

# OpenTheo

## Galatians (Overview) - Part 2



### **Bible Book Overviews** - Steve Gregg

This overview of Galatians by Steve Gregg covers the remaining four chapters and delves into the essence of righteousness and faith in the Christian faith. Gregg explores the significance of the law and how it relates to the promise given to Abraham's seed. He also discusses the contrast between trying to be righteous by the law versus having faith in Christ. Additionally, Gregg addresses the concept of walking in the spirit and highlights the importance of bearing one another's burdens in the Christian community.

### **Transcript**

Okay, we're going to dash through the remaining four chapters of Galatians. Those of you who know me laugh because they know how fast I don't dash, but I'll do my best. And I really am going to cover this in a short time.

So Paul has given this, you know, after his opening remarks, something about his background. And of course, everyone, when they tell us their background, they have to edit it to bring in the things that are important to the point they want to make. And the point he wants to make is that he was appointed as an apostle directly by Christ, not by the other apostles.

He got his gospel directly by revelation from Christ, not handed down from the other apostles. He is not a second-hand apostle. He's a first-hand apostle.

And so he tells the story in such a way as to show how little he had even opportunity to be influenced by the apostles. He got saved, and it wasn't until three years later he first met them. And that was only two of them, and that was only for two weeks.

Then it was another 14 years before he crossed their paths again, and they didn't add anything to his doctrine, or they only affirmed him. And then, of course, there was another time later he doesn't come to because it hadn't happened when he wrote this, and that was the Jerusalem Council, would be the third time. And because it had not yet happened, he doesn't mention it.

Now he goes into his theology. O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you

should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? Now that they were bewitched is interesting because it suggests some translation of who has cast a spell on you. It indicates they've come under almost a demonic spiritual blindness.

And legalism is what they've come under. I believe Paul did view legalism as a spirit, a bad spirit. In Romans chapter 8, Paul says, For God has not given us a spirit of bondage again to fear, but a spirit of sonship, whereby we call Abba Father.

So there's a spirit of bondage to fear, bondage to the law he's talking about. And so he says, You guys have been bewitched here. You guys have been, it's like someone's put a spell on you, you're not seeing things clearly.

He says, This only I want to learn from you. Did you receive the spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? It's rhetorical. Obviously, they received the spirit by hearing the gospel with faith, not by keeping the law because they didn't keep the law.

They were Gentiles, they never did keep the law. They weren't circumcised, they didn't keep Sabbath, they weren't law keepers. So clearly, he's saying, You received the spirit, which is the mark of your true salvation and regeneration without keeping the law.

That should tell you something. He says, Are you so foolish having begun in the spirit? Are you now being made perfect in the flesh? Having suffered so many things, have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain? Like you've suffered a great deal for your Christian faith, are you going back now? Just throwing all that away? Therefore, he who supplies the spirit to you and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Same question as he asked before, similar question anyway. And the point is that these things have been happening to you, but you haven't been circumcised, you haven't kept the law.

So obviously, he's not, God's not doing this because you're keeping the law, you're not. It's because of faith. That means faith is what saves you, not keeping law.

Just as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. This is one of Paul's favorite verses from the Old Testament, Genesis 15, 6. Because as Abraham believed God, that's faith, he had faith in God and that was counted him for righteousness. That is, he was counted righteous because of that, not because of keeping the law of Moses.

Abraham did not keep the law of Moses because Moses was a distant descendant of Abraham. Moses didn't live, the law didn't exist at the time of Abraham. But he was justified just like the Galatians were, entirely apart from the law.

Now Paul quotes this also in Romans 4. And then Paul makes another point in Romans 4 that he doesn't make here, and that is that this accounting Abraham righteousness by

faith, that happened before he was circumcised. He was later circumcised, and Paul goes on to say that in Romans 4, when God finally did tell him to be circumcised, that didn't contribute to him being righteous. He was declared righteous by faith in chapter 15.

He wasn't circumcised until chapter 17 of Genesis. So he was counted righteous without being circumcised. Being circumcised was a later requirement put on him for special reasons, so it's not put on the Galatians.

But the idea is you were justified by faith, so was Abraham, without circumcision, without the law. Therefore know that only those who are of faith are the sons of Abraham. Now that's quite a restrictive thing, because most Jewish people who are physically descended from Abraham are not of faith.

They don't believe in Christ. So he's saying, Jews who don't believe in Christ, they don't even qualify as children of Abraham, because they don't have the faith of Abraham. Jesus said that to the Jews also in John chapter 8. He said, I know you have Abraham for your ancestor, but if you were really the children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham, and you're not doing those.

You would love me, because God, you know, if you were children of God, you'd love me. And you're not the children of Abraham. Now they were.

He said they were descended from Abraham. In that sense they were, but in the sense that God counts. The true children of Abraham are the ones who are like Abraham, not the ones who have his DNA in their cells.

It's not a biological connection that makes someone the son of Abraham, but a spiritual connection of faith like Abraham had. Therefore, he says, only those who are of the faith are the sons of Abraham. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the nations, that is the Gentiles by faith, preach the gospel to Abraham beforehand saying, in you all nations shall be blessed.

Now, the verse Paul quotes here is Genesis 12, 3, which is recorded in Genesis 18, 18 and Genesis 22, 18. The idea is that in Abraham and his seed, which is Christ, he'll say all the nations will be blessed, the Gentiles. So God, even in the time of Abraham, before anyone was circumcised, even before there were Jews, even before there was a law, before there was Moses, God promised that the Gentiles would be blessed.

