

BIBLE SURVEY

GALATIANS

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” Galatians 5:1

Reformation Inspiration

The Reformer, Professor Martin Luther declared that Galatians is the best Book in the Bible. *“This is my Epistle. I am married to it!”* It was Dr. Martin Luther’s study of Galatians, Romans and Psalms that led him to make his bold stand, 31 October 1517, nailing the *95 Theses* against the false teachings and superstitious practises of the Roman Catholic papacy. In the Psalms, he saw what true worship is. In the Book of Romans, he discovered what the Gospel really is and how we are saved. In the Book of Galatians, he discovered true Biblical Faith.

The Best

The Puritan, John Bunyan, author of best-selling *Pilgrim’s Progress*, wrote: *“I do prefer this book of Martin Luther upon the Galatians, excepting the Holy Bible, before all books that have ever seen as most fit for a wounded conscience.”*

The Author

The very first verse identifies the Apostle Paul as the author (1:1). Paul was born in Tarsus, a city in the Province of Cilicia, not far from Galatia. Paul was trained under the famous Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Paul was a member of the ultra-orthodox sect of the pharisees (Acts 23:6) and of the Tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5).

Dating

The Letter to the Galatians was written A.D. 48, or early A.D. 49, after the Apostle Paul’s First Missionary Journey, but before the first Church Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15), as it makes no reference to this pivotal event which directly addressed the very issues he was dealing with. If this Letter had been written after the Jerusalem Church Council of Acts 15, then the Apostle Paul would have certainly referred to it as it decisively condemned the Judaizing cult that Paul’s Letter to the Galatians was dealing with. This makes Galatians the earliest letter of the Apostle Paul. Galatians is the oldest Letter that we have of the Apostle Paul. It is his first Epistle chronologically.

Who Were the Galatians?

The Galatians were a Celtic people who had migrated to that region from Gaul (modern day France) in the 3rd Century B.C. The Romans conquered the Galatians in 189 B.C. but allowed them to have some measure of autonomy until 25 B.C. when Galatia became a Roman province, incorporating regions not inhabited by ethnic Galatians. This included Lyconia, Phrygia and Pisidia. During his First Missionary Journey, the Apostle Paul founded churches in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 13:14-14:23), in Southern Galatia.

Background to the Controversy

False teachers were undermining central Biblical doctrines including justification by Faith. The Judaizers were spreading the dangerous legalism demanding that Gentiles must first become Jews, submitting to Mosaic Law, before they could become Christians. The Judaizers were distorting the Gospel, agitating among the new converts, perverting the Faith, requiring Gentiles to become circumcised for their salvation. Effectively the Judaizers were seeking to convert Gentile Christians to Judaism.

Character Assassins

Not content merely to preach another gospel, the Judaizers attempted to discredit Paul who had founded the churches in Galatia. They claimed that Paul was a renegade who had defied his superiors and the Apostles in Jerusalem. They claimed that Peter had argued against Paul over the requirement of Gentiles to become Jews in order to be saved. The agitators claimed that Paul had originally preached and practiced circumcision for salvation. Understanding this background is essential to appreciating the meaning of the Book of Galatians.

Thunder Bolts Against False Teaching

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the Gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.” Galatians 1:6-10

Too Emotional

Some people dislike Galatians intensely. Some claim that it is too emotional. Galatians is a highly charged Letter. It was clearly written in white-heat and is full of anger against false teaching, which was deceiving new believers, with disastrous eternal consequences.

Too Personal

Some complain that Galatians is too personal. The Apostle Paul speaks of his physical handicaps, evidently an eye-disease as he refers to the large letters he has to use when he writes with his own hand (6:11) and how they did not despise him when he came, but were even willing to give their own eyes to him (4:14-15).

Too Unsettling

He explains his side of the public disagreement with the Apostle Peter. Many are anxious to avoid public differences. However, to Paul, when truth is at stake, one even has to be willing to stand up against those we most love and respect.

Too Confrontational

There are those who complain that Galatians is too combative, too controversial and too argumentative. We live in an age where people prefer to live in comfortable homes, travel in comfortable vehicles, to go to comfortable churches and to hear comfortable messages. Galatians is discomfiting. Some have described a Missionaries Job Description as: *“To comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable!”* Paul certainly afflicts the comfortable in Galatians!

