

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

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

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

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

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

True gospel

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

Counterfeit gospel

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

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

Chapter 1

vs. 1-5.

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

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

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

vs. 6-12.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

B. This shows the gospel is superior to angels.

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

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

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

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

HEB 1:1-4.

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

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

v. 6 c/w MAR 6:6.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2CO 3:6; GAL 6:15.

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

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

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

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

vs. 13-14.

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

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

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

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

vs. 15-16.

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

- D. Only the truth of Jesus Christ can make someone free from this strong deception. **JOH 8:31-32.**
- (1) The mind and will remain in bondage until one submits to the facts of his own corruption and of Christ's perfection.
 - (2) The conscience of hypocrites is first *defiled* (**TIT 1:15**), then *seared* (**1TI 4:1-2**) to the point eventually that it is *past feeling* (**EPH 4:19**).
 - a. In this state, one is either convinced that he can do no wrong, or that it doesn't matter if he does wrong.
 - b. It may take a violent divine intervention to break one free of this bondage.
- E. Paul was suddenly and violently interrupted by Christ and jarred out of his self-righteous deception.
- (1) The transition between **v. 14** and **v. 15** allows for no gradual conversion process, as when one man teaches another. **PSA 51:13.**
 - (2) Paul seemed beyond man's reach but he was not beyond God's reach.
 - (3) Paul was suddenly drafted into God's army. Sometimes the draft is what is needed to straighten out rebels and make them useful. **EPH 4:7-8 c/w PSA 68:18.**
2. These verses about the Damascus road experience (**ACT 9**) set forth Paul's conversion, not his regeneration.
- A. Nowhere is it here stated or implied that Christ stopped Paul to regenerate him, make him a new creature with a new nature, pass him from spiritual death unto life, take up residence within Paul, make him into a child of God, etc.
- (1) The common theory of the sinner's reconciliation to God is that the sinner must be presented with an offer of the Son of God made effectual by the sinner's response (which variably would be confession, faith, baptism, sacraments, etc.).
 - a. This would mean that God halted Paul to REVEAL and OFFER His Son TO him.
 - b. But it says, "To reveal his Son IN me..." (not BY me nor THROUGH me).
 - c. The Son was already IN Paul and this needed to be revealed to him.
 - d. The Son being IN one is spiritual life which guarantees bodily resurrection unto life eternal. **ROM 8:9-11 c/w PHIL 3:20-21; COL 1:27.**
 - (2) That Christ was in Paul shows that he was a regenerated child of God before his conversion. Regeneration and conversion are not the same thing.
 - a. regenerate: (v.) *trans.* In religious use: To cause to be born again in a spiritual sense; to invest with a new and higher spiritual nature.
 - b. convert: (v.) *trans.* To turn in mind, feeling, or conduct; to bring into another state (of mind, etc.).
 - c. As a natural man is generated passively by the will of a father, the new spiritual man is regenerated by the will of the heavenly Father so as to be made a son of God. **JOH 1:12-13.**
 - d. In conversion, the will and act of the regenerated man is required. This is the duty of those who are called to spiritual life by God's will and power when they are convicted by truth. **MAT 18:3; ACT 3:19.**
 - e. A regenerate man may not know he needs to be converted until instructed. **MAT 16:16 c/w 1JO 5:1 c/w LUK 22:31-32.**
 - f. **GAL 1:15-16** plainly state that two things occurred in Paul at some point *prior* to his arrest by God on the Damascus road where God revealed His Son in him: he was separated from his mother's womb and called by God's grace. The call by God's grace is the inward quickening of the spiritually

dead unto eternal life, resurrection power applied inwardly.

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

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

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

- h. That Paul was so vigorously fighting against Christ prior to conversion shows that he was one of those elect Jews that belonged to God yet an enemy of the gospel. **ROM 11:27-29.**
- i. Paul had been *kicking against the pricks* (**ACT 9:15**), the inward pricks that should provoke the regenerate heart to repentance. c/w **ACT 2:37.**
- j. In his blind Pharisaic zeal he had been fighting against his God unawares, as Jacob had once done. **GEN 32:24-32.**

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

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

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

- 1. First note that the phrase, "But when it pleased God..." is referring to his conversion experience.
 - a. Conversion is at God's pleasure, not before. **LUK 24:16; ACT 14:16, 27; 2TI 2:24-25.**
 - b. Since conversion is at God's pleasure, we should be cautious about concluding that the lack of good fruit today is certain evidence of no life or the possibility of future fruit. **LUK 13:6-9.**
- 2. Paul may have simply been acknowledging God's role in his natural birth. c/w **JOB 10:18; PSA 71:6.**
- 3. But here he is focusing on the reason for his conversion: to make him a minister.
 - a. Jeremiah was ordained a prophet while in the womb. **JER 1:5.**
 - b. Paul was similarly a *chosen vessel*. **ACT 9:15.**
 - c. Paul ascribed the Messianic prophecy of **ISA 49:1-6** to his own ministry. **ACT 13:47.**
 - d. In due time the Holy Ghost separated Paul to the ministry. **ACT 13:2.**
 - e. He was thus by God's ordination separated from the womb, by the Holy Ghost's direction separated for the ministry, "...separated unto the gospel of God" (**ROM 1:1**). God's choice makes vessels of mercy and honour (**ROM 9:21-24**). All good comes from God's election.