And Paul's going to go and say that blessing is salvation in Christ. He says, so then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. Those who are of faith includes the Gentile Galatians.

They're not Jews, but they are blessed with the blessing of Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. Meaning if the works of the law is how you define yourself, that is how the Jews did by being circumcised, keeping the dietary laws.

If that's your thing, if that's who you are, then you're under a curse. For it is written, he quotes in Deuteronomy 27, cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Obviously, nobody, including the Jews, have continued in everything the law said.

Everyone has sinned. All the Jews have sinned as well as Gentiles. They have better laws, but they didn't keep them.

And so Paul says, if you're under the law, there's a curse in the law that says if you don't continue in everything the law says, you're cursed. So if you're under the law, you're cursed. That's not the way.

You want to be blessed with Abraham. Those who have faith are blessed with Abraham, but if you have, if you're under the law, you're cursed by that, not blessed. There's no blessing of Abraham in keeping the law.

It's a curse. He says, but that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident. For the just shall live by faith.

Another one of Paul's favorite verses, which is Habakkuk 2.4. That one and Genesis 15.6 are the two main Old Testament verses that he uses to teach justification by faith. The just person will be just because of his faith, Habakkuk said. Yet the law is not of faith.

In other words, trying to be righteous by law is not the same thing as trying to be righteous by faith. Abraham was righteous by faith, but he had no law. So it's a different thing.

It's a different system. The law is not faith, but the man who does them shall live by them. Here again, he's quoting Leviticus 18.5. That is, the law says a man will live by the law only if he does it, but no one does it.

No one obeys it well enough, so no one can live by it. He says, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. For it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.

Now this statement, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree, is from Deuteronomy 21.23. And it's a strange argument, but it's a strange law. I think Paul recognized that was a strange law and it must be there for some reason. It's just in the kind of in the middle of the law, in the discussion of rules that God's giving, just out of nowhere God says, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.

Well, what in the world? It doesn't say don't hang people on trees. It doesn't say don't get hanged on a tree, since you don't usually have a choice about that. What is this law? Is it forbidding hanging on trees? No.

It's just saying if someone's hanging on a tree, they're cursed. Okay, well I guess you would have probably concluded that. Anyway, if you saw someone hanging on a tree, boy, he's cursed.

But Paul says that law is kind of hanging out there in the law so that Jesus could take on the curse of the law by being hanged on the tree. He could not take on the curse of the law by disobeying the law, because then he'd be a sinner too. And a sinner can't die for the sins of other people, he has to die for his own sins.

Jesus had to be sinless to die for us, but somehow he had to take on the curse of the law. And Paul has just said in verse 10, the law says cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written. Well, well then for Christ to take on that curse, he'd have to become a sinner and not continue the law.

No, there's a loophole here. The law also says a person who hangs on a tree can be considered cursed under the law. And Jesus was that.

Now, Jesus could be hanging on a tree without breaking any laws. Nobody's at fault for being hung on the tree by somebody else. They're the victim, not the perpetrator.

But because of that strange law, Paul says, now we can see Jesus took the curse of the law on himself by being hanged on a tree. And the curse of the law is what we needed to be redeemed from. By hanging on the tree, he redeemed us from the curse that we were under by our disobedience of the law.

So that, verse 14, the blessing of Abraham, which he's already said is righteousness by faith, being just by faith, that's the blessing of Abraham. He's already said in verse 9, those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. So that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.

Now, the promise of the spirit, the promise of justification by faith, these are the things that he considers to be the blessing that God said in Abraham, all the nations will be blessed, all the Gentiles. The Gentiles received the blessing of Abraham through faith and received the spirit through faith because they were all redeemed from the curse under the law by Jesus, taking that curse on himself by hanging on a tree. Verse 15, brethren, I speak in the manner of men, though it's only a man's covenant, that's just covenants in general.

You make a statement about covenants. Generally speaking, a covenant in this context is referring to possibly a will, but, or some other kind of, you know, national non-aggressions, mutual non-aggressions pact, another kind of covenant they had. But even if it's a man-made covenant, not a divine one, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.

Once you've confirmed a covenant, you can't change it. By the way, marriage is a covenant too. Once you've entered into a marriage of covenant, you can't annul it.

You can't change it. You've made your vows. You live by your word.

Any covenant is like a man's covenant. He's saying you don't change it after it's been confirmed. Now, to Abraham and his seed, the promises were made.

He does not say, and to seeds, as of many, but as one, and to your seed, who is Christ. Now, this is a radical thing for Paul to say. He's pointing out that the Jews think that they are the people of God because they are the seed, plural, of Abraham.

The word seed can be singular or plural in the Hebrew, the Greek, and English. So it's ambiguous. When promises were made to Abraham and his seed, the Jews assume that meant the many seeds, the many offspring, the Jews, the seed of Abraham.

Paul says, well, actually, the promise wasn't really for the many seeds. It was to the singular seed. Jesus was the seed of Abraham, and that's the seed that the promises are made to, not to the whole Jewish race, but to the particular seed, which is Christ.

And this, I say that the law, which was 430 years later, that is, 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it's no longer a promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Now, this is very confusing, of course, but what he's saying is God made a covenant to This covenant was that there'd be blessing to him and his seed for all nations.

That is Christ, Christ his seed. Through Christ, all the nations be blessed, as is the case when the nations are evangelized by the gospel. They come into the blessing of Abraham being justified by faith and receive the spirit by faith, Paul says.

That's the blessing of Abraham coming on the nations, all the nations. And this blessing is in the seed of Abraham, which God said it'll be through your Now that was Christ. He says, now that promise was made 430 years before the law came.

