and “*harvest.*” No one can plant a seed today and gather the harvest tomorrow. In agriculture, due season is from six weeks to six months according to the seed that is sown. In fruit trees, “*due season*” can vary from about two years to seven years. In spiritual matters it is the same. Some will gather the harvest of the seed they have sown rather quickly, while for others, several years may pass before they reap what they have sown. If we faithfully continue to sow while we patiently wait for the time of harvest, our harvest will be bountiful indeed. Do not weary; continue “*sowing to the Spirit*” every day that you live. The harvest is guaranteed.

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

**“...for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not...”**

The words “*due season*” in this verse are used a little differently than in other verses. The Greek word for “*due*” is “*idios*,” and means “*one’s own*.” The promise of God is that the things you sow in this life will also be harvested in this life, as well as in the world to come. Those who “*sow to the Spirit*” will “*of the Spirit reap everlasting life*.” Their “*harvest*” is in the “*fruit of the Spirit*” (Galatians 5:22-23). It begins to grow in them immediately, producing “*love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance*.” These will become their environment in later years as they are surrounded by others with the same nature.

**10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.**

After you have given your “*tithe*” for the ministry of the gospel of Christ, give to the needs of the poor among you as well, and you will certainly be blessed by God. Help those who cannot help themselves, not only with money, but with time and labor. Let the love of God abound through you to lighten the load of others, most especially those who trust in Christ.

**11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.**

**12-13 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.**

This seems to be a reference, not to the “*Judaizers*,” who were true believers in circumcision and the Law of Moses, but to certain Gentiles at Galatia who promoted circumcision for no other reason than to avoid persecution from the Judaizers. They desired to “*make a fair shew in the flesh*.” They wanted to do things that would bring them into favor with man, particularly

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

with those who might otherwise be their persecutors. The words “*to make a fair shew*” are better understood from the Greek as “*to put on a good front.*” Nothing is real to them; nothing is worth making a stand for; they simply seek the easy way out in all things.

It is a strange phenomenon of human nature that many people will gravitate toward their tormentors. If you slap a true Christian in the face, he will “*turn the other cheek*” and love you in return. If you slap one who is of “*the circumcision*” in the face, he will hate you and seek to stone you to death. Why anyone would seek fellowship with those who seek to kill them, I cannot understand, but it is true. They will do anything to please their tormentors “*lest they should suffer persecution,*” and they will despise those who love them.

**13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.**

They do not keep the Law, but they have the “*proof*” that they are circumcised. They do not trust in Christ, which is proven in the same way; they submitted to circumcision to satisfy their tormentors. They prevail upon all their friends to follow them in their folly, seeking the praises and approval of those who have become their “*masters.*”

**“...that they may glory in your flesh...”** The word “*glory*” in this verse is translated from the Greek word “*kauchaomia,*” which means “*to boast.*” Paul said, “*They seek bragging rights at your expense.*”

**14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.**

In Romans 3:27-28, Paul says, “*Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*”

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### **“He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18**

*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”* If a person could be justified by keeping the “*deeds of the law,*” they would have reason to boast, but due to the fact that man is justified by faith, there is no room for boasting. Those who were circumcised boasted in themselves, and carried the proof of their religion in their body. To this, Paul says, “*I will not boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*”

When Paul speaks of the cross and crucifixion in this verse, he is relating to two other places in his writings. First, in Romans 6:6, Paul says, “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed....*” Paul says the same thing in a much different way in Colossians 2:11, “*In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.*” In “*crucifixion with Christ*” it is “*the body of sin*” that is “*destroyed.*” In “*circumcision made without hands,*” it is “*the body of the sins of the flesh*” that is cut out and put off. All boasting, all thanks, and all praise is due to “*...the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29).

**“...by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world...”** When Saul of Tarsus was eight days old his parents took him to the synagogue to circumcise the “*foreskin of his flesh.*” When as an adult he surrendered to Jesus, it was the “*foreskin of his heart*” that was circumcised by God Himself. Sin was cut out of his heart by an operation “*made without hands.*” “*Crucifixion with Christ*” and the “*circumcision made without hands*” is the same thing. Both were finished for the believer at the cross of Christ. For Paul, it meant that not only was sin “*cut out of his heart,*” but “*the world*” also.

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

**15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.**

In such a sharp dispute over such crucial matters as those facing the Galatian churches, divisions and factions always form. On one hand there were those who boasted in circumcision. On the other hand, there was a faction that boasted in uncircumcision. On both sides of the issue people totally lost sight of Christ in their dispute, to which Paul says, “...*in Christ, whether you are circumcised, or whether you are not circumcised carries no weight, it is whether you are a ‘new creature in Christ Jesus.’*”

**16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.**

The word “*rule*” in this verse does not speak of a “*law*,” but of a “*measure*,” or what we might call a “*rule of thumb*.” The “*measure*” of a believer is not whether or not he was circumcised when he was a child, but whether or not they are a “*new creature in Christ Jesus*.” Their old man has been crucified with Christ, and sin has been cut out of their heart. This is the true circumcision, and the sign of the righteousness we have in Christ.

**17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.**

Paul bore in his physical body the “*marks*” of the five times he was beaten with thirty nine stripes; the three times he was beaten with rods (known today as “*caning*”), and at least one time he was “*stoned and left for dead*.” He spoke much in this last chapter of Galatians of the “*persecution*” he suffered for preaching the cross of Christ instead of circumcision “*after the manner of Moses*.” Some believe that Paul points to the scars on his body as proof of his apostleship, and say, “*Do not trouble me; I have suffered enough*.” Such is a touching story, but

## Section 12: THE YOKE OF BONDAGE Chapter Six

### “He that sows to His Flesh” Galatians 6:1-18

in reality, the visible wounds in his physical body did not prove anything more than the “wound” of circumcision after the manner of Moses does for the circumcised. Throughout history there have been criminals and heretics that bore in their physical bodies the same “wounds” that Paul had. For the marks in a person’s physical body to prove anything, we would have to know the story behind each mark, and what a story it would be in the case of Paul. Paul could not be speaking of the physical marks in his body, however, because he has already told us, *“I will not glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”* These are the “marks” that Paul speaks of, the marks of crucifixion that can be seen by all, but do not appear in the hands and the feet.

The Judaizers could point to the “marks” of their circumcision. This was the cause of their boasting. They could tell the time and place that a priest had cut off the foreskin of their flesh. Paul would point, as it were to the “cross of Christ,” and say, *“...that is where I was crucified; it was there that my heart was circumcised.”* Everyone who knew him knew that it was so because he bore every “mark” of one who was “crucified with Christ.” These were not physical marks, but it was obvious that the old persecuting Saul had been nailed to the cross “with Christ.” It was just as obvious that sin had been cut out of His heart. Let the entire religious world chant, *“We are still sinners, we sin every day,”* and the man or woman who knows God says, *“You’ve come too late to tell me that.”* They point to the cross of Christ; *“That is where I died to sin.”* They point to the empty tomb; *“There, I arose with Him,”* and they bear the marks of both “death” and “life” to prove it.

**18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.**