Tactless and Intolerant

Certainly many arguments have been waged over the Book of Galatians. We live in an age when tolerance and tact are considered primary virtues. Not that either is considered a virtue in the Bible! Our Lord Jesus Christ was certainly neither tolerant, nor tactful, especially when He came into the Temple with a whip and condemned the scribes and pharisees as *“hypocrites, white-washed tombs, a brood of snakes, twice as worthy of hell! Blind guides!”* When the Lord whipped the corrupt Jewish money-lenders out of the Temple, there were probably those who complained that He wasn't being tolerant, or tactful, enough.

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

If Dr. Martin Luther had not been convicted from a study of the Books of Psalms, Galatians and Romans to confront the false teachings and superstitious unBiblical practices of the Roman catholic papacy, then the Reformation may not have occurred. The Scripture commands us to stand firm in the Faith and to fight the good fight of Faith!

Too Intellectual

Some complain that Galatians is too intellectual. Indeed there are subtle historic and Biblical intellectual arguments requiring some hard-thinking. Paul stretches our minds and requires some serious Bible study and intellectual exercise to grasp the essence of his arguments.

Too Spiritual

There are even those who claim that the Book of Galatians is too spiritual! In Galatians we encounter the sharp double-edged sword of the Word of God that penetrates to bone and marrow, dealing with heart-motivations and inner-attitudes. Galatians strips off religious veneers and strikes at human pride.

Critical Issues

Galatians tackles some of the most fundamental issues of the Faith, which if we misunderstand, or distort, can be fatal to our Faith. God has entrusted to Christian leaders the responsibility of studying and striving for the Faith, contending for the Faith once delivered to the saints. We need to **discern** the truth of God's Word and **defend** it publically.

Internal Subversion Can be Devastating

Generally speaking, attempts to destroy the Church by outside attacks and violent persecution have failed. However, subtle attacks from within the church to pervert, erode or corrupt the Gospel have had far more devastating long-term consequences. Entire denominations have been devastated by the **legalism** or **licence** exposed and countered in the Epistle to the Galatians.

The Unique Qualifications of the Apostle Paul to Deal with These Issues

The Apostle Paul was one of the greatest men who ever lived. One of the most influential thinkers, writers and missionaries of all times. Born in Tarsus, the Roman world's third most important centre of study, after Athens and Alexandria. Trained by Gamaliel, Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews and a pharisee of the pharisees. He had achieved a great deal of self-righteousness and had sought to destroy the Christians.

False Accusations

The false teachers who were disturbing the Galatians were claiming that the Apostle Paul was not a true Apostle that he did not understand the deeper teachings of Judaism and had failed to teach them the real way of religion.

Counter-Attack

Paul explains that he understands the teachings and practices of Judaism even better than his critics and that he had done even more to attack the Church. ***“For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.”*** Galatians 1:13-14. The accusers were confusing the new converts, entangling them in a web of Jewish legalism and traditions.

The Five Solas

In the Book of Galatians, Paul champions what became known as the five Solas of the Reformation:

Sola Scriptura. Scripture alone is our authority.

Sola Gratia. Salvation is by the grace of God alone.

Sola Fide. Salvation is received by Faith alone.

Solus Christus. Christ alone is the head of the Church and it is through the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross on Calvary alone that Atonement is made for our sins.

Soli Deo Gloria. Everything is to be done to the glory of God alone. We must leave no room for human pride and the flesh. Human pride is what is motivating these false teachers ***“That they may boast in your flesh”*** (6:13).

Adding to the Gospel Dilutes, Subverts and Corrupts It

As in modern cults, the Judaizers were adding to the Gospel. Cults and false religions often seek to either add to the Gospel, or subtract from it. Christian Science add Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health*. Mormons add Joseph Smith's *Book of Mormon* and *The Pearl of Great Price*. The Judaizers were claiming that you needed works in addition to your Faith. Circumcision, the Sabbath and all the other rituals and requirements of Mosaic Law were being put forward as essential for Salvation.

Salvation by Works

Most religions of the world advocate salvation by works. You must pray in this way, you must fast in this way, you must give alms to the poor, tithe to the church, attend these meetings, complete these rituals, bow down in this way, repeat these words, complete this formula, so that at the end you may be saved. Salvation by works. Do-it-yourself religion appeals to people because it gives us something to be proud of. It is this self-righteousness of the pharisees that our Lord Jesus Christ condemned so completely in Matthew 23.

