

GALATIANS

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] **Paul, an apostle, (not from [the authority of] men, or through the [agency] of a man, but by [a direct commission from] Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead).** 2) [It also comes from] **all of the brothers who are with me [and is being sent] to the churches of Galatia [i.e., Iconium, Derbe, Lystra and Antioch of Pisidia].** 3) **May you have unearned favor and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,** 4) **who gave Himself to [save us from] our sins so that He might deliver us from [the control and condemnation of] this present evil world. [This is] according to the will of our God and Father,** 5) **to whom [may there] be honor forever and ever. May it be so.**

6) **I am astonished that you people are so quickly abandoning God [i.e., by rejecting His truth], who called you [to Himself] through the unearned favor bestowed [on us] by Christ. [You are turning] to a different Agospel,@ 7) although it is really not a different one, but rather some people are causing you trouble by trying to pervert the [true] Gospel of Christ.** 8) **However, if we [apostles] or even an angel [claiming to be] from heaven were to preach any other Agospel@ than the one we have [already] preached to you, let that person be cut off from God-s [salvation].** 9) **I repeat what I have already said: If any person preaches to you a Agospel@ other than what you have already received [from us apostles], he should be cut off from God-s [salvation].** 10) **For am I seeking [to gain] the favor of men or of God? Or, am I striving to please people [by what I do]? If I were still [trying] to please people, I would not be a [true] servant of Christ.**

11) **For I would like to clarify for you, brothers, the situation regarding the Gospel that I have preached: It did not originate from man.** 12) **[Furthermore], I did not receive this [Gospel message] from any person, nor was I taught it [by anyone]. Instead, it came to me through [a divine] revelation from Jesus Christ.** 13) **For you have heard about the way I lived in the past, when I was in the Jewish religion, [that is], how I mercilessly persecuted the church of God, making havoc of it.** 14) **I advanced in the Jewish**

religion beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen. I have been extremely more zealous in advocating the traditions [taught] by my forefathers. 15) But then it was the good pleasure of God, who set me apart [for this purpose] before I was born, to call me [to this ministry] through His unearned favor. 16) [And when I was called], God revealed His Son to me so that I could preach [about] Him to the Gentiles. [When this happened] I immediately avoided discussing the matter with anyone. 17) I did not go up to Jerusalem to [discuss it with] those who had become apostles before me either; instead I went away into Arabia. [Note: This is probably when Paul received supernatural power from the Holy Spirit]. Then afterward, I returned to Damascus. [Note: This was in Syria where Paul was converted].

18) Then, three years later I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [i.e., Peter], and stayed with him for fifteen days. 19) But [on this trip] I did not see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. [Note: This James was not one of the original twelve apostles. See Matt. 10:2-4]. 20) Now [realizing I am] in God's presence, I am not lying about any of these things. 21) [Then after that] I went to the territories of Syria and Cilicia. [Note: Cilicia was where Paul's home town of Tarsus was located. See Acts 9:30]. 22) [At this time] I was still unknown personally to churches in [the province of] Judea, which are in [fellowship with] Christ. 23) They had only heard it said about me, 'This person, who had once persecuted us [Christians], is now preaching the faith he once made havoc of.' 24) So, they gave honor to God for [what He was doing through] me.

CHAPTER TWO

1) Then, fourteen years later I went up to Jerusalem again, [along] with Barnabas, and I took Titus also with me [this time]. 2) [It was] in response to [a divine] revelation that I went [there] and explained to them [i.e., the apostles and elders] the Gospel [message] that I had been preaching among the Gentiles. Then [later on I presented it] privately before those who were highly regarded [i.e., the three apostles, verse 9] so [they would have verification that] my running [i.e., ministry] had not been, nor was now, in vain. 3) But they did not even require that Titus, a Greek [i.e., a Gentile] who was with me, become circumcised. 4) For [certain] false brothers,

who were secretly brought in to observe us practicing our liberty in Christ Jesus [i.e., by not having Titus circumcised], attempted to place us [back] under the bondage [of Mosaic Law keeping]. 5) But we did not submit ourselves to their influence for even an hour, so that you people might be able to continue [following] the truth of the Gospel. 6) These apostles, who were highly regarded (although it really does not matter to me what they are, for God does not show partiality to any particular person); these men, I say, provided me with nothing [concerning the Gospel message]. 7) On the contrary, they saw that I had [already] been entrusted [by God] with the Gospel for the uncircumcised ones [i.e., for Gentiles], just as Peter [had been entrusted by God] with the Gospel for the circumcised ones [i.e., for Jews]. 8) For God assigned Peter to be an apostle to the circumcised ones [i.e., Jews], and me to be an apostle to the Gentiles. 9) Also, when they perceived that this [special] favor [of preaching to Gentiles] was granted to me, James, Cephas [i.e., Peter] and John, the highly regarded pillars [i.e., leaders of the church] extended to me and Barnabas their right hands [signifying an agreement] to share [in the preaching of the Gospel], with us going to the Gentiles and they going to the circumcised ones [i.e., Jews]. 10) The only thing that they encouraged us to do was to remember [the needs of] poor people, which I was very eager to do. [See Acts 24:17].

