

SYLLABUS

June 7	LESSON ONE Introduction
June 14.....	LESSON TWO Galatians 1
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JoLynn Gower
Summer 2020
493-6151
jgower@guardingthetruth.org

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

The opening of the Galatian epistle is both typical and atypical. Though the salutation includes the usual identification of author and recipient together with a customary greeting, the usual expression of thanksgiving and praise for believers is totally absent. There is an abruptness about the opening words which plunges the reader immediately into one of Paul's major concerns, namely, that his apostolic credentials had been challenged. Though not one of the original Twelve, Paul claimed equality with them as an apostle.

The word *Apostolos* connotes authority and refers to a person who has a right to speak for God as His representative or delegate.

Paul's apostleship did not originate with men. He was not appointed an apostle by any official body such as the leaders in Jerusalem or Antioch, even though they acknowledged and sent him out. Neither did his apostleship originate with any one man, not even Ananias, who assisted Paul in Damascus.

Read Acts 9:10-17, recording what you learn here: _____

Neither did the call come from Barnabas, who played a strategic role in opening doors of ministry for Paul in both Jerusalem and Antioch.

Read Acts 9:27; 11:25-26: _____

Paul instead makes the bold claim that his call was of heavenly origin, from God the Father and the risen Lord Jesus Christ. This is the only direct mention of the resurrection of Christ in the epistle. It emphasizes the importance of that event to Paul's apostleship, for he was not called during the earthly ministry of the Lord but by the resurrected Christ.

Joining with Paul in the sending, though not the writing, of this letter were all the brothers with him. These were the apostle's fellow workers, perhaps Barnabas as well as the prophets and teachers with whom Paul ministered in Antioch. Mentioning these co-laborers emphasized the fact that the teachings of this epistle were not peculiar to Paul but were held in common with others.

Some scholars have argued for a very early date (making this one of Paul's earliest letters), because Paul does not explicitly appeal to the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15; but that Paul can refer to taking Titus to Jerusalem with him (Galatians 2:1) means that he had already completed his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). Therefore, the letter dates to either his "famine" trip #2 in around 43 or implies that the Council had probably taken place. Galatians may thus date from the mid forties to the late fifties.

Paul is clearly battling opponents who have settled in Galatia, which is a region and not a city. Most scholars think that readers were in South Galatia. If so, Acts 13-15 provides especially helpful background for the letter. Read through those chapters, noting things you find particularly important to your understanding here: _____

There are Jewish Christians, called Judaizers, who would rather circumcise the Galatians—thus alienating them from their own Gentile culture—than allow Judean Jews back home to think that Christian missionaries were lax. Unlike Paul, a more seasoned missionary, these missionaries want to impose their own culture on the Galatians.

The Jerusalem Council had apparently settled this issue, but side effects lingered: could Gentiles be part of God's people without circumcision? Some of the strictest Pharisees may have required circumcision for salvation, but many Pharisees believed that any Gentiles who kept the few laws given Noah would be saved. But even for this more lenient class of Pharisees, one could not become part of the *people of God* without circumcision. Very few Jews were so lenient as to accept Gentiles on the terms put forward by the Jerusalem council. Circumcision had even become a major cultural symbol of fidelity to Judaism. Attempts to restrict the practice led to revolts both before and after Paul's time.

Some Judean Christians were now arguing that one must become culturally Jewish to become a full Christian, fully righteous. The scripture itself made this requirement for anyone who wished to belong to God's people.

Genesis 17:10-14 _____

Further, they may have reasoned, if Paul argued for baptism (a post-Old Testament Jewish addition to circumcision), why could Judean Christians not require circumcision, even though it drove away potential converts? Paul argues forcefully against this.

Paul concluded his salutation with a magnificent statement regarding the work of Christ on the cross and its delivering power, another major emphasis of this epistle. Christ gave Himself for our sins.

1 Timothy 2:6 _____

Titus 2:14 _____

1 Peter 3:18 _____

His death was voluntary and final. It satisfied God's righteous demands against sinners, reconciled people to God, and provided for human redemption. One purpose of Christ's death is to rescue us from the present evil age. The gospel is an emancipating message. It delivers believing sinners from the power of the present world system through the power of the indwelling Christ just as certainly as it delivers them from eternal judgment to come. Paul clearly believed that the Old Testament Law, so strongly promoted by the Galatian legalizers, would be impotent to accomplish such great things.

LESSON 2 GALATIANS 1

Although speeches and letters often opened with praise of the hearers or a polite thanksgiving, Paul begins with a direct rebuke. This literary convention is found only among the harshest of ancient letters. Letters of blame, especially in their harsher forms, typically used the expression "I am amazed.". Paul's readers will have no doubt that he is quite upset.