Religion vs. Relationship

There are a variety of religious options including: Works Alone save you, or Works Plus Faith save you, or Faith Plus Works saves you. This is what the Judaizers of Paul's time were saying, that you need to complete your salvation by Faith with these Jewish works and rituals. However, Paul advocates Faith alone. Salvation is by the grace of God alone based upon the Atonement of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary, received by Faith alone.

Those Under the Law are Condemned

"For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.' But that no one is justified by the Law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by Faith.' Yet the Law is not of Faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them'. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')." Galatians 3:10-13

Liberty vs. Legalism and Licence

Liberty is the key theme in Galatians. The Judaizers were promoting **legalism**. Others, egalitarians, promote **licence**. Christians stand for Biblical liberty in Christ, led by the Holy Spirit. Christian liberty is not doing what we want, nor is it doing what others tell us to. Christian liberty is not the freedom to sin. It is the freedom **not** to sin. Christian liberty is **real freedom** - To do what we ought, to please God. To be freed from the bondage of the Law and from the curse of antinomian licence.

Only Those Who Are of Faith Are Sons of Abraham

Circumcision is condemned as a slippery slope, the first link in the chain of legalism. It is not part of the Gospel. Paul points to Abraham: ***"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of Faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain - if indeed it was in vain? Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of Faith? - Just as Abraham 'believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Therefore know that only those who are of Faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by Faith, preached the Gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, 'In you all the nations shall be blessed.' So then those who are of Faith are blessed with believing Abraham."*** Galatians 3:1-9

Abraham Was Justified by Faith

Many hundreds of years before the Law was given through Moses, God justified Abraham by Faith. If Faith without works was sufficient for Abraham, why should we apostatize from the Faith and revert to the Law which only brought condemnation?

No One is Justified by Law

The Law cannot give righteousness, but it does bring death upon all those who do not keep it. The Law demands perfect obedience. ***“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.’ But that no one is justified by the Law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by Faith.’*** Galatians 3:10-11

Christ Bore the Curse for Us

A curse is upon all those who break the Law. A blessing is upon all those who live by Faith. ***“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’).*** Galatians 3:13. Do not turn back to the Mosaic Law from which Christ has redeemed us. Who has bewitched you foolish Galatians that you should turn from the blessing of Faith to the curse of the Law?

The Law is Our Schoolmaster to Bring us to Christ

The Law deals with **what we have done** and **who we are**. While grace deals with **who Christ is** and **what He has accomplished**. ***“Therefore the Law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by Faith.”*** Galatians 3:24

The Role of the Law

The Law restrains the wicked, guides our conduct and acts as a school teacher to bring us to Christ that we may be saved, justified by Faith. The Law reveals our sin, our failure, our depravity and our need of Redemption through Christ. The Law reveals to us our spiritual blindness and lost condition. The sharp needle of the Law needs to prick our conscience and carry through the scarlet thread of Gospel Redemption through Christ.

Only Those Who Have Faith in Christ

To those who claim that Jews are the true children of God, Paul writes: ***“Therefore know that only those who are of Faith are sons of Abraham.”*** Galatians 3:7

Legalists Place Themselves Under a Curse

“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse...” Galatians 3:10

There is Only One Way of Salvation

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:28-29. This passage has been abused to suggest that there is no more distinction between different nationalities, classes, or genders. Indeed, Galatians 3:28 has even been misconstrued to justify women ministers, inter-racial marriage, homosexual marriage and trans-genderism, with men having access to women’s bathrooms and all manner of other perversions that could never have been imagined by the Apostle Paul, or millions of Christians who have read these passages for nearly 2,000 years!

Distinctions Remain

What Galatians 3:28 is making clear is that there is only one way of Salvation for Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female and that is through Christ Jesus. It is not suggesting that there are no more social, or gender, distinctions. Men may not walk into women’s bathrooms quoting Galatians 3:28. We remain of different genders, social and economic classes and nationalities. However, those who belong to Christ are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.