Therefore, the law can't annul it. The covenant is already established to Abraham and to his seed. So the coming of the law doesn't throw out justification by faith.

The law came later, and it was indeed a sort of ancillary covenant that these Jewish people had to keep, but not all the nations. The promise to the nations was justification by faith in Christ, like Abraham had when God made another covenant with the Jews that they keep this law for, you know, 1400 years. It's a temporary covenant.

That doesn't change the fact that God had already said the nations will be justified by faith in Christ. So he says the coming of a later covenant doesn't annul the first one. And

God gave this to Abraham by a promise.

So God has to keep it. Verse 19. What purpose then does the law serve? Now, if the coming of this covenant of the law didn't change anything about the promise, why did it come in at all? If it didn't change anything, what's the point of it? Why did God make this big deal about the law about Sinai? And for the next 1400 years require people to keep it? He says, well, that was it was important in a sense.

It was added because of transgressions until the seed, meaning Christ should come to whom the promise was made. And it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now, before Jesus came to fulfill basically the promise made Abraham and to bring the nations into righteousness through Christ, before that happened, the law was there to keep people in line.

It was added because of transgressions. People tended to transgress the law a great deal. So God put some teeth on it.

And and, you know, there's penalties for breaking the Mosaic law. And that had to be there to kind of civilize people until they could actually come into the promise itself. Now, he's going to go on and say, once the promise is going, you don't really need the law to civilize you because you have a new spirit in the law.

Laws can only make you behave outwardly. And punish you if you don't. They can't change who you are.

The spirit of God coming in, you can change who you are, your whole nature. You have it says in second Peter, one for that we have received the divine nature, we have partaken to the divine nature and the Holy Spirit comes in as he imparts the nature of Christ himself. So we live righteously without laws telling us to do so before people have that divine nature imparted to them.

They need laws to keep them from going berserk. You know, I mean, the Jews still went berserk when they're breaking the laws, but the laws somewhat civilized their society. And that's it was needed for that until Jesus would come.

Now, he says it was given to Israel and appointed through angels at the hand of a mediator. Moses is the mediator, the angels apparently mediated between God and Moses. This is not seen in the Old Testament.

There's no mention of the Old Testament of the angels mediating the law, but the Jews had a strong tradition that this was so. And three New Testament passages seem to confirm that tradition. In Stephen's sermon in Acts chapter seven, he rebukes the Sanhedrin, says you receive the law at the hands of angels and have not kept it.

Okay, so Stephen mentions the Jewish tradition that angels deliver the law of Moses in

Hebrews. It says that the law was given through angels in Hebrews chapter. I think it's Hebrews chapter two.

Yeah, Hebrews two to four. If the word spoken through angels, he's referring to the law proved steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward. So Hebrews two to mentions the law being given through angels.

Acts seven fifty three also does. And of course, Galatians three nineteen. It's a Jewish tradition, but but seems to be confirmed by Stephen, by Paul, by the right of Hebrews.

That's true. Now he's saying that the law as impressive as it was, was not given directly face to face between God and the people. It came through the mediator, Moses.

Moses saw God face to face, but even he had the mediation of angels. In other words, there is a certain distance God kept even in the first covenant with the Jews. He didn't just come in into the camp of Israel, show himself and say, hey, here's what I want you to do.

No, that had to be done through mediators. But what he says is here. Now, a mediator does not meditate, mediate for one only, but God is one.

Now, that is an incredibly hard statement to understand. But apparently in the course of Paul's argument, what he's saying is this. When there's a mediator, there's two different people involved.

And there was no such mediator, as it were. Between God and Abraham. The promise God made Abraham was direct face to face without a mediator.

Therefore, the covenant made with Abraham is more prestigious, has more of the divine direct stamp of God's immediate intervention rather than the law which was given through mediators. It's a strange wording. Paul's a little hard to understand there, like Peter says.

He says, is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not. For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the scripture has confined all under sin.

That is, the law has condemned us all because we break it. That the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to us, to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

Therefore, the law was our tutor. The King James says our schoolmaster. But the word in the Greek actually means a person who guards a child.

There was a, in a rich family, you'd have some, a servant in the family who'd guard the child all the time, keep them out of trouble. So the law was like that. We were kept under



guard by the law until faith came.

Therefore, the law was our guard to bring us to Christ, to conduct us to Jesus, that we might be justified by faith eventually. But after faith has come, we're no longer under the guard. The idea being that a child, once they grow up, don't need that household servant to protect them.

They're now adults. But when they're young and haven't reached their maturity, they need that. And we, when you come to Christ, we've, as it were, reached the maturity that the law was there to bring us to.

Now that we've reached that, the babysitter can go home. For you are all sons of God. And the word sons here is the Greek word for mature sons.

There are two words for son. One is an immature son and one's a mature son. Huyos is, I think the term he uses here, which is mature sons.

You're all mature sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek. There's neither slave nor free.

There's neither male or female. You're all one in Christ Jesus. And if you're Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

Now that statement means that the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are made to him as seed. And if you are Christ's, then you are that seed. And how can I be, how can we be his seed when Paul just said, it's not promised, not made to many seeds, but one seed Christ.

Well, he just said, we are all one seed. Jew, Gentile, male, female, we're all one in Christ. This is not to many seeds.

The blessing comes to us as collectively in Christ. Christ is the seed of Abraham to whom the promises were made. We are in Christ and therefore participants in the blessing and in the promises that belong to the seed of Abraham.

We are that seed because we are flesh and bones of Christ. We're parts of his body. We are collectively we are him.

