

# NOTES FROM MY BIBLE -- GALATIANS

**NOTE:** This study is not a "Bible Study" or "Class Notes on Galatians," but merely a copy of the notes I have written down in the margin of my study Bible. Thus there are cross--references to my notes in other Bible books which will be unavailable to students who do not have access to my Bible. It is hoped this study will be of assistance to the reader in spite of this shortcoming.

**Refs. to my book "Help in Hard Places" will be noted as "HIHP page(s) \_\_\_ or \_\_\_" [with the page number(s) in the original edition followed by the page number(s) in the second printing].**

## INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL

There are several illustrations in the OT (Old Testament) of the legalism which Paul so strongly attacks in Galatians. After Naaman was healed graciously by Elisha, refusing any payment for his services (2 Kings 5:15, 16), Elisha's servant, Gehazi, felt Naaman had gotten off too easily. "But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him." (2 Kings 5:20). When he stood before Elisha he was sternly reproved. "But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?" (2 Kings 5:25, 26). This legalism of Gehazi was judged by God -- he became a leper!

In Jeremiah 34 we have the story of how liberty was proclaimed to the servants and they were all set free. "But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids" (Jer. 34:11). This was severely condemned by God (Jer. 34:13 - 17 & following).

In the NT (New Testament) story of the "prodigal son" the elder son is the legalist, not willing to acknowledge any relationship with his brother, even though his brother had been freely and graciously forgiven by their father. The whole point of the story, as the context indicates, is the legalism of the brother.

Even under Law, when grace takes over there is no room for legalism -- and how much more so today, in the day of grace? <sup>1</sup> Just as Paul was deeply stirred by the carnality of the Corinthians (see First Corinthians), he is hurt and angry at the legalism of the Galatians.

The legalism answered in this book took two forms: the teaching that works were necessary for salvation (Gal. 1:6 - 9 and context), and the doctrine that, once justified "by the hearing of faith" (3:2), perfection (sanctification) came by the Law (3:3). Both heresies are still with us today, and are as pernicious now as they were then. The epistle to the Galatians is closely related to Romans, the latter setting forth justification by faith, the former defending that teaching against those who would pervert or discard it.

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<sup>1</sup>For a full discussion of Law and Grace see HIHP pages 82 - 98 or pages 75 - 90. This study is also found in an edited and expanded form as Appendix # 1 in Class Notes on Exodus.

**NOTES:**

**1:4.** Christ not only died to save us from the penalty of sin -- but to deliver us, right now, from being a part of this evil age, from living a life after the "life style" of those around us.

**1:8.** My note at 1 Kings 13:18 reads: *It seems that this "old prophet" (v. 11) was indeed a prophet (13:20), but not like the "man of God" (v. 1) sent to Jeroboam. The old prophet did not stand up against the king, and was a liar. The man of God believed the lies of the old prophet because he claimed to have received his message from an angel. How many today believe the Mormons for the same reason! See Paul's warnings in Gal. 1:8 and 2 Thess. 2:2.*

**1:6 - 9.** The "other" gospel in view here is not the "gospel of the circumcision" of 2:7 - 9. It is **any** message that makes salvation a result of our works instead of the work of Christ on Calvary. It is not a gospel at all! The passage reads, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another [**of a different kind** -- ετεροσ] gospel: which is **not** another [**of the same kind** -- αλλοσ]" (Galatians 1:6, 7).

**1:12.** Contrast Heb. 2:3, 4.

**1:13, 14.** The contrast here is not between grace and **believers** who are zealous for the Law (Acts 21:20), but between Paul's life as a believer and his past as an **unbeliever** -- a past filled with legalistic religion **without any salvation**. So the contrast in vs. 6 - 9 is **not** a contrast with Peter, but with the legalizers of Acts 15:1.

**1:14.** Contrast Phil. 3:7, 8 and the context there. Here, looking back to his life before he was saved, he knew the traditions of the fathers -- there, as a believer years later, he longs to know, **really know, Christ** (Phil. 3:10). Here he was exceedingly zealous for religion -- there he has his eye on the Judgment Seat of Christ and is exerting every effort, like a runner in a race, to receive the "prize." Here he was looking **around** at others and **back** on his achievements -- there he is looking **forward** in eager anticipation (Phil. 3:13, 14).

**1:21.** Syria and Cilicia were Gentile areas (Tarsus was located in Cilicia). This was before the preaching in Judea mentioned in Acts 26:20 for, according to Gal. 1:22, Paul was still unknown in Judea, except by reputation, at the time described here in v. 21.