Messengers who distorted the contents of their message were subject to legal penalties. We can remember those who distorted the divine message in terms of false prophets, for whom the penalty was death.

Jeremiah 23:16 _____

Deuteronomy 13:5 and 18:20 _____

Some Jewish mystics of the period claimed revelations from angels, especially in apocalyptic literature. Oaths and curses were familiar in ancient religion, magic and everyday life. Paul may allude here to the curses of the covenant leveled against those who failed to keep Moses' law.

Deuteronomy 27-28 _____

The use of this word for "curse" in the Septuagint of Deuteronomy 13, reminds us that false prophets and those who listened to them were to be destroyed.

Pleasing God rather than people echoes a common theme of philosophers. Demagogues who flattered the masses were unpopular in aristocratic circles and were commonly denounced publicly. Paul paints his opponents as pleasers of people.

Galatians 6:12-13 _____

"I would have you know" was sometimes used to introduce the narrative portion of a speech. Like philosophers and moralists who presented themselves as models of the virtuous life, Paul can present himself as a model of the gospel. But anything that could be interpreted as boasting or self-exaltation was offensive to ancient ears, unless one had proper reasons for it; defending oneself or claiming to be boasting on behalf of another (here, God) was, however, considered sufficient reason.

In any apologetic, firsthand knowledge counts highly. "Received" was sometimes used for the passing on of human traditions, as Jewish scholars did; here Paul refers to his experience in. Paul defends himself based on what he had received from God. Read Act 9 and record your thoughts here: _____

"Advancing" (Galatians 1:14) is the technical language of philosophical schools progress in one's studies, as a grading system. It was also current in Judaism to progress for a rabbinic student. The Palestinian Jewish image of "zeal" was commonly rooted in the models of Phinehas and also the Maccabees, who were willing to kill for God.

Read Numbers 25:11 _____

Paul speaks of ancestral traditions. Given Paul's pharisaic ties, it probably refers to Pharisaic traditions, on which Jews discussing Pharisaism generally commented. Pharisees were known for their adherence to oral tradition. Paul actually understands the Palestinian Jewish piety of his day far better than his opponents do. His position and activities are reported in greater detail in the following verses:

Philippians 3:5 _____

Acts 8:1-3 _____

Acts 9:1-2 _____

It is clear that God set his servants apart even before birth.

Jeremiah 1:5 _____

Isaiah 44:2; Isaiah 49:1 _____

Paul presents his own call in the light of the Old Testament prophets.

“Arabia” refers to Nabataea, the area around Damascus in Syria. This area was prosperous; Greek cities like Petra (Aretas’s capital), Gerasa and Philadelphia (modern Amman in Jordan) belonged to the Nabataean Arabs, and Bedouins traveled through the land. Damascus was next to Nabataea and at this time may have been controlled by Nabataea’s king, Aretas IV.

Paul then reinforced his previous argument by asserting that he waited three years after his conversion to go to Jerusalem, time that was spent in Arabia and Damascus. Would he have waited that long if he had needed theological instruction from the disciples? When he did go, it was to get acquainted with Peter, that is, it was a personal visit lasting only 15 days. Paul then left because of a plot against his life.

Acts 9:29 _____

Meanwhile Paul had had a meaningful time coming to know the noted apostle, but there is no suggestion that Peter gave him theological instruction or apostolic endorsement for his ministry. Of the rest of the apostles Paul met only James, the Lord’s brother, a leader in the church in Jerusalem.

Acts 12:17 _____

To stress the truth of what he had just said—no doubt in the face of a Judaizer’s charge that he had misrepresented his relationship to the apostles—Paul put himself on oath, calling God to be his witness that he was telling the truth.

After his abbreviated visit in Jerusalem Paul worked for an extended time in Syria and Cilicia, which is why he was personally unknown to the churches of Judea.

Acts 9:30 and 11:25_____

He was not commissioned for this ministry by the apostles, and because of the distance between him and Jerusalem he could not have been under their authority or subject to their oversight.

The churches in Judea by this time had almost forgotten Paul. The only report they had recently heard was that this one who had once persecuted the church was now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy. This would of course include the doctrine of justification by faith apart from circumcision or works. And in the face of this report the Judean believers praised God because of Paul. This was a telling blow to the false teachers. The Jewish Christians in Judea rejoiced in the same gospel the Judaizers were trying to undermine.