And so it says in Ephesians, the last verse in Ephesians one, it says that Christ is become head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all the church is his body, which is the fullness of him. We are him on earth. We are his body.

We are his flesh and his bones, Paul says in first Corinthians 12. So, or actually Ephesians 5. So this is how Paul thinks. There's only one seed of Abraham Christ and we're it

collectively.

Male, female, Jew, Gentile, slavery, we're all one in Christ. If you were baptized, you were baptized into that one entity. You were as many as you were baptized into Christ have put on Christ, you know, like you put on your clothes, you're inside Christ.

You're encompassed by Christ. You're included in Christ. And therefore the promises to Abraham seed are ours.

Chapter four. Now I say that the heir, as long as he's a child does not differ at all from a slave, though he's the master of all the child of a wealthy home is going to inherit the whole thing. But when he's a child, he doesn't have control.

He's just like a slave. He has to obey like anyone else. He's not the Lord of the house yet, but he's under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

Even so, we, when we were children, I think he means the human race in general, we're in bondage under the elements of the world. And when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son born of a woman born under the law to redeem those who are under the law, that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying out of a father.

Therefore, you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Now he's talking about before Jesus came.

That's when a child is a child. He may be the heir. He may be destined someday to reign with God, but he's like a slave in his childhood until he's an adult.

The coming of Jesus was the coming of age. Of the people of God. Before that, Israel under the law, they were slaves.

They were like slaves. They were God's people, but they were no better than slaves. Paul says they had to be enslaved to the law.

They're in a bondage. But now that Christ has come, maturity has come. They're no longer a child under stewards and guardians.

They're now an adult who has come into the inheritance, he's saying. And you don't have to be under the guardian anymore. The law, which was the guardian, is no longer needed.

Verse eight, but then indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not God's. But now, after you have known God or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn away, turn again to the weak and beggarly elements to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I'm afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

Brethren, I urge you to become as I am, for I am as you are. You have not injured me at all. You know that because of a physical infirmity, I preached the gospel to you at the first.

Paul had a physical infirmity. He calls it the thorn in his flesh. In another passage, in 2 Corinthians 12, he said, because of physical infirmity, I preached to you at first.

We don't know exactly what the setting was that caused him to come to them initially through physical infirmity. It may be that his sickness directed his itinerary a different way than he was planning to go. He doesn't explain that.

And the trial which was in my flesh, you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given to me. Now you say this is how you receive me when I first came to you really receive me well, as if I was an angel, as if I was Jesus himself.

I had this disgusting problem, this sickness, and you didn't despise me for it. You would have given me your eyes if you could. That statement particularly has led most scholars to believe that Paul's problem was an eye problem.

Perhaps he had runny, pussy, red eyes from some malarial condition or some virus in the area, but it was apparently a disgusting thing because he commends them for not being put off by it. And when he says, if you could have you to give me your eyes, that wouldn't make much sense unless he needed a pair. I'm not going to pass a bag around here.

You know, those of you who really committed, please put your eyes in the bag. What do I need your eyes for? You know, that it might be a costly expense to you, but it wouldn't do me anything unless I need eyes. The fact that he says you would have given me your eyes if you could have means I think almost certainly that his eyes needed replacements, but they couldn't do that back then.

Can't do it today either apparently. So have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? They, meaning the false teachers, zealously caught you, but for no good. Yes, they want to exclude you.

That is, exclude you from Christ, that you may be zealous for them. They don't want you to follow Jesus. They want you to follow them and their religious ideas.

But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always. And not only good thing, not only when I'm present with you, my little children for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you. He sees himself as like the mother who went through all the trials of childbirth, the labor of childbirth and bringing them about.

He says, now I feel like I have to do it over again because it seems like you've fallen away. I feel like I'm going through labor pains again to try to just get you to survive. I would like to be present with you now and change my tone for I have doubts about you.

Tell me you who desire to be under the law. Now this is an interesting argument we need to understand. Tell me you who desire to be under the law.

Do you not hear the law? So it's addressing the Judaizers or the Galatians themselves if they are wanting to be under the law, under the influence of the Judaizers. For it is written that Abram had two sons, the one of a bond woman, the other by free woman. Of course the first one is Ishmael.

His mother was a bond woman, Hagar. The free son was Isaac. His mother's the free woman, Sarah.

They knew that. That's basic Genesis history. But he who was of the bond woman was born according to the flesh and he of the free woman through promise.

In other words, Ishmael was born without any particular miracle. The reason Abram went into Hagar's because his wife Sarah couldn't have children. She was barren and old.

So she suggested going to Hagar and have a child. Hagar wasn't barren or old. So through a natural copulation, Ishmael was conceived and came into being like any other child.

He was just a child of the flesh, just an ordinary physical descendant. But Isaac not so much because Isaac came through Sarah miraculously. He only came about because God promised that he would.

God made a promise to Abram and Sarah a year before Isaac was born, saying a year from now Sarah's going to have a child. And they laughed. That was ridiculous.

And God says, why do you laugh? Is anything too hard for Yahweh? And then they stopped laughing. And a year later Isaac was born. But to a woman who was barren all her life, a woman who has passed menopause, this was miraculous.

The only reason Isaac existed certainly wasn't because of natural copulation. It was because of the promise. It was a fulfillment of a promise.

So although Isaac was a physical descendant for Abram too, he was miraculously in existence only because God promised it. So he's a child of promise as opposed to just a child of the flesh. Now Paul's saying these things are symbolic for these are two covenants.

That is the two women are two covenants. He's seen Hagar as an old covenant and Sarah as the new covenant as we'll see. And the children of them are like the children of

the two covenants.