**1:23.** This verse proves that Paul is not contrasting the "gospel of the grace of God," or his "my gospel," with the gospel preached by the twelve. In chapter one he is contrasting the basic gospel of salvation by grace (1 Cor. 15:1 - 4) with the **false** "gospel" of salvation by works.

In chapter two the comparison moves on to that basic gospel as it was adapted to two different groups of believers. The Jews (the "Israel of God" mentioned in 6:16), who had been saved before the Body of Christ began, were to preach the "gospel of the circumcision." Those in the Body of Christ were to preach the "gospel of the uncircumcision," the same basic gospel as adapted to those in the Body."

**2:7.** See my notes at Matt. 10:7 and Rev. 15:3.

**2:7 - 9.** Both the gospel of the circumcision and the gospel of the uncircumcision are based on the one basic gospel in view in 1:6 - 9 (see note there). However this gospel must be adapted to the group of Jews (almost totally in Jerusalem) saved before the Body of Christ began -- kingdom saints. This was a temporary adaptation for the short period before these saints all died off. The gospel of grace is described here as "the gospel of the uncircumcision" in contrast to this modified and restricted message. Once the "Israel of God" (6:16) is off the scene the gospel of the circumcision is obsolete and no reference is made to it -- or the descriptive title given to it.<sup>2</sup>

**2:11 - 21.** Peter had agreed that the gospel of the uncircumcision given to Paul was of God. But here he was in an assembly of Body-of-Christ-believers and he was not acting according to that message. He did not deny the authority of Paul, or the specific message given to him, by **word** -- but he implied a denial of both by his **actions**. He is not under the curse of 1:8, 9, but he **is** rebuked. He was not in any way denying that salvation -- in either program -- is dependent on the death and resurrection of Christ, but he was bringing the principles of the kingdom program over into the Body of Christ. Sadly, this has continued and has been the curse of Christendom.

**2:13.** The word translated "dissimulation" is the Greek word **υποκρισις** from which we get our word "hypocrisy." See my notes at Acts 15:36 - 40.

**2:17.** It is noted here that Peter is seeking to be justified by Christ (not by the Law). So he was **not** involved with the "other" gospel of 1:6 - 9. It was as one saved by grace that he is sinning. It has to do with the program to be followed by the saint -- not the message to be believed by the sinner. The righteousness of v. 21 is not the imputed righteousness of justification, but has to do with "the life which I now live in the flesh" (v. 20) -- sanctification. This is made very clear in 3:1 - 3 where the problem is not how to be saved -- they **already have** the Spirit -- but how they can "be made perfect."

**2:17, 18.** The sin here is his inconsistency, his hypocrisy. If he was right to abide by the principles of the Body of Christ when with the Body saints, then he was wrong to withdraw. If he was right to withdraw, at such a time, then he was wrong to have eaten with them in the first place. Either way, he has made himself a transgressor (v. 18).

**3:3.** See Col. 2:6 (and my note at John 5:11).

**3:7.** (See my note at John 8:42)

**3:8, 9.** "All nations . . . blessed" is restricted to those in the nations who "are of faith" (v. 7) or which "be of faith" (v. 9).

**3:11.** "No man" -- of whatever dispensation, from Abraham on -- is justified by the Law. Compare Rom. 3:20, 28.

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<sup>2</sup>See attached Appendix number one.

**3:13.** See Deut. 21:23.

**3:19, 20.** A "mediator" was needed because **two** parties to the agreement were involved. Since God is **one** (though existing in three persons), man must have been the other party to the covenant. Since the covenant of the Law was not totally dependent on God, as is grace, man became its limitation. He was the weak link in the chain. Notice in Heb. 8:7, 8 that the "fault" implied in the first covenant (v. 7) was that it depended on "**them**" (Israel -- v. 8).

**3:21.** It was never the intent that salvation be through the Law. The Law was given to gather all men into the net of sin ("concluded" in v. 22<sup>3</sup>) that there, in that "net," grace could find them in total dependence on God and save them.

**3:28.** See Josephus<sup>4</sup> for a description of the divisions between Jews and Gentiles and between men and women in the temple worship.