Ishmael and Isaac

Paul uses the example of Abraham having two sons: Ishmael from a slave woman, Hagar and Isaac from his wife, Sarah. *“For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two Covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar - for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children - but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.”* Galatians 4:22-26

Those Under Bondage Persecute the True Children of God

“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? ‘Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.’ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.” Galatians 4:28-31

Only Those Born of the Spirit are Children of God’s Promise

The true descendants of Abraham are not those who are born of his flesh and blood, but those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord. Those born of the flesh are under the condemnation of the Law. Those born miraculously, of the Spirit, are free. Hagar the mother of Ishmael is symbolic of Mount Sinai and corresponds to Jerusalem. The children of Mount Sinai, the Mosaic Law and Jerusalem, are symbolised by Ishmael. The Jews are not true heirs of the promise. Those who seek salvation by Law are not true sons of Abraham. It is the son born miraculously, as Isaac was, of Sarah, when she was well past the natural age for child bearing, who are the true children of Israel, the true children of Abraham, the true children of the promise.

Legalism Cannot Save

The Judaizers, by promoting circumcision, Sabbath observance on the seventh day and other requirements of Judaism were not adding to anyone’s’ salvation, but taking away their salvation, leading them astray into error and bondage. When you tell people that they must keep the Law of Moses in order to be saved, you are consigning them to hell, because they cannot do it.

Legalism is a Death Sentence

Judaism is not the cradle of Christianity but its grave. Our Lord Jesus Christ was scathing in His denunciation of Judaism and its legalism and the hypocrisy of the scribes and pharisees. As Moses was raised up to deliver the Hebrews from bondage in Egypt, so the Apostle Paul was raised up to deliver the Christian Church from the bondage of Judaism.

The Charter of Liberty

The Book of Galatians is the Magna Carta of the Christian Church. *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by Faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* Galatians 2:20

From Persecutor to Preacher

Paul gives some of his testimony *“...he who formerly persecuted us now preaches the Faith which he once tried to destroy.”* Galatians 1:23. The Apostle Paul has moved from enemy to Evangelist, from opponent to advocate, from the persecutor of the Gospel to preacher of the Gospel. Only God could have changed Paul from being a murderer to being a Missionary. Paul makes it clear that he is an Apostle, not from men, or through men, but through Jesus Christ who personally confronted and called him. He makes it clear that he is a man under authority, accountable, teachable and open to correction.

Under Authority, Accountable and Teachable

“And I went up by revelation and communicated to them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately, to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.” Galatians 2:2. Paul was plainly not a rebel, or a renegade, a law unto himself, refusing to be taught. He was a team-player, under authority, accountable, teachable and open to correction, as we read of the Bereans, who were more noble than the rest, because they studied the Word of God daily, to see if the things that they were taught, were true.

Accepted and Supported by the Apostles in Jerusalem

“And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.” Galatians 2:9. Paul went up to Jerusalem and submitted his understanding of the Gospel to the Apostles to be evaluated by them. The Apostles, James, Peter and John, the pillars of the Church, gave Paul the right hand of fellowship, indicating their acceptance, support and recognition of the Hand of God and Call of God on Paul's life. They endorsed his Mission to the Gentiles.

Clarifying the Confrontation

He clarifies that the disagreement with Peter over the legalistic requirements of the Judaizers was one in which Peter acknowledged that he had been inconsistent ***“...If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?”*** Galatians 2:14. It was not Paul who was being subtle and subversive, he had openly submitted his teaching to evaluation by the Apostles. He had been open when he needed to rebuke a fellow apostle over inconsistency and hypocrisy. The friendship and mutual respect between Peter and Paul stood the test of time and conflict (2 Peter 3:15).

No One Can be Justified by Law

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but by Faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we might be justified by Faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; for by the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified.” Galatians 2:16

Those Who Go Back to Judaism Reject Christ

Paul says he is astonished that these new Christians could have given up the Gospel of freedom in Christ to accept a legalistic message that was no gospel at all, but bondage. He twice pronounces a curse upon those troubling them, adulterating the Gospel and perverting the message. Even if an Angel from Heaven were to preach any other gospel, let him be eternally condemned to hell, accursed, anathema (1:6-9).

Why Did Christ Die?

For what possible purpose did Christ die, if we can be saved by keeping the Law? The legalistic Judaizers were effectively denying the Atonement of Christ. How are we justified? Not by works (Galatians 2:16-17). Christ is our sacrifice for sin and He is our sufficiency in the Spirit-filled life.