LESSON 3

Galatians 2

While chapter 2 continues Paul's defense of his apostolic authority and the gospel he preached, he focused not on the source of his message but on its content. Further, whereas in chapter 1 he emphasized his independence from the other apostles, he now demonstrated that there was a basic unity between himself and them.

Much debate has centered on the question of the identification of this trip which Paul took to Jerusalem with Barnabas, a Jewish believer, and Titus, a Gentile believer.

The Book of Acts mentions five Jerusalem visits made by Paul after his conversion:

- (1) the visit after he left Damascus (Acts 9:26-30; Gal. 1:18-20);
- (2) the famine visit (Acts 11:27-30);
- (3) the visit to attend the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-30);
- (4) the visit at the end of the second missionary journey (Acts 18:22);
- (5) the final visit which resulted in Paul's Caesarean imprisonment (Acts 21:15-23:35).

Scholars are divided primarily over whether Galatians 2:1 refers to the famine visit or to the Jerusalem Council visit.

The preponderance of evidence suggests it was the famine visit, in response to a revelation. That is, he went because God directed him to, not because the Jerusalem leaders had summoned him or called him "on the carpet" for preaching to the Gentiles. The reference may well be to Agabus' prophecy of a famine which prompted Paul and Barnabas to go to Jerusalem on a relief mission.

Acts 11:27-30 _____

Paul seized this opportunity to consult with the other apostles privately concerning the message he was preaching to the Gentiles. This does not mean Paul sought their approval of its truth and accuracy, for he had received the

gospel from God by revelation. Rather, he wanted them to consider its relationship to the gospel they were proclaiming. But if the Jerusalem leaders insisted on circumcision and other requirements of the Law for Gentile converts, Paul's labor (running) among the Gentiles was in vain. It was not that the apostle had any doubts or misgivings about the gospel he had preached for 14 years, but that he feared that his past and present ministry might be hindered or rendered of no effect by the Jud

If Galatians dates to the famine visit, we might understand why Paul brought Titus along on this Jerusalem trip. He was a test case. Would the Jerusalem apostles force the rite of circumcision on a Gentile believer? Paul knew that both Jews and Gentiles are accepted by God through faith in Jesus Christ without any distinction and that the church should do the same. The apostle declared that this truth was affirmed in Jerusalem because Titus was not compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. But this victory did not come easily.

Pressure to have Titus circumcised was brought to bear by certain false brothers whose chief slogan is found in Acts 15:1: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." These "false brothers" were like spies or penetrated to search out weak areas of enemy positions. In this case they, "sneaked in alongside, intruded without invitation into the apostles' private conference.

Romans 5:20 _____

Their goals were twofold:

1. To spy out what the church was doing
2. To promote their agenda of legalism

Specifically they strongly insisted that Titus be circumcised. But Paul stood absolutely firm because the truth of the gospel was at stake for the Galatians, and the entire Christian church. To impose circumcision on Titus would be to deny that salvation was by faith alone and to affirm that in addition to faith there must be obedience to the Law for acceptance before God. Thus the basic issue of the gospel was involved and Paul would not deviate or yield for a moment.

Having completed his discussion of Titus, Paul resumed the narrative relating to his conference with the apostles in Jerusalem and declared that they added nothing to his message. They did not correct or modify Paul's message but recognized its divine source and affirmed its truth and completeness. But why did the apostle speak in what appears to be a derogatory manner about some of the

In view of the fact that Paul's purpose in this passage was to emphasize his unity with the apostles, it seems best to explain these allusions as stemming from the fact that the Judaizers, in order to disparage Paul, had made much of the Jerusalem leaders. While there may be irony in Paul's expressions, he declared that he was not awed by the past or present stations of James, Peter, and John. Indeed they endorsed Paul's message and received him as an equal.

The point is that the gospel was preached to two distinct groups of people. The reason the apostles concluded that Paul's commission was equal to Peter's was the fact that God gave success to both as they preached. This was sealed by James, Peter, and John in their extending to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. This was a sign of agreement and trust and an indication to all present that they endorsed the division of labor whereby the Jerusalem apostles were appointed to evangelize the Jews and Paul was entrusted to carry the gospel to the Gentiles.

The only request from the leaders in Jerusalem was that Paul remember the poor which he affirmed he was eager to do. If we are considering the famine trip, it had been concern for the poor which brought Paul to Jerusalem in order to bring them financial relief.

Acts 11:29-30 _____

In this historical incident, Paul related how he found it necessary to oppose even Peter, the reputed chief of the apostles, for conduct which threatened to compromise the gospel. The contrast with the previous section is dramatic.