11) But when Cephas came to Antioch [of Syria], I confronted him personally [about a matter] for which he deserved to be condemned. 12) For, before certain [leaders] came from James [i.e., Jesus=brother, a leader of the Jerusalem church, See Acts 12:17; 15:13-22], he had eaten [a social meal] with some Gentiles. But when these men came, he abruptly discontinued this practice out of fear of the circumcised ones [i.e., out of concern for what the Jews would think of him]. 13) Then the rest of the Jews also discontinued [eating with Gentiles] along with Peter, until even Barnabas was influenced to go along with this hypocritical practice. 14) But, when I saw that they did not act in harmony with [the principles of] the truth of the Gospel [message], I said to Cephas in front of everyone, **“If you, being a Jew, act like a Gentile [by showing such discrimination], how do you expect to persuade Gentiles to live like Jews [i.e., like Christian Jews who are taught to love all people]?”** 15) Although we are Jews by natural birth, and not sinful Gentiles [who do not have a relationship with God], 16) still we know that a person

is not justified [i.e., made right with God] by [perfect obedience to] **the Law of Moses, but rather through faith in** [the person and work of] **Christ**. [Knowing this] **we have trusted in Christ Jesus** [to save us], so that we might be made right with God by trusting in Him and not by [our compliance with] **the requirements of the Law of Moses**. Because by such law-compliance no one can be made right with God. 17) But, if while we were trying to be made right with God through a relationship with Christ, we were discovered to still be sinners [by acting like unsaved Gentiles], **does that mean Christ is responsible for our sin? Of course not. 18) For if I try to build up again what I had already destroyed** [i.e., by returning to depend on compliance with the Law of Moses to become right with God, after having rejected this system by trusting in Christ to save me], **I would certainly be guilty of sin. 19) For it was by means of** [this system of] **law-keeping that I** [realized I] **was dead. This was so I could find life through a relationship with God. 20) I have been crucified** [i.e., died] **with Christ, and so I am not the one who lives** [anymore] **but rather, it is Christ who lives in my heart. And** [now] **my entire life is being lived by trusting in the Son of God** [to save and keep me], because He loved me and gave Himself up for me. 21) [In doing this] **I am not trying to disregard God-s unearned favor, for if a person could become right with God by** [perfect obedience to the requirements of] **the Law of Moses, then Christ died for nothing.**

CHAPTER THREE

1) **You foolish people** [of the churches] **of Galatia** [Note: This was a province in present-day Turkey], **who tricked you? Was not Jesus Christ graphically portrayed before you as being put to death on a cross? 2) The only thing I would like to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Holy Spirit** [into your lives] **by** [meeting the requirements of] **the Law of Moses or by hearing** [and obeying the message] **of faith** [in Christ]? 3) **Are you so foolish** [as to believe that after] **having begun** [your Christian lives] **through** [the power of] **the Holy Spirit, you can** [now] **become complete by** [living according to your human strength]? 4) **Did you suffer so many things** [for the faith] **all for nothing?** [That is], **if it really was for nothing? 5) Therefore, as God has provided you with the Holy Spirit and has produced miracles among you,** [do you think He has done all this] **as a result of your**

obeying the requirements of the Law of Moses or as a result of hearing [and responding to the message of] the faith?