So the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar. Hagar was a slave. Her child technically was born a slave too.

Just like Sinai, the covenant of the old covenant, it gives birth to children. The children of that covenant are slaves to the law. That's what he's saying.

He says this is Hagar in Mount Sinai in Arabia or this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with their children. So the natural Jews under the law in the temple in Jerusalem, they're in bondage to the law. They're children of Abram, but only in the flesh.

They're only natural children. They have physical descent from Abram, but that's not enough. He says, but the Jerusalem above, which is like Sarah, is free, which is the mother of us all.

Us all Jews and Gentiles who are part of the new covenant. These are two covenants. The old covenant bears children for bondage like Hagar did.

The new covenant bears free children like Sarah did. She was not a slave. She was a free woman.

For it is written, rejoice, O barren, you who do not bear. Break forth and shout, you who do not travail. For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband.

Now this is a quotation from Isaiah 54, 1, where it's talking about the Gentiles are like the barren woman through whom God has never brought forth children. The married woman is Israel, married to God. And the prophecy is there's going to be, God's going to have more children through the barren woman, through the Gentiles, than he's going to have through the married woman, Israel.

There's going to be more Christians, in other words, born into God's family from the Gentiles than from the Jews. That's what Paul's saying. He's quoting Isaiah on that point.

Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are children of the promise. Isaac was a child of promise. We're children of the promise, namely the promise God made to Abraham.

That's what he's been saying all along. So the promise to Abraham is more important than the covenant of the law. And children of the promise are the true free heirs, free from the law.

Children of the old covenant are slaves to the law. And he starts in because we're free children, not children of the bond woman. That is not, we're not of the old covenant.

Therefore, we don't have to keep the law. But as he who was born according to the flesh,

then persecuted him, was born according to the spirit. Even so it is now.

Now he's referring to the fact that at the weaning of Isaac, the one born of the spirit, Ishmael, who is 13 years older, was mocking him and got himself thrown out of the house for it. The one who was born of the flesh is Ishmael. The one born of the spirit is Isaac.

And he says, like back then, the child of Abraham after the flesh, Ishmael persecuted the child of the spirit, Isaac. So now the natural Jews who are children of the flesh of Abraham persecute the Christians who are children of the spirit of the promise. He said Abraham has two kinds of children, just like he did back then.

Some children are simply natural heirs, natural children, biological descendants. That's the Jews, he said. Others are children of the promise.

That's all of us who have Christ. We are children of the promise that God made to Abraham. And he says, but the natural Jews persecute the spiritual ones.

The natural children of Abraham persecute the spiritual, the Christians. Nevertheless, what does the scripture say? Now, this statement that is quoted here is from Genesis 21:10, where it's the words of Sarah to Abraham. But he says this is like it's God saying it.

It's the scriptures cast out the bondwoman and her son for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. Now, that meant that Ishmael was thrown out of the house and would not inherit Abraham's estate like Isaac would. But in Paul's context, Ishmael is the Jews, the natural seed of Abraham.

Isaac is the Christians, the spiritual seed of Abraham. He's saying the natural seed are not going to be the heirs with the spiritual seed. That is, he's saying the Jews are not the inheritors of the promises.

Dispensationists think they are. The Jews still think they are. But Paul said, no, it's not that way.

The natural heirs, natural children are not going to be the heirs. The spiritual heirs of the church. And that's why Paul said at the end of chapter three, if you are Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and you're the heirs, according to the promise.

Christians are the heirs of the promises made to Abraham and the natural heirs, the natural seed are thrown out and not going to inherit with them. So, brethren, we are not children of the bondwomen, but of the free. Now, moving on in chapter five, stand fast, therefore, in the liberty by which Christ has made us free.

Do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. We're not children of the bondwoman, we're children of the free woman. So don't get into bondage.

And he means by this bondage of the law. He's still concerned that Judaizers might persuade them to come under the law. And so he said, don't do that.

Indeed, I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised, that he's a debtor to keep the whole law. Now, what he's saying is this.

Circumcision isn't a standalone rule. Circumcision is the initiation into Judaism. If a Gentile, even today, gets circumcised, it's because he's, unless it's just for hygienic reasons, which sometimes it's done for that reason.

But if a person is for religious reasons, getting circumcised, they're joining a synagogue. They're becoming part of Judaism. They're moving into a religion that is not the Christian religion.

In fact, it's an anti-Christian religion. Judaism, the synagogue, is very much opposed to Christ and opposed to Christianity. They're not friendly.

They persecute it, as Paul said. And Paul saw it firsthand more than we would. Now, what he's saying is if you get circumcised, then you're becoming a proselyte.

You're a convert to Judaism. You're now agreeing to keep the whole law. You don't just get circumcised and take that box and say, now you Jews stop bugging me.

No, you get circumcised. You're joining them. You're joining their religion.

You're now swearing yourself to be under the law. There'd be no other reason to be circumcised unless you're acknowledging that you're under the law that requires it. You're getting into a whole new religion if you get circumcised.

Christ will profit you nothing. You're alienated from Christ. You're choosing a religion different than Christ.

He says in verse four, you have become estranged from Christ. You who attempt to be justified by the law. You've fallen from grace.

There can't be any stronger arguments against the Hebrew roots and Torah observant movement that's so popular among many Christians today. If you're getting into the Torah, you're getting into a different religion and you can't have one foot in Christ and one in an anti-Christian religion. And that's what Judaism is.

Orthodox Judaism, they follow the Talmud. What's the Talmud say? Talmud says Jesus is the illegitimate son of a Roman soldier and a Jewish peasant girl. The Talmud says Jesus was a sorcerer and that he was justly crucified for deceiving the people.