When Paul visited Jerusalem, Peter (and others) gave him "the right hand of fellowship"; but when Peter visited Antioch, Paul opposed him to his face. The time of Peter's trip to Antioch is not known. There is no reference to it in the Book of Acts, but perhaps the visit occurred soon after Paul, Barnabas, and Titus returned to Antioch from Jerusalem. At any rate Peter's conduct in Antioch produced a tense face-to-face confrontation between two Christian leaders. Paul felt compelled to rebuke and condemn Peter for his actions, thus defending the gospel and demonstrating again his own independence and equality as an apostle.

On arrival at Antioch, Peter found Jewish and Gentile Christians fellowshiping together at mealtimes without regard to Jewish dietary laws. Because of the vision Peter had received at the house of Simon the tanner, he felt free to eat with the Gentiles, and did so on a regular basis. While it lasted, this was a beautiful demonstration of the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ.

But a breach occurred when some arrived from Jerusalem who were shocked at Peter's conduct. These emissaries came from James and belonged to the circumcision party, but it is doubtful that they had James' endorsement. Nonetheless Peter was influenced by their presence and slowly but surely began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles. The verb tenses indicate a gradual withdrawal, perhaps from one joint meal a day, and then two; or it may be that he began a meal with Gentiles but finished it with only Jewish Christians. By such actions Peter in effect was teaching that there were two bodies of Christ, Jewish and Gentile. And that was heresy. But why did Peter create this breach? Not because of any change in theology, but simply out of fear. Once, after preaching to Gentile Cornelius, Peter courageously defended himself before the Jerusalem leaders; but this time he capitulated to some Jewish men.

The defection of Peter brought the defection of the other Jews and finally even Barnabas. The pressure must have been great for Barnabas to succumb because he was from Cyprus, a Gentile center, and was involved in a missionary program with Paul to reach Gentiles with the gospel. All of them—Peter, the other Jewish Christians, and Barnabas—were guilty of hypocrisy because while confessing and teaching that they were one in Christ with Gentiles, they were denying this truth by their conduct.

The response of Paul was electric. What Peter had initiated created a public scandal and therefore deserved a public rebuke. Further, the defectors were not acting according to the truth of the gospel, that is, they were denying by their actions the truth that on the basis of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection Jews and Gentiles who believe are accepted equally by God. Peter's response is not recorded. He stood condemned. He was acting contrary to his own convictions, was betraying Christian liberty, and was casting a slur on fellow believers. Such behavior needed this severe reprimand. The remaining verses of the chapter develop, then, the inconsistency between Peter's behavior and his beliefs. At the same time they form a superb transition and introduction to chapters 3 and 4 in which Paul defended the key doctrine of justification by faith.

Paul's argument was addressed to those who were Jews by birth, including Peter and himself, who in spite of their superior advantages were saved by faith.

In Galatians 2:16, the word *justified* occurs for the first time. It is a legal term, borrowed from the law courts and means "to declare righteous." Its opposite is

"to condemn." But since people are condemned sinners and God is holy, how can people be justified? In answer, the apostle made a general declaration that negatively man is not justified by observing the Law, but positively, justification is by faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul's opponents argued, however, that since justification by faith eliminated the Law, it encouraged sinful living. A person could believe in Christ for salvation and then do as he pleased, having no need to do good works. Paul hotly denied the charge, especially noting that this made Christ the promoter of sin. On the contrary, if a believer would return to the Law after trusting Christ alone for salvation, that Law would only demonstrate that he was a sinner, a lawbreaker. Paul likely had in mind Peter, who by his act of withdrawing from Gentile fellowship was returning to the Law.

Paul then distinguished himself from Peter, contrasting what he did with the Law with what Peter did with the Law. Paul described the transformation in a person who has come to God by faith in Christ in terms of a death and a resurrection. The Law demanded death for those who broke it, but Christ paid that death penalty for all sinners. Thus the Law killed Him and those joined to Him by faith, freeing them to be joined to another, to live for God.

Compare with Paul's position in Romans 7:4 _____

Paul's point is that the self-righteous, self-centered Paul died. Further, death with Christ ended Paul's enthronement of self; he yielded the throne of his life to Christ. But it was not in his own strength that Paul was able to live the Christian life; the living Christ Himself took up His abode in Paul's heart: Christ lives in me. Yet Christ does not operate automatically in a believer's life; it is a matter of living the new life by faith in the Son of God. It is then faith and not works or legal obedience that releases divine power to live a Christian life. This faith, stated Paul, builds on the sacrifice of Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us. In essence Paul affirmed, "If He loved me enough to give Himself for me, then He loves me enough to live out His life in me."