Relationship Not Religion

The daily life of a Christian disciple is to die to self and sin, to forsake the world and to follow Christ. We are not called to a legalistic ritual, or religion, but to a living Faith in a living Saviour. Christianity is first and foremost a relationship with Almighty God through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Not a religion. Religion may be the best man can do. Christianity is what God has done in and through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. How can we be made just? Not through the Law, but through Faith in the shed Blood of Christ Jesus, our Lord. True Children of Abraham are not those born of his physical descendants, but those who believe in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. ***“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us...”*** Galatians 3:13

Is the Blessing in Christ or a Political Entity?

“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds’, as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed’, who is Christ.” Galatians 3:16. Those who claim that the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 is fulfilled in the present state named Israel in the Middle East, are denying the clear teaching of Scripture. Galatians 3:16 makes it clear that the promise was to Abraham and to his Seed: Christ. We are blessed in accordance with our faithfulness to Christ and we are cursed if we reject Him. Genesis 12:1-3 is a Messianic prophecy fulfilled in Christ.

No Nation Can Claim God’s Blessings without Fulfilling His Conditions

Those who claim that the promise to Abraham is fulfilled in the secular state of Israel in the Middle East, betray a spiritual blindness. For the Scripture is clear that no nation has ever received a blank check from God. All the prophets condemned the nations of Israel and Judah for idolatry, immorality, injustice and ingratitude. God twice condemned Jerusalem to be destroyed and its people sent into exile. How much clearer can it be, that no nation, no people, can ever claim the promises of God without fulfilling His conditions of faithfulness and loyalty to the God who gave those promises.

Blessings of Obedience - Curses of Disobedience

Deuteronomy 28, Leviticus 26 and Jeremiah 18, make it clear that there are blessings for obedience and there are curses for disobedience. To suggest that people’s well-being and blessing before God is determined by how much they support a political state, is unBiblical.

The Wrath of God Comes on Those Who Support the Wicked

When King Jehoshaphat of Judah sought to mobilise in support of the Northern kingdom of Israel, the Word of the Lord came to him. **“...Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Therefore the wrath of the Lord is upon you!”** 2 Chronicles 19:2. That was in context of supporting the Northern kingdom of Israel.

Unconditional Support for Any State is UnBiblical

Yet, today, some people would have you believe that you will be blessed by God for any and all political and material support for a secular state, which rejects Christ! Jews have not come back into the land in repentance and in Faith in Christ. How then can we expect God to bless anyone for such support? The state of Israel is not a theocratic state seeking to faithfully apply the Word of God to all areas of life. Nor yet a nation that openly worships our Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Judaizers today would have you believe that support for a secular state (which in point of fact denies Christ, legalises abortion - over 2 million babies have been killed so far in the state of Israel, officially and legally, with taxpayers money - a state which legalises pornography, perversion and prostitution) should receive unqualified support from all of God's people! Why?

Promoting Perversion

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs openly posts videos promoting Tel Aviv as *the gay capital of the world* with vulgar displays of perversion. Homosexual activists have voted Tel Aviv as *the most gay-friendly city in the world!* Yet we are to believe that such a state that denies Christ, persecutes Christians and conscripts women into the Army, while legalising abortion, prostitution, pornography and perversion, should be supported?

Why is America Not Blessed?

Judaizers say that those who bless the state of Israel will be blessed and those who curse the state of Israel will be cursed! Yet, the country that has done more to support the state of Israel than any other, the United States of America, seems to have been progressively cursed since supporting the establishment of Israel in 1948. Crime has increased, the U.S. currency has devalued multiple times, natural disasters have increased, political disasters, the paganisation of the schools and the spread of perversion throughout the United States has increased dramatically over the last 70 years, despite consistently pouring many Billions of Dollars into the state of Israel.

Israel Worship Has Become Cultic

Yet according to the teachings of John Hagee and other Judaizers, America should be blessed beyond every other nation, in return for having given more Foreign Aid to Israel than to all other nations in the world combined! But surely this is nonsense. People are blessed and cursed in relationship to our Lord Jesus Christ. God is not obligated to bless false doctrines and foolish distortions of His Word. The fact that so many believe it, does not change the fact that they are unBiblical. ***“You shall not follow a crowd to do evil...”*** Exodus 23:2

Your Relationship to Christ is Critical

Those who bless Christ are blessed, those who curse Christ are cursed. That is the plain teaching of Scripture. To twist, adulterate and pervert Genesis 12:1-3 for any political end is inexcusable and indefensible, especially in the light of the clear teaching: ***“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds’, as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed’, who is Christ.”*** Galatians 3:16

unBiblical Contradictions of Terms are to Be Rejected

Those who speak of *Judeo-Christian* are confused. Judaism rejects Christ. Christianity is centered on Christ. How did Christians come to put such an unBiblical concept above the clear teachings of Scripture? Nowhere in the Bible will you read of *Judeo-Christian*, yet today all too many Christians repeat this mantra which is an oxymoron. This tells us something about the pervasive indoctrination by modern media.