**3:29.** See v. 16. See my note at Luke 3:8.

**4:4, 5.** My note at Isa. 9:6 reads: *"Everlasting Father" is literally "Father of Eternity" according to the ASV margin. The baby born "in the fulness of time" is already the Father --- not of time merely -- but of eternity! This appears to be the strongest way to express the absolute eternity of Christ, He is "father" of that which had no beginning! See Gal. 4:4. Compare Isa. 63:16, "Doubtless You are our Father, though Abraham was ignorant of us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O LORD, are our Father; our Redeemer from Everlasting is Your name."*

**4:9.** Compare 2 Tim. 2:19.

**4:10, 11.** Balance this against Col. 2:16, 17 (see my note there) and Rom. 14:5, 6.

**5:2.** I.e. for **religious** reasons.

**5:2 - 5.** My note at Deut. 1:41 reads: *Obeying the right command at the wrong time is disobedience. See v. 43. Compare the Galatians who were "obeying" God's command to Israel -- intended for the kingdom program -- and were rebuked for it. See Gal. 5:2 and notes there.*

**5:2 - 6.** But for Israel as a nation circumcision is still to be practiced. Notice Acts 21:21 and context. See Ezek. 44:9, speaking of Israel during the Millennium. In Gal. 6:15, 16 there are two groups: those who walk by the rule of v. 15 (the Body of Christ) and the "Israel of God" (the believing Jews who were saved before the Body began).

**5:3.** One cannot choose which parts of the Law he will keep. If he puts himself under

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<sup>3</sup>The word (συγκλειω) translated "concluded" here and in Rom. 11:32 and "shut up" in Gal. 3:23 is translated "inclosed" in Luke 5:6 where it describes catching fish in a net.

<sup>4</sup>"Wars of the Jews" by Josephus, V, V, 2, page 554. The William Whiston translation. Published in 1980, in one edition, by Hendrickson Publishers, Lynn, Massachusetts 01904

any part of it God holds him accountable to keep it all. James 2:10.

**5:4.** Not that anyone really is justified by Law (Rom. 3:20), but those who seek justification by Law, and may imagine they have it, have fallen away from grace as a principle and cannot claim some grace to go along with the Law to help them over the hard places.

**5:6.** For today it is faith without works (Rom. 3:28; 4:4 - 6; etc.). But this faith works -- not due to coercion or pressure from the Law, but by love! See 2 Cor. 5:14.

**5:12.** "Cut off" is "castrated" in the Greek. Paul longs that these false teachers not be able to reproduce themselves spiritually -- i.e. have converts to their false teaching.

**5:14.** Faith works by love to fulfill [the righteousness of] the Law (Rom. 8:4). All of our work can never accomplish this. The faith principle under grace does not forsake the goal of righteousness in our lives -- but is God's better way (the only way that is effective) to accomplish this goal.

**5:15.** See Isa. 9:20, 21.

**5:16 - 18.** See Romans seven.

**5:17.** (See my note at Matt. 26:41.)

**5:18.** This is how we can "walk in the Spirit" (vs. 16, 25) -- by being led by the Spirit. The one who is walking in the flesh is led by the flesh. Compare Rom. 8:4.

**5:19 - 25.** See my note at Deut. 7:22.

**5:21.** "Do" has the idea of "practice" or to continue to do as a habit.

**5:22, 23.** The first three facets of the fruit of the Spirit relate to God; the second three to one another; the last three are internal. Compare the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit with the nine "beatitudes" in Matthew five and the three lists of nine items each in 2 Cor. 6:4 - 10.

**5:23.** The walk produced by the Spirit needs no restraints (it is not produced by the Law, but it is not contrary to Law). It does not have to be controlled by rules. If a rabbit is eating your lettuce the surest way to put an end to the destruction is not to put a fence around the rabbit, but to kill it. God has no plans to improve, or even to control, the flesh. His only plan is to crucify it.

**5:25.** Compare v. 6; Col. 2:6.

**6:2.** This verse speaks of our attitude toward the burdens of others. Verse 5 has in view our attitude toward our own burdens. We are not to impose our burdens on others, but be quick to share theirs.

**6:6.** "Not merely financial backing is in view. We should share with the teacher 'in all good things,' with the emphasis on spiritual things" -- Mark Matychuk.

**6:7.** My note at Ezek. 20:3 reads: *See v. 31 and 14:3. To give worship and obedience to the idols, and then expect to go to the Lord for guidance or help when we are in trouble, is to mock God -- and He will not be mocked by His creatures! See Gal.6:7.*

**6:11.** The NKJV (New King James Version) reads, "See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!" Rather than wait for an amanuensis (like a secretary) to write this letter for him, as he usually did, he wrote it himself. He had to use large letters because of his greatly impaired eyesight. This emphasizes the critical importance of his message and the deep concern Paul had for them in this matter of legalism.