Summing up his case against Peter, Paul declared that he did not set aside the grace of God. The clear implication is that Peter and the others who followed him were setting aside God's grace. The essence of grace is for God to give people what they have not worked for. To insist on justification or sanctification by works is to nullify the grace of God. Further, such insistence on legal obedience also means Christ died for nothing. If righteousness comes by keeping the Law, the cross was a futile gesture.

LESSON FOUR

Galatians 3

In the first two chapters of the epistle Paul established the divine origin of his apostleship and his message. Then he turned to the Galatians who were being urged to add works to faith, to keep the Mosaic Law in addition to placing faith in Christ as the grounds of acceptance before God. The Galatian Christians would receive, the Judaizers thought, a more complete salvation and a greater sanctification if they would obey the Law. But, Paul argued, to supplement the work of Christ is to supplant it. There can only be one way of salvation, and that is by faith in Christ alone.

The Judaizers claimed to have the Old Testament on their side, especially looking to Moses as their teacher. But Paul went centuries farther back and said, Consider Abraham. How was he, the father of Jewish people, justified? The answer was simple and direct.

Genesis 15:6 _____

Paul linked the past with the present and declared that just as Abraham was saved by faith so were those who now claimed to be his children. Paul concluded this phase of his argument by stating that though provision was made for "all nations", only those who have faith receive the blessing of justification. Thus Paul drew a distinction between God's provision and human appropriation.

Having established the fact that justification is by faith from the experiences of the Galatians and of Abraham, Paul then showed the illogic of reliance on the Law.

Contrary to what the Judaizers taught, the Law could not justify; it could only condemn.

Deuteronomy 27:26 _____

The idea that a person can gain God's acceptance by human effort is therefore totally destroyed. Quoting the Old Testament again, Paul showed that even during the dispensation of Law, legal obedience was not the basis for a justified standing before God.

Habakkuk 2:4 _____

Even if Paul's opponents admitted that Abraham was justified by faith, those Judaizers might have argued that the Law, coming at a later time, entirely changed the basis for achieving salvation. To refute this, Paul declared that just as a properly executed Roman covenant (or will) cannot arbitrarily be set aside or changed. Further, the promises spoken to Abraham and to his seed were not fulfilled before the giving of the Law. Rather, they found fulfillment in Christ and are in effect forever.

What, then, was the purpose of the Law? Paul answered by declaring the purpose and character of the Law. First, it was given because of transgressions, that is, the Law was given to be a means for checking sins. It served as a restrainer of sins by showing them to be transgressions of God's Law which would incur His wrath.

1 Timothy 1:8-11 _____

Second, the Law was temporary and served until the Seed came, after which it was no longer needed. Third, the Law was inferior because of the manner of its bestowal. While God made promises to Abraham directly, the Law was established by a mediator.

A mediator implies a covenant between two parties both of whom have responsibilities, facts true of the Mosaic Covenant. On the other hand God is One, that is, the "promise" was unilateral and was given to man directly without a mediator, God alone having responsibility for fulfilling it.

Theoretically salvation could have come by the Law if people had been capable of keeping it perfectly, but they could not

Romans 8:3-4 _____

But if the Law is not opposed to the promises, if there is no conflict between them, how can their harmony be demonstrated? By recognizing that while the Law revealed sin and pointed to the need for a savior.

Paul's vindication of the doctrine of justification by faith reached a climax in this section as he contrasted the position of a justified sinner with what he had been under the Law.

LESSON FIVE

Galatians 4

To illustrate the spiritual immaturity of those who lived under the Mosaic Law, Paul reminded the Galatian believers of certain characteristics of an heir as a minor child (*nēpios*, in contrast with *huios*, "son." Though by birthright he owned the whole estate, nevertheless he was kept in subservience like a slave in that he enjoyed no freedom and could make no decisions. In fact the heir as a child was under guardians watched over his person, and trustees who protected his estate. This was true until he came of age as a son, an age that varied in the Jewish, Grecian, and Roman societies. Under Roman law the age of maturity for a child was set by his father and involved a ceremonial donning of the *toga virilis* and his formal acknowledgement as son and heir.

Though often interpreted as a reference to the Mosaic Law, this view does not fit the Galatians, most of whom were Gentile pagans before conversion and were never under the Law. It seems better to understand the "basic principles" to refer to the elementary stages of religious experience, whether of Jews under the Law or Gentiles in bondage to heathen religions.