Conflict of Interest

There is also a tremendous financial incentive for the political entity in the Middle East who call themselves “Israel” to continue to do everything necessary in terms of public relations that the billions of dollars continue to flow in so-called Foreign Aid. (Someone has described foreign-aid as the transfer of money from the poor in rich countries to the rich in poor countries.) In this case it is a transfer of taxes from Christians in America to non-Christians in the state of Israel who buy up huge numbers of agents of influence to indoctrinate Christians with unBiblical theology, such as through the Scofield Bible, John Hagee and many ministries, magazines, pulpits and programmes which continue to propagate the very teachings that were condemned so clearly in the Books of Galatians and Hebrews and by the first Church Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15). ***“Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?”*** Galatians 4:16

An Inversion of Priorities

It is disturbing that many Christians today are more distressed by criticism of Israel, or of the Jews, than blasphemy against Christ and persecution of Christians. It is idolatry, hypocritical and a bizarre inversion of priorities.

Stand for Christ and Resist Those Who Reject Christ

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole Law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by Law; you have fallen from grace.” Galatians 5:1-4

You Are Either For Christ or Against Him

The Apostle Paul makes it clear that circumcision avails nothing (5:6). ***“A little leaven leavens the whole lump.”*** Galatians 5:9. Paul makes it clear that if you desert the true Gospel then you are deserting God Himself, falling from grace and losing all hope of Salvation. There is no Salvation in the blood of bulls and goats. There never was and never will be. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were mere shadows to point one to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Salvation is the gift of God's grace, unearned and undeserved. Received by Faith alone. Faith

itself is God's free gift. Faith alone is the key because Christ alone is the Saviour. He bore the curse of the Law in our place, upon the Cross.

Woe to You When All Men Speak Well of You

To those who claim that Paul was still preaching circumcision: *“And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the Cross has ceased.”*

Galatians 5:11

Scars Testify to Sacrificial Service

If you are not being criticised then you are not doing your job. Paul reminds the people that he bears in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus (6:17). There are scars of service testifying to sacrifices made in the service of our Lord. By implication his accusers have no such scars. What have they sacrificed and suffered for Christ? Sacrificial service is more eloquent than many sermons.

Do Not Return to a Dead and Empty Religion

There are dreadful consequences to abandoning the Gospel of Christ Jesus as the only Saviour for our sins. There is Salvation in no other. Turning back to dry and dead religion is a rejection of a real relationship with our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

You are Called to Liberty – Not Legalism nor Lawlessness

To those who claim that this Gospel of the grace of God received by Faith alone will lead to lawlessness and licence, the Apostle Paul responds: *“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the Law is fulfilled in one Word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’”* Galatians 5:13-14

Recognise What Your Salvation Cost Our Saviour

The Gospel of God's grace gives us true liberty and true Christians will not despise, or abuse, that liberty because they recognise that it cost so much: the Blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We abuse liberty when we degenerate into licence and lawlessness.

Recognise and Resist the Fruit of the Flesh

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:16-21

Faith and Freedom

With freedom comes responsibility. Freedom from an addictive habit, such as drunkenness, smoking, drug addiction, or from political oppression, is a glorious experience. Even more exhilarating is the spiritual freedom that comes from the grace of God experienced through Faith in Jesus Christ alone. We are free, not to follow our inward lusts, or the decadence of this world, but free to serve our Saviour and do His will. Free to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbour as ourselves. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...”* Gal. 5:22-23

Walk in Step with the Spirit

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Galatians 5:25

We learn to walk holding onto a parent's hand. We need to think of walking in the Spirit as walking arm in arm, not running ahead, nor lagging behind. Note the nine-fold fruit or nine graces:

1. Towards God: **Love, joy and peace.**
2. Towards others: **Patience**, or long-suffering, **kindness and goodness** and
3. Towards myself: **Faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.**

As our Lord taught in John 15, if we abide in Christ and His Words abide in us, we shall bear much fruit. To walk in the Spirit means to march in step with the Spirit, to keep in step with the Holy Spirit, to be in harmony with the Holy Spirit.