That's what the Talmud says about Jesus Christ. That's what Orthodox Judaism teaches.

It's a blasphemous anti-Christian religion.

Amazingly, a lot of Christians think, well, the Jews are almost like us. You know, we should help them build their temple. We should, you know, we should help them, you know, reestablish their religion in Jerusalem.

Really? Shall we go to a place in Arabia and help the Jews, you know, help the Muslims build their mosques too? It's the Jewish religion, the Islamic religion are equally anti-Christian. The difference is the Muslims have a higher view of Jesus than the Jews do. Mohammed said Jesus was the greatest prophet.

The Jews say he's an illegitimate sorcerer who deserved to be crucified. Judaism is further from Christianity than Islam is. And both of them are too far from Christianity.

You can't be in both of them at the same time. If you're going into Judaism, you've fallen from grace. You've departed from Christ.

For though, he says, for we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, not the law. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith that works through love. God doesn't care if you're circumcised or not.

If you're a Jew, you're already circumcised. You become a Christian, fine. If you're a Gentile, you're not circumcised, that's fine too.

Circumcised, uncircumcised, it's a non-issue with God. What is an issue is if you have the faith that works through love. Paul makes it very clear throughout his writings were justified by faith.

Here he makes it very clear. The faith that saves us is a faith that works through love. James said faith without works is dead.

Paul said it's quite the same. Faith that doesn't produce works of love is not what God cares about. You ran well.

Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion does not come from him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. That is, don't compromise with this thing at all.

Once you get a little bit of that compromise in, it spreads like leaven in a lump of dough. I have confidence in you and the Lord that you will have no other mind, but he who troubles you shall bear his punishment whoever he is. God's going to punish those who lead these Christians into Hebrew roots Torah observance.

He said don't even let a little of that, that's like leaven. You know, you say, well is it okay if we just celebrate Passover in a Jewish way? Well that's a little leaven. That could



leaven the whole lump eventually if you let it have its free course.

I'm just saying what's there. And I brethren, if I still preach circumcision, there's a verse I was looking for earlier. Why do I still suffer persecution? Some people must have said he still preaches circumcision in some places, just not with you.

I said no I don't or else I wouldn't be persecuted anymore. Then the offense of the cross has ceased. I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off.

For you brethren have been called to liberty, only do not use your liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the laws fulfilled in one word, even in this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Paul made the same point in Romans in chapter 13.

He made the very same point. You fulfill the whole law, at least the part of it that has anything to do with your obligations toward your fellow man socially. When you love your neighbors, you love yourself.

For you brethren have been called to liberty, only do not use your liberty. Just he says the law is fulfilled when you love your neighbors yourself. But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another.

I say then walk in the spirit, which is what Paul says in Romans 8.4. And you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things which you wish, which sounds like Romans 7. A lot of Romans ideas here in Galatians.

But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. In Romans 8, Paul says as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Now, if you're led by the spirit, you're a son of God and you're not under the law.

You're not being led by the law, you're being led by the spirit. You can be led by the law or you can be led by the spirit. There's two options, but not both.

They're different authorities. If you're under the authority and leadership of the spirit of Christ, under his headship, that's one thing. Being under the authority of Moses and the law, that's a very different thing.

It's not the same. Now, the works of the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like. This is the longest list Paul makes of this kind of thing, of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul said the same thing in fewer words in 1 Corinthians chapter 6. He said, do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Neither fornicators or idolaters or homosexuals or, he gives this long list of things, as I tell you, they won't inherit the kingdom of God. That's what he says here too. Inheriting the kingdom of God is when Jesus comes back and you reign with him.

You inherit a crown, you inherit a throne, just like him. If we endure, we'll reign with him, the Bible says. You won't inherit that privilege if you are living in an ungodly way.

And Paul says that more than once. He wants them to, the Gentiles, to be aware of that. But the fruit of the Spirit, on the other hand, is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such there is no law. Now, he says we don't walk in the flesh, but in the Spirit. If we walk in the Spirit, we won't fulfill the lust of the flesh.

The two, the flesh and the Spirit, are at war with each other, keeping you from doing what you need to do, unless you walk in the Spirit. And when you do walk in the flesh, this looks like all these bad things. When you walk in the power of the Spirit, he produces this kind of behavior.

Love, joy, peace, goodness, faithfulness, self-control. He says if that's happening, there's no law against those things, so you don't even need the law. In another place, he tells Timothy, the law was not made for a righteous man, but for the unrighteous.

He lists all these things, murderers of fathers, murderers of mothers, and these horrible things. That's the people the law was made for. The law wasn't made for righteous people.

What he's saying is if you walk in the Spirit, you're righteous. You don't need the law. The law can't touch you.

There's no law against love and joy and peace and goodness and self-control and faithfulness. Those are the things that the law actually approves of. So when you're doing that, not because the law tells you to, but because the Spirit leads you, well then, that's good.

You don't have to even think about the law. There's no law against this. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

I think what he means there is he said earlier in chapter 2 and verse 20 that we have crucified with Christ. That means we've died with him. And he makes it very clear, for example, in Romans 6, that when Jesus died, he died to the law.

When a man is dead, the law can't touch him anymore. And so we are not under the law.

We've died with Christ.

But also a man who's died is no longer living in his flesh, not following his lusts and his desires and his passions. That's another thing about a man who dies. A man who dies is not under the law, but he's also not following his passions anymore.