Colossians 2:20 _____

As a human father chose the time for his child to become an adult son, so the heavenly Father chose the time for the coming of Christ to make provision for people's transition from bondage under Law to spiritual sonship. This "time" was when the Roman civilization had brought peace and a road system which facilitated travel; when the Grecian civilization provided a language which was adopted by the empire; when the Jews had proclaimed monotheism and the messianic hope in the synagogues of the Mediterranean world. It was then that God sent His Son, the preexistent One, out of heaven and to earth on a mission. The "Son" was not only Deity; He was also humanity as the expression born of a woman indicates.

The reasons "God sent His Son" are twofold:

First, He came to redeem those under Law. This is not a redemption from the curse of the Law (as in 3:13), but from a slavery to the entire Mosaic system. The emphasis is not on the penalty of the Law as in 3:13, but on its bondage. v). All the enjoyments and privileges of a mature son in a family belong to those who have entered into the benefits of Christ's redemptive work.

He also sent the Spirit. Thus the full Trinity is involved in the work of salvation. The Holy Spirit is a gift of God to every believer because of sonship. No sons or daughters lack the Spirit. Further, He is present within each believer's heart to give evidence of that one's position in God's family.

Romans 8:15 _____

Mark 14:36 _____

Paul declared that the Galatians were no longer slaves, but were sons and heirs. In God's family, sonship carries with it heirship .

Romans 8:17 _____

Paul now turned to a personal appeal for the Galatians not to return to a slavery similar to their former bondage in paganism.

Prior to conversion the Galatians, in their ignorance of the one true God, were in bondage to false gods such as Zeus and Hermes.

Acts 14:11-13 _____

But a change happened when they came to know God (salvation from the perspective of man), or to be known by God (salvation from God's perspective).

Under the influence of the Judaizers the Galatians had begun to observe the Mosaic calendar. They kept special days (weekly sabbaths), and months (new moons), and seasons (seasonal festivals such as Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles), and years (sabbatical and jubilee years). But they observed these special times, thinking that they would thereby gain additional merit before God.

Paul challenged the Galatians, "Become free from the Law as I am, for after my conversion I became like the Gentiles, no longer living under the Law." The irony, however, was that the Galatian Gentiles were putting themselves under the Law *after* their conversions.

Before, the Galatians had received Paul with joy, but that had all changed. They no longer contemplated his presence among them with "joy." Rather, they now acted as though he had become their enemy, for the simple reason that he had been telling them the truth. They were turning against the Lord, and the messenger who brought them the news of justification by faith.

The Judaizers were using flattery to win over the Galatians. Acknowledging that it was good for anyone to be sought after, Paul nonetheless insisted that the intention must be honorable, but in the case of the Judaizers it was not.

The apostle, on the other hand, had always had good motives regarding the Galatians. He desired for Christ to live in their lives. So he challenged them to understand what the Law really said.

Paul reminded his readers that Abraham had two sons (those born later are not important to his illustration), and that they should consider which of the two they were most like. One son, Isaac, was born of Sarah, the free woman; the other, Ishmael, was born of Hagar, the slave woman. According to ancient law and custom the status of a mother affected the status of her son.

A second contrast concerned the manner in which the sons were conceived. Ishmael was born in the ordinary way, that is, in the course of nature and requiring no miracle and no promise of God. Isaac, on the other hand, was born as the result of a promise. Abraham and Sarah were beyond the age of childbearing, but God miraculously fulfilled His promise in bringing life out of the deadness of Sarah's womb.

Now Paul points out two covenants. One, the Mosaic, had its origin at Mount Sinai. Those under this legal covenant were slaves. As Hagar brought forth a slave, so does the Law. They must understand the implicit reference to the Abrahamic Covenant, a gracious system represented by Sarah which through its messianic promise brought forth children who are free.

Next, Paul pointed to two Jerusalems. Hagar also stood for the first-century city of Jerusalem, a city enslaved to Rome and in slavery to the Law. Sarah, on the other hand, corresponded to the Jerusalem above, the mother of all the children of grace. Applying the truth from the biblical illustration, Paul made three comparisons.

First, Paul compared the birth of Isaac to that of Christians.

Second, the apostle compared Ishmael's persecution of Isaac to the false teachers' opposition to believers.

Third, Paul compared the action of Abraham to the obligation of the Galatians.

When Sarah observed Ishmael mocking Isaac, she asked Abraham to expel the slave woman and her son lest Ishmael become a joint heir with Isaac. And God granted Sarah's request. This reminded the readers that Law observance brought no inheritance in the family of God, and it also charged them to excommunicate the Judaizers and those who accepted their false doctrines. A fundamental incompatibility remains between Law and grace, between a religion based on works and a religion based on faith.