6) [An example of this is] Abraham, who believed God's [promise] and [because of such faith] he was considered right with God. 7) You should know, then, that people who have faith are [truly] God's children. 8) And, predicting that God would consider the Gentiles right with Him by [their] faith, the Scriptures previously recorded [this promise of] the Gospel to Abraham by saying [Gen. 12:3], 'All nations will receive a blessing through your descendant [i.e., Jesus].' 9) So then, all those who have faith [in Jesus] receive a blessing along with Abraham, a man of faith. 10) For all who seek to be right with God by trying to meet all the requirements of the Law of Moses are under a curse [from God], because it is written [Deut. 27:26], 'Every person is cursed [i.e., cut off from God] who does not continue to obey all of the requirements written in the Law of Moses.' 11) Now it is evident that no person can be made right with God by [obeying all the requirements of] the Law of Moses for [Hab. 2:4 says], 'The righteous person will obtain life by [his] faith [in God].' 12) Now the Law of Moses is not based on one's faith, for [Lev. 18:5 says], 'The person who obeys the requirements of the Law of Moses will obtain life by doing so.' 13) Christ bought us back from the curse [caused by our not obeying all the requirements] of the Law of Moses; He became a curse for us [by dying on the cross], for it is written [Deut. 21:23], 'Every one who hangs on a tree [i.e., a cross] is cursed [i.e., cut off from God].' 14) [This happened] so that the blessing [promised] to Abraham might be received by the Gentiles through [the person and work of] Christ, so that we might receive the promised [gift of the] Holy Spirit through [our] faith [in Jesus].

15) Brothers, I will use an illustration from the way people deal with each other: Even though an agreement is made between people, once it is finally settled, no one can cancel it or include additional provisions to it. 16) Now [specific] promises were made to Abraham and to his seed [i.e., descendants]. [God] did not say 'seeds' [plural] as though He were referring to many persons but 'seed' [singular] showing that He meant one [descendant]; [Gen. 13:15 says] 'And to your seed,' referring to Christ. 17) Here is what I am saying: The Agreement originally made by God [with Abraham], with its attending promises, was not canceled when the Law of Moses was given some four hundred and thirty years later.

18) For if the inheritance [of never ending life] **can be obtained by** [obeying the requirements of] **the Law of Moses, it would not come from the promise** [of God]; **but God provided** [this inheritance] **for Abraham according to** [His] **promise.**

19) What then is [the benefit of] **the Law of Moses? It was introduced** [as part of God's revelation] **in order to define what sin was, until the seed** [i.e., Jesus] **would come, to whom the promise** [of never ending life] **was made. The Law of Moses was ordained through** [the medium of] **angels and** [delivered] **through the hand of an intermediary** [i.e., Moses]. **20) Now an intermediary does not serve in a situation involving** [only] **one person. However, God is one** [Being]. **21) Is the Law of Moses contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could provide** [never ending] **life, then a person could be considered right with God by** [obeying the requirements of such] **a law. 22) But the Scriptures indicate that everything** [i.e., everyone] **is under the control of sin, so that the promise** [of never ending life] **could be available** [only] **to those who have faith in Jesus Christ.**

23) But before faith [in Christ] **became available, we** [Jews] **were kept in bondage under** [condemnation for not obeying perfectly] **the Law of Moses.** [This condition existed] **until the faith** [i.e., the Gospel message] **was made known** [to people]. **24) So, the Law of Moses became like our Atransportation to school,**[@] **bringing us to** [the school of] **Christ where we** [learn how to be] **made right with God by faith** [in Christ]. **25) But now that faith** [in Christ] **has become available, we are no longer in need of this Atransportation to school.**[@] **26) For all of you are children of God through your faith in Christ Jesus** [as God's only Son]. **27) For all of you who were immersed into** [a relationship with] **Christ have been clothed with Him** [i.e., His life]. **28) [In this relationship] there is to be no** [distinction between] **Jews or Greeks** [i.e., Gentiles], **slaves or free persons, men or women; for all of you are united into one** [body] **because of your relationship with Christ Jesus. 29) And if you belong to Christ, then you are** [truly] **Abraham's seed** [i.e., his spiritual descendants] **and thereby** [you will] **inherit what was promised to him** [i.e., God's blessings].

CHAPTER FOUR

1) **But as long as the person who has an inheritance coming to him is a child, he is really no better off than a slave, even though he himself is [rightfully] entitled [to the inheritance].** 2) **He is [still] under [the direction of] guardians and managers [of his affairs] until the day his father decides [to give him his inheritance].** 3) **So also, when we [Jews] were like children, we were under bondage to the basic worldly rules [of the Law of Moses].** 4) **But, when [God's] timing fully arrived, He sent His Son, born to a woman [i.e., Mary], born during [the time when] the Law [of Moses was still in effect],** 5) **so that He could buy back [from Satan] those who were [still] under [obligation to] the Law of Moses, and that we could become adopted children.** 6) **And because you are [His] children, God sent the Holy Spirit of His Son into our hearts, to call out, *AAbba*,[@] [which means] *AFather*.[@]** 7) **So [now], you are no longer a slave but a child, and since you are a child, you also will receive an inheritance through [the blessings of] God.**