We've been crucified with Christ. So we've been crucified from the law, but we've also been crucified from our passions and lusts. Well then, what are we? We're raised with Christ to be in Christ, to be him, to be his hands and feet, to live like him, to live in a newness of life.

And if we live in the Spirit, he says, which he assumes to be true, then let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another or envying one another. Now the last chapter.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Now, if you see someone go wrong, you don't gossip about them. You go to them if you're spiritual.

Now, if you're not spiritual, you better just keep your mouth shut and don't talk about it at all. If you're one who is spiritual, go and restore such a one. You don't go there just to castigate him and make him feel worse.

You go to restore him. You have to point out to him his error. Jesus talks about this in Matthew 18, you know, 15 through 17, about if your brother sins against you, go to him alone and try to win him over.

The idea is to restore him, but you do it in a spirit of meekness, realizing you're not really better than him. You may not be guilty of the thing he's become guilty of, but you're guilty of other things. And you might be the next one who does what he's doing.

You never know. You go humbly. When you have to confront someone about what they're doing wrong, you go in humility, considering yourself.

You also could be tempted. You're not really better. And you go to someone with that understanding.

I'm not standing up here talking down to you and condemning you. I'm here as equal to you, equally in danger of falling into sin, equally subject to temptation. I might be the next time you may have to come to me and restore me.

I'm coming to you because I'm your brother. I want you to be restored. God wants you to be restored.

But I'm coming with the attitude that realize that tomorrow you might have to come and restore me because I'm not perfect. That's the attitude Paul says to have. Bear one

another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Now, fulfill the law of Christ. The law of Christ is love your neighbor as you love yourself or love one another as I have loved you. How does that look? Well, it means you're doing, you're actually helping to alleviate the burdens of your brother.

What burdens? Well, maybe his poverty, if he's in need. Maybe he's struggling with temptation. He needs some accountability.

He needs some help. He needs prayer. He needs some practical assistance.

He might even be carrying a heavy load and you help him carry that load. The point is you're looking out for him in practical ways. He's bearing burdens and you don't let him bear it alone.

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees in Matthew 23 saying, woe unto you scribes and Pharisees because you put heavy burdens, grievous to be born on men's backs, but you won't lift one finger. You won't use one finger to lift that burden from them. They aren't following the law of Christ.

But if you see your brother under a maybe a burden of guilt, like the first verse one, you know, he's going astray. He's got a burden of guilt. You're going to restore him.

He's got a burden. It's a physical burden. You help lift it.

He's got a financial burden. You help him. He's got, you know, struggles in his marriage that are getting him down.

Well, you go and counsel and encourage him the right way. You help him. Bearing his burdens is helping him in any practical way necessary.

It's doing that that is fulfilling the law of Christ because loving your neighbors, you love yourself is do unto others as you would have done to you. It's doing not just feeling. Love your neighbor doesn't mean feel warm toward him, feel affectionate toward him, be fond of him.

No, love your neighbor means what do you want done to you? Do that to them. That's the whole law of the prophets, Jesus said in Matthew 7 and 12. And so it's actually practical helping somebody in a real way.

For if anyone thinks himself to be something when he's nothing, he deceives himself. Don't think you're something. But let each one examine his own work and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone and not enough for each one shall bear his own load.

Now we can bear one another's burdens and the word burden in Greek is a different word than the word load. Everyone has to bear his own load means his own

responsibility. We can bear other people's burdens, which means the difficulties that they face, but we all bear our own responsibility for our choices.

And you know somebody else's good choices don't kind of overflow to our credit. We have to, as he says, examine his own work so that he can have rejoicing in his own work and not someone else's. Everyone's going to answer for his own works on the day of judgment.

Let him who is taught in the word share, he means financially, in all good things with him who teaches. Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man sows that will he also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will reap of the flesh corruption.

He who sows to the spirit will of the spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Now this sowing to the flesh and sowing to the spirit.

The way I was taught this from my youth, and I still think it has merit, is that everything you do, every choice you make is contributing something either to your spiritual or to your carnal side. If you are reading the word, if you're praying, if you're fellowshiping over the things of Christ, if you're listening to Christian music, if you're doing things that are if you're doing things like just watching Netflix all the time or playing video games or or worse, looking at pornography and you know, hanging out with coarse-talking people and so forth, you're sowing to your fleshly side, to your carnality. And the harvest, the fruit of your life, will be carnal fruit.

Now that's how I was taught this passage, and I think it makes perfectly good sense. I will say this though, it's interesting that he mentions this immediately after sharing finances, because in another place Paul uses the sowing and reaping thing in 2 Corinthians, where he's telling the Corinthians he wants them to take up a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. He says, he that reaps sparingly, or he who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, but he who sows abundantly will reap abundantly.

He's talking about the money they're giving to the poor being sowing, and they'll get a harvest of blessing from God for it. What's interesting is if this sowing to the flesh of the Spirit was a standalone statement, and maybe it's intended to be, but if it didn't follow verse 6, which says that those who are taught share in all good things with him who is taught, teaching. And then he says, if you sow to the Spirit, he could be again talking about the financial matters that he's talking about in 2 Corinthians, he's talking about sowing and reaping.

I don't know if he is, I just have to wonder. He's saying, you know, if you share financially with the people who are the ministers that you're learning from, then that's good, you're sowing to the Spirit. There'll be a spiritual result, spiritual harvest.

You support missionaries, you support, you know, people who are working in the ministry, and you're promoting spiritual ends. That's a sowing to the Spirit. But if you are instead supporting businesses, entertainers, you know, different, if your money is going toward products that are just carnal things, well then it's going to promote carnality.