In conclusion, Paul affirmed that he and the Galatian believers were not children of the slave woman who was driven away and was denied a share in the inheritance. Rather all believers are children of the free woman, "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

LESSON SIX

Galatians 5

Having defended both his authority as an apostle and the doctrine of justification by faith, Paul turned to defend the life of Christian freedom.

A common theme in Paul's writings is the potential of becoming entangled in the Law. Read the following for other examples:

1 Corinthians 16:13 _____

Philippians 1:27 and 4:1 _____

1 Thessalonians 3:8 _____

2 Thessalonians 2:15 _____

But Paul was strongly opposed to the Judaistic theology which insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation. Anyone who was circumcised for that reason added works to faith and demonstrated that he had not exercised saving faith in Christ.

Its converts may have been few, but the believers must be on guard lest the error affect the entire church. Paul's point may also have been that one apparently small deviation from the truth could destroy the entire system. If circumcision, for example, were made necessary for salvation, the whole grace system would fall.

Speaking out of deep concern for the gospel of the grace of God, Paul an incredibly strong expression. He wished that the Judaizers, who were so enthusiastic about circumcision, would go the whole way and castrate themselves, as did the pagan priests of the cult of Cybele in Asia Minor. Maybe it was to imply an impotence rendering them unable to produce new converts.

Paul commended another form of slavery that was beneficial—a slavery of mutual love.

Leviticus 19:18 _____

Matthew 22:39 _____

Luke 10:25-28 _____

But Paul also wanted to show that Christian love is the "fulfillment" or "the carrying out" of the Law. The apostle developed this point in Romans 13:8-10:

As a believer walks through life he should depend on the indwelling Holy Spirit or guidance and power. But the Spirit does not operate automatically in a believer's heart. He waits to be depended on. When a Christian yields to the Spirit's control, the promise is that he **will not** (the double negative *ou mē* is emphatic) **gratify** (*telesēte*, "complete, fulfill" in outward action) the desires of the sinful nature. Thus, while no believer will ever be entirely free in this life from the evil desires that stem from his fallen human nature, he need not capitulate to them, but may experience victory by the Spirit's help.

Paul next explained the need for a life that is controlled and energized by the Spirit. The unredeemed body and its lusts are in conflict with the life desired by God. In summary, Paul emphasized that a godly life is not lived under the rules of the Law but is a life led by the Spirit. It was important for the Galatians to know that just as justification is not possible by works so sanctification cannot be achieved by human effort.

The sins of the flesh are obvious, meaning either that they are public and cannot be hidden, or that they originate with the sinful body and not with the new nature indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The listed sins are commonly seen to fall into four categories.

First, three sexual sins are mentioned.

1. Sexual immorality (*porneia*) is often translated "fornication." From this word comes the term "pornography." *Porneia* refers to any and all forms of illicit sexual relationships.
2. Impurity (*akatharsia*) is a broad term referring to moral uncleanness in thought, word, and deed Ephesians 5:3-4_____

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3. Sensuality (*aselgeia*) connotes an open, shameless, brazen display of these evils

2 Corinthians 12:21 _____

Romans 13:13 _____

Following the sexual sins, Paul cited two religious sins.

1. Idolatry involved the worship of pagan gods by bowing to idols, and because of its mention just after the listing of sexual sins it probably includes the male and female prostitution so often a part of heathen religion.
2. Sorcery is the translation of the Greek word *pharmakeia* from which the term "pharmacy" comes. In ancient times the worship of evil powers was accompanied by the use of drugs to create trances.

Revelation 9:21 and 18:23 _____

Eight societal evils are then listed:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Two sins associated with alcohol fall in a fourth category of evils. Drunkenness (*methai*) refers to excessive use of strong drink by individuals, and orgies

(*kōmoi*) probably refers to the drunken carousings commonly associated with such things as the worship of Bacchus, the god of wine. Finally, to show that this long list was only representative and not exhaustive, Paul added the words and the like.

The apostle then solemnly warned the Galatians, as he had done when he was in their midst, that those who live like this, who habitually indulge in these fleshly sins, will not inherit the future kingdom of God. This does not say that a Christian loses his salvation if he lapses into a sin of the flesh, but that a person who lives continually on such a level of moral corruption gives evidence of not being a child of God.

LESSON SEVEN
Galatians 6

Dealing with a hypothetical case of a Christian who is caught by a sin, Paul pictures someone running from sin but sin, being faster, overtakes and catches him. Two passages show how the Judaizers responded to such thoughts:

John 8:3-5 _____

Acts 21:27-29 _____

But a Christian should restore such a one.