8) **At that time, when you did not know God [as your Father], you were in bondage to those who were, by nature, not really gods at all.** 9) **But now that you have come to know God [as your Father], or rather, to be known by Him [as His children], how can you turn back again to the weak, cheap, elementary teachings [of the Law of Moses], to which you [seem to] desire to become enslaved?** 10) **You are observing [certain] days, and months, and seasons, and years [as binding religious holidays].** 11) **I am afraid for you, [i.e., for your spiritual safety], that possibly I may have spent a lot of effort on your behalf for nothing.**

12) **I urge of you, brothers, become like me [in this matter], for I have become like you. You did not do anything wrong to me, [even as I have not wronged you].** 13) **But you are aware [I am sure] that when I first came preaching the Gospel [message] to you, I had a physical handicap.** 14) **And when you could have been tempted to look down on me [because of the nature of my affliction], instead you welcomed me as [if I were] an angel, or even Christ Jesus Himself!** 15) **Now where are those good feelings you had for me? For I can [honestly] testify that [at one time] you would have even gouged out your eyes and given them to me [for sight] if that had been possible.** 16) **So then, have I [now] become your enemy because I have told you the truth [about your condition]?**

17) **Certain people are showing quite an interest in you, but it is not for your benefit. Instead, they are trying to separate you**

[from me], **in hope that you will seek them out** [for help]. **18) Now, it is fine for someone to want to seek you out anytime, if it is for a good purpose, and not just when I am around** [to be impressed]. **19) My little children** [i.e., dear ones], **I am again deeply pained** [as a woman in childbirth] **over your** [spiritual] **condition, until** [the life of] **Christ becomes formed in your character.** **20) But I would like to be present with you and change the tone** [of my remarks], **because I am very distressed over your condition.**

21) Tell me, those of you who desire to be under [obligation to the requirements of] **the Law of Moses: Are you really paying attention to what the Law of Moses says?** **22) For it is written in the law about Abraham's two sons** [Gen. 16]; **one** [was] **by his slave woman** [Hagar] **and the other by the free woman,** [his wife, Sarah]. **23) Now the son** [Ishmael], **born to the slave woman, was born simply of their natural relationship; but the son** [Isaac], **born to the free woman, was born in fulfillment of a** [divine] **promise.** **24) This set of circumstances contains an illustration; for these two women** [Hagar and Sarah] **represent the two Agreements** [between God and mankind]. **The one** [Agreement], **given at Mount Sinai, represents Hagar, whose children became** [the Israelites], **enslaved under bondage** [to the requirements of the Law of Moses]. **25) Now this woman, Hagar, is similar to Mount Sinai, in Arabia, and represents the present** [earthly] **Jerusalem** [i.e., Israel], **consisting of children in bondage** [to the Law of Moses]. **26) But the heavenly Jerusalem** [Heb. 12:22] **consists of free people, and is the mother of us** [Christians]. **27) For it is written** [Isa. 40:1], **A[Woman] you should be happy that you have not had children. Cry over your inability to experience the pain of childbirth. For the deserted woman has had more children than the one with a husband.**@

28) Now, brothers, you [Christians] **are children of the promise** [made to Abraham. See 3:29] **just like Isaac,** [Abraham's son] **was.** **29) But, just as it was then --- the son born in the ordinary way** [i.e., Ishmael] **persecuting the one born according to the Holy Spirit's** [leading, i.e., Isaac] **--- so it is now** [i.e., Jews urging compliance with the requirements of the Law of Moses persecuting those who refuse to return to dependence on that law for salvation. See 3:1-3]. **30) What does the Scripture say about this matter?** [It says, Gen. 21:10-12], **AGet rid of the slave woman** [Hagar], **with her son** [Ishmael]; **for the son of the slave woman** [Ishmael] **will not inherit** [what God promised to Abraham and his descendants], **along with the**

son of the free woman [i.e., Isaac].@ **31) Therefore, brothers, we [Christians] are not the [spiritual] children of the slave woman [Hagar] but of the free woman [Sarah].**

CHAPTER FIVE

1) Christ set us free [from condemnation under the Law of Moses], **so we could stay free! Remain where you are then, and do not get tangled up again in the enslaving harness** [of the Law of Moses].