I don't know if he's talking about money here or not. See, as I said, what I've always taught and believed is that he's talking about sowing to your own Spirit by doing spiritually edifying things will produce spiritual fruit in your life, whereas sowing to your flesh by doing carnal things is going to produce carnal fruit in your life. That makes sense to me and could be exactly what he means here.

That's the only way I've ever heard it taught. But given his use of sowing and reaping over in 2 Corinthians, made me wonder about this. Is he talking about what we invest in, what we financially invest in? If we financially invest in the Kingdom of God, then there'll be a spiritual harvest in the Kingdom of God.

And if we spiritually invest in the worldly things, then there'll be a worldly harvest of the flesh. I'm not sure which it is. Maybe both are true.

So he says in verse 10, Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. That sounds like he's still on that subject. Do good to people in practical ways, especially to Christians, especially those of the household of faith.

Means that we shouldn't only help Christians. When we see there's poverty in the world, we shouldn't say, oh, they're not Christians, let them starve. No, we should as much as we have opportunity to do good to everybody.

But first priority would be the brothers, the family. You know, obviously the Christians have a commitment to each other that's greater than the commitment to anyone else. Because Jesus says, as much as you do it to my brethren, you do it to me.

What we do when we help out a Christian is helping out Jesus. That's the first priority. As we have opportunity to be honest, help out other people too, as many as we can.

Not just Christians. Someone who's not a Christian is not disqualified from receiving our help. But if there are Christians who need our help, they kind of get the first place in life as far as Paul's concerned.

See what with what large letters I've written to you with my own hand. As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these try to compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. They don't want to come into the position Paul's in and being persecuted by the Judaizers.

So they just keep, they go with the Judaizing message, which is more popular among, I

guess, the Jewish Christians. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, really, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. That they can mark you up as another convert.

Their team makes them look better. They glory in it. But God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

Again, having died with Christ, that I've died to the law. I've died to my passions and lusts, as he said in the previous chapter. And now I've also died to the world.

I've been crucified to the world and the world is crucified to me. In other words, my, you know, a dead man is no longer concerned with the things of the world. I'm not concerned about the things.

I'm crucified to all that, those concerns. I'm now concerned about the things of God, which are not the same things. I'm concerned about the kingdom of God.

For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, as he said earlier in 5.6. But this time he says, but a new creation. Being in the body of Christ, which is a new creation. If anyone's in Christ, he is a new creation.

It says in 2 Corinthians 5. So, or 10, excuse me. No, 1 Corinthians. I'm sorry.

Got that mixed up. I'm sorry. So the point here is then being in Christ, being in the new creation is what matters to God, not whether you're a Jew or a Gentile, not whether you're circumcised or not.

As many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them and upon the Israel of God. Now, this statement is a very key controversial statement, which is and upon the Israel of God. Because I believe he's saying that the church is the Israel of God.

There are people who are of another mind, usually dispensationally say, no, they're not. This is some other group. Now, the question is the word and and upon the Israel of God, the word and can be translated even it's the word Chi in the Greek.

Sometimes it means and sometimes it means even. Now, if Paul's saying even, then he's equating the Israel of God with this, the group he first mentions as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy on them, even upon the Israel of God. But if he says and something, that means he's talking about two different groups.

And therefore, the Israel of God, they say, is a subgroup among the Christians. And they say he's talking to the Jewish Christians as the Israel of God. But if that is what he's doing, then he's dividing between the Israelites in the church and the Gentiles in the church, which is exactly what he's been laboring to eliminate in the whole in the whole

book.

He said there's no distinction between Jewish and Gentile. It doesn't matter if you're circumcised or uncircumcised. It doesn't matter, you know, if you're male, female, Jew, Gentile, slave, it's all one.

I mean, for him then to give the six chapters of this message, then to contradict it almost at the last verse. Oh, and now I'm going to address the Jewish Christian, especially, you know, I'll talk to you, Gentile Christians. I have a special greeting for the Jewish Christian.

What? That's the opposite of what Paul's talking about in this chapter. And here, if he is talking about two groups and the second one is the Israel of God, which is the Jewish Christians, they say, well, then then they are not the first group. And who is the first group? As many as walk according to this rule.

So are the Israel of God people who don't walk according to this rule? As many as walk according to this rule would be all Christians, Jew and Gentile. They are even the Israel of God. And that shouldn't surprise us, because earlier he said we are the seed of Abraham.

That's that's usually what Jews talk about. So Paul says, if you're in Christ, you're the seed of Abraham. You know, so we're children of God.

Israel is considered to be God's children. No, you're all children of God in Christ. Paul said those things.

He's taken terms that the Jews used to apply to themselves and he's applying to all the believers. Only those who are of faith are the children of Abraham. So to now single out the Jewish people in the church and send special greetings and separate them off from the rest of the church, it's ridiculous.

But it would also be saying that those who walk according to this rule are not the same people as the Israel of God, which means the Israel of God walk by some different rule. What rules they walk by? It's just to make this two different groups just doesn't make any sense grammatically or doesn't make sense in the context of the letter. From now on, let no one trouble me.

I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Some Catholics say he says he has the stigmata. I don't think that's what he means.

The marks, the scars on him are the scars like the whipping marks on his back like Jesus had. And they are the scars of Jesus because what is done to Paul is done to Jesus in all their afflictions. He is affliction.

The Bible says when Paul's whip, Jesus is whipped. The marks on his back are the marks that Jesus bears. And Paul gets to share in the sufferings of Christ, he says in Colossians,



what is in makeup in himself, what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ.

His sufferings are Christ's sufferings and therefore Christ's. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

And thus we are done. All right.