Do a word study on the word "restore" in 6:1 _____

The restoration process is not something that new believers are equipped to handle; it is done by those who are spiritual, that is, believers who walk by the Spirit, and who are mature in the faith. It must be done gently with the recognition that no one is immune from falling into sin. Read the following verses and record your thoughts here:

Galatians 5:16 _____

2 Corinthians 2:15 _____

Hebrews 5:13-14 _____

1 Corinthians 10:12 _____

A serving Christian lends a helping hand with heavy loads. Although the principle would apply to all burdens, the context has special reference to the heavy and oppressive weight of temptation and spiritual failure. While the "spiritual" do the work of restoring, all believers are to become involved by prayer and encouragement. This, wrote Paul, will fulfill the law of Christ, that is, the principle of love.

John 13:34 _____

Paul indicates that something must be laid aside if a believer is to be a burden-bearer and that is an attitude that breeds intolerance of error in others and causes us to think that we are above failure. For this reason, we are to examine our own actions.

Do a word study on "examine" from Galatians 6:4 _____

1 Peter 1:7 _____

This means that rather than comparing ourselves with others, we should step back and take an objective look at ourselves and our accomplishments. Then we can take pride in himself over what God has done in and through our life.

Romans 12:3 _____

The Greek word *kauchēma*, rendered "boasting," means personal exultation, not sinful pride.

The Christian does in fact test himself by carrying his own load. This does not contradict verse 2 because the reference there is to heavy, crushing, loads that would be more than a man could carry without help. In this verse a different Greek word *phortion* is used to designate the pack usually carried by a marching soldier. It is the "burden" Jesus assigns to His followers. There are certain Christian responsibilities or burdens each believer must bear which cannot be shared with others. Jesus assured us that such burdens were light.

Matthew 11:30 _____

One responsibility of each believer is to shoulder the financial support of the pastor-teachers in the church. Perhaps the Judaizers had influenced some of the believers to slack off in their support of the teachers, a special group who were giving their full time to this ministry and who were reimbursed for their labors

1 Corinthians 9:7-14 _____

The concept of voluntary giving to provide for the Lord's servants was revolutionary since Jews were taxed for the support of their priests and Gentiles paid fees, made vows, etc., to sustain their religions. The admonition is clear that as a teacher shares the good things of the Word of God, a believer is to reciprocate by sharing all good things with his instructor.

Paul uses a solemn warning that God cannot be mocked. No man can snub God whose rule that a man reaps what he sows is immutable. Each sower decides what his harvest will be. If a person sows to please his sinful nature, that is, if he spends his money to indulge the flesh, he will reap a harvest that will fade into oblivion. On the other hand, if he uses his funds to support the Lord's work, or sows to please the Spirit, and promotes his own spiritual growth, he will reap a harvest that will last forever. Though a broader application of the principle is legitimate it seems clear that Paul was dealing primarily with the question of financial support of Christian workers in the Galatian churches.

Christians may become discouraged with spiritual sowing because the harvest is often long in coming. In the face of this reality the apostle charged the Galatians not to become weary or give up because the harvest is sure. Paul, no doubt, had contemplated his sometimes frustrating labors on behalf of the Galatian Christians. The reaping will come at God's proper time, which may be only in part in this life and in full in the life to come at the judgment seat of Christ.

Christians have a measure of responsibility to all people to do good, when the occasions arise. When Jesus fed the 5,000, both saved and unsaved participated. So the benevolence of Christians should not be restricted, except that believers are to have the priority. As in a home, family needs are met first, then those of the neighbors.

This passage then speaks clearly about Christian social responsibility, but it should be noted that it is addressed to individual believers. The church is not primarily an agency for social work, though individual Christians are charged to minister in this way as they are able and have opportunity.

Romans 12:17-21 _____

As Paul brought the Galatian letter to a close, he again emphasized some of the great issues discussed throughout the epistle. The conclusion contains both a summary and final statement of the issues the apostle felt so strongly about.

At this point Paul took the pen from his scribe and wrote the rest of the letter himself, a practice he often followed.

1 Corinthians 16:21 _____

Colossians 4:18 _____

2 Thessalonians 3:17 _____

The large letters he used probably did not refer to the length of the epistle as some have suggested but to the size of the letters he inscribed. It may be that Paul wrote the conclusion in large letters. He may have done so because he was afflicted with weak eyesight; it is more likely, given the tone of the letter, that the apostle sought in this way to give a final emphatic thrust to his message.