2) Look, I Paul am telling you that, if you revert to [the practice of] **circumcision** [i.e., the Jewish rite of identity, signifying the responsibility to observe the Law of Moses], **then Christ-s [sacrifice] will be of no value to you.** **3) Yes, I declare to every person who attempts to require circumcision** [as a means of gaining acceptance with God], **that he must also obey everything else required by the Law of Moses.** **4) Those of you who seek to be right with God by observing the requirements of the Law of Moses have severed yourselves from** [your relationship with] **Christ; you have fallen away from God-s unearned favor.** **5) For we are waiting for the hope** [to be fulfilled] **of being made right with God by** [the power of] **the Holy Spirit.** **6) For in** [our relationship with] **Christ neither the practice of circumcision nor refraining from its practice matters in any way; but** [all that really matters is having a genuine] **faith** [in Christ] **that causes us to work** [for Him] **out of a genuine love** [for Him and others].

7) You [Christians] **were running** [the race of life] **well; who hindered you** [from making further progress] **so that** [now] **you are no longer obeying the truth?** **8) [Your] being persuaded** [to do this] **was not motivated by God, who called you** [into His fellowship]. **9) A little bit of yeast permeates the whole batch of dough** [i.e., a few people can influence everyone else to do the wrong thing in this matter]. **10) [However], I have confidence in you, since we both have a relationship with the Lord, that you will not think differently** [than I do] **about this matter. But whoever is causing you trouble will be rightfully judged** [and punished] **for it.** **11) But, brothers, if I were still preaching** [that a person had] **to be circumcised, why am I being persecuted?** [Note: Paul-s argument seems to be **All** must not be preaching circumcision since I am being persecuted by those who

believe in it[@]. [If I preached that a person had to be circumcised] **then my preaching that Christ died on the cross would not be such an offense** [to those who believe in it]. **12) I wish that those who are causing such a problem over wanting people to be circumcised would just mutilate themselves** [while they are at it!].

13) For you brothers were called [by God] **to enjoy your freedom; but do not use this freedom as an excuse for living a sinful life; instead, use it to render loving service to each other.** **14) For the whole Law of Moses can be fulfilled by** [obeying this] **one requirement** [Lev. 19:18]: **You should love your neighbor the way you love yourself.**[@] **15) But if you** [unlovingly] **bite and eat one another** [i.e., figuratively], **be careful that you do not totally consume one another.**

16) But, I am saying to you, live in harmony with the Holy Spirit-s [desire for you] **and** [then] **you will not** [always] **be giving in to the wrong desires of your body.** **17) For what your body wants is in conflict with what the Holy Spirit wants** [for you], **and what the Holy Spirit wants conflicts with what your body wants, for these** [two desires] **are contrary to one another, so that you do not** [always] **do what you** [really] **want to.** **18) But, if you are led by** [what] **the Holy Spirit** [wants you to do], **you are not under** [obligation to meet the requirements of] **the Law of Moses.** **19) Now those things done by the sinful, physical nature** [of a person] **are evident; they are these: sexual immorality, moral impurity, indecent conduct,** **20) idol worship, occultic practices, hatefulness, dissension, jealousy, angry outbursts, factious spirits, divisiveness, party spirits,** **21) envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.** **I warn you again, as I have done before, that those people who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.** **22) But the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,** **23) gentleness and self-control.** **There can be no law against** [practicing] **these things.** **24) And those persons who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified** [i.e., put out of their lives, Col. 3:4ff] **the sinful cravings of the body, along with their passionate desires.**

25) If we live by the [guidance of the] **Holy Spirit, we should also walk in** [the ways of] **the Holy Spirit.** **26) We should avoid foolish pride as well as provoking or envying one another.**

CHAPTER SIX

1) Brothers, if any one of you is overwhelmed by a [particular] sin, those of you who are spiritually minded should [attempt to] restore such a person [to faithfulness]. But do it in a gentle way, being very careful that you yourself do not become tempted [to get involved in any sin]. 2) Take on yourselves the [spiritual] burdens of one another, for in doing so you will be fulfilling Christ's law [of love, John 13:35]. 3) For any person who thinks he is someone [important], when he is really nothing, is self-deceived. 4) But let each person test his own accomplishments so that he can determine if he should get credit for them or if his neighbor should. 5) For each person should shoulder the responsibility of his own work load.

6) But the person who is taught the word [of God] should provide his teacher with what he needs.

7) Do not be deceived; God will not be fooled. Whatever a person does with his life, he will reap [the results of it]. 8) If he engages in things to satisfy his own sinful desires, he will be [spiritually] destroyed for such conduct, but the one who engages in things to please the Holy Spirit will receive never ending life through the [same] Spirit [as a result]. 9) And we should not become tired of doing good things, for eventually we will receive [never ending life] if we do not give up. 10) So then, we should do the right thing toward every person whenever we have the opportunity, and especially toward people who are part of God's family [i.e., those making up the faith].

11) Look at how large the letters are that I am using