Sowing and Reaping

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”

Galatians 6:7. If we sow in the Spirit we will reap a spiritual harvest. If we sow to the flesh we will reap corruption. The harvest will not be so much according to what we **know**, but what and how much we **sow**. This refers to both **attitudes** and **actions**. We may have a large supply of seed in the barn of our heart and mind, but, unless it is planted in suitable soil, it will bear no harvest. We need to sow Scriptural seed in our thoughts and in our deeds.

What You Sow is What You Will Reap

To those who deceive themselves saying it does not matter what I sow, as long as I am sincere... what kind of advice would that be for a farmer? In this instance the Christian life is not likened to that of a used-car salesman, or a politician, but to a farmer. There are agricultural rules and realities to consider here. When it comes to a person's mind: garbage in - garbage out. What we see influences what we think. What we think influences what we believe and what we believe influences how we act. Thoughts easily develop into attitudes, actions, habits, character and eternal destiny. Every choice we make, makes us more a creature of Heaven or hell. Every decision and choice puts us more down the broad road to destruction, or the narrow road to life.

Head, Heart, Hand and Feet

In Romans we find our **standing**. In Galatians we take our **stand**. In Romans we are to use our **heads** to grasp the great facts of the Faith. In 1 Corinthians we are to put out our **hand** to grasp our privileges in Christ. In 2 Corinthians we are to lift up our **hearts** to receive the comforts that are ours. In Galatians we are commanded to **stand** on our **feet** in the liberty that Christ gives us.

What a Saviour

Galatians proclaims our Lord Jesus Christ as a Mighty Saviour. Powerful to deliver us from sin (1:4; 2:21; 3:22); to deliver us from the curse of the Law (3:13); to deliver us from selfishness (2:20; 5:24); to deliver us from worldliness (6:14).

Adoption into the Family of God

In and through the miracle of regeneration, the new birth (4:4-7), we receive the Holy Spirit, we are adopted as sons and daughters and made heirs of God through Christ. In Galatians we are called to be *“no longer a slave, but a son”* (4:7).

Apostasy Brings Curse

“But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?” Galatians 4:9. Paul pronounces a curse on the false teachers because they pervert the Gospel (1:6-9). He describes them accursed and false brethren. *“They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them.”* Galatians 4:17

Justification and Sanctification is by Faith

Salvation is by Faith alone. We are justified by Faith (justification). Sanctification also is by Faith, walking in the Spirit. The Book of Galatians must have been written before the Jerusalem Church Council of Acts 15, since its decision would have been a powerful point in Paul's argument. The Judaizers were attempting to discredit Paul's authority as an Apostle and to distort his message of

grace. In one of the severest statements in the New Testament, the Apostle warned that those who pervert the Gospel of grace are placing themselves under a curse for eternal damnation.

From Persecutor to Apostle

Paul who was once so zealous in his opposition to the Church and violent in his persecution of believers, now finds himself an advocate and Apostle for the Gospel, seeking to defend the Church from false teachers who would distract, distort and corrupt the Church from within.

Jesus is Either Your Lord and Saviour or He is Your Judge

The Law places a curse on all who break the Law in any point. As Christ took this curse upon Himself, those of us who identify with Him and are loyal to Him can be Saved from the curse. Those who reject Christ are taking the curse upon themselves, for there is no Salvation outside of Christ.

Help Bear One Another's Burdens and Restore Those Who Fall

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the Law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another.” Galatians 6:1-4

Do Not Grow Weary in Your Work for God and His Creatures

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of Faith.” Galatians 6:9-10

No Room for Pride

“But God forbid that I should boast except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.” Galatians 6:14

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” Galatians 5:1

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The [Old Testament Survey](#) book and the [Old Testament Survey Audio and Data MP3 boxset](#) are available from Christian Liberty Books, PO Box 358, Howard Place 7450, Cape Town, South Africa, tel: 021-689-7478, fax: 086-551-7490, email: admin@christianlibertybooks.co.za and website: www.christianlibertybooks.co.za. Prices exclude postage.

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