**6:14.** The crucifixion according to Paul. Notice details given by Paul which are not given anywhere else. **We** were crucified (Gal. 2:20). **Our old man** was crucified (Rom. 6:6). **The flesh**, with its affections and lusts, has been crucified (Gal. 5:24). The **handwriting of ordinances** was nailed to the Cross (Col. 2:14). **The world** was crucified to us and **we were crucified to the world** (Gal. 6:14). **The enmity between Jew and Gentile** was slain by the Cross (Eph. 2:16). **The enmity between God and mankind** was slain by the Cross (Eph. 2:16).

**6:16.** Two groups are in view here: The Body of Christ, walking according to the rule of v. 15, and the Jews saved before the Body of Christ began, the "Israel of God." See "Millennialism -- The Two Major Views" by Charles Feinberg, page 230.

**6:17.** The "marks of the Lord Jesus" are the scars he bore due to his persecutions. See 5:11 where he is saying that if he still preached circumcision he would not be persecuted and would not bear the marks referred to in 6:17.

## Appendix number one -- Peter And Paul's Agreement In Galatians Two

*"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: 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:) 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."*

(Gal. 2:6 - 9)

If the agreement arrived at in these verses was merely that Peter was to preach to the Jews and Paul to the Gentiles:

Why was Paul told by God "You will be a witness for Him [Christ] to all men of what you have seen and heard"?

Why did Paul not abide by the agreement? Until the end of the book of Acts he

continued to preach to the Jews! He preached to:

- Timothy's mother, who was a Jewess (Acts 16:1);
- the synagogue in Thessalonica, as was his custom (Acts 17:1 - 3);
- the Jews in Berea (Acts 17:10);
- the Jews in the synagogue in Athens (Acts 17:17);
- Aquilla, a Jew (Acts 18:2);
- the synagogue in Corinth (Acts 18:4 - 6);
- the synagogue in Ephesus (Acts 18:19; 19:8);
- the Jews (by implication) throughout all the region of Judea (Acts 28:17);
- and the unsaved Jewish leaders in Rome (Acts 28:17).

Why did Paul go to Jerusalem long after Acts 15? This was headquarters for Peter and the twelve, and they were having a fruitful ministry there (Acts 21:20). They had heard that Paul has been teaching "all the Jews who are among the Gentiles" (Acts 21:21).

Why should the recipients of the message be the heart of the agreement when the whole purpose of the meeting was the message? (Acts 15:1, 2, 5, 6).

Why, immediately following this agreement, did Judas and Silas (leading Jewish believers) preach lengthy messages to these Gentiles? (Acts 15:32).

If there is no difference between the message of Peter and that of Paul:

why did Paul already know what Peter had been preaching while Peter had to be instructed about Paul's message? (Gal. 2:6, 7).

why, years after Paul had completed his ministry and Peter had read all of his epistles, did Peter find some of Paul's message hard to understand? (2 Pet. 3:15, 16).

why did Peter never mention the Body of Christ, the Rapture, or the teaching that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile? (Acts 10:34, 35 and 15:9 do not indicate that there was no difference between Jew and Gentile, but there was no difference in respect to salvation -- it was now being offered to both)

why were those under Peter's ministry all zealous of the Law (Acts 21:20) when Paul had been telling us that we are not under the Law (Rom. 6:15); that the Law written and engraven on stones has been done away (2 Cor. 3:7 - 11); and that neither salvation (Gal. 2:16), sanctification (Gal. 3:2, 3) nor power in ministry (Gal. 3:5) are by the Law?

Why were those under Peter's ministry still practicing circumcision -- and defending the practice as in contrast to those under Paul's ministry (Acts 21:21) -- when Paul had been teaching "If you become circumcised Christ will profit you nothing" (Gal. 5:2)?

It seems clear to me that the agreement arrived at in Galatians two could be summed up as follows: "We agree that, while Peter has been entrusted with the gospel as adapted to the Jews who were saved before the Body of Christ began, and Paul with that gospel as adapted to the largely Gentile Body of Christ, both messages -- in their proper sphere -- are of God."<sup>5</sup>

Once those kingdom saints had passed from the scene the only message -- to all men -- was Paul's gospel of the grace of God, and there was no need for the designations "gospel of the circumcision" and "gospel of the uncircumcision." In keeping with this, they are never again used in Scripture.

-- William P Heath < My Documents\Class Notes\New Testament\Gal-1 > - Microsoft Word

<sup>5</sup>See the introduction to First Peter in Class Notes on First Peter -- by W. P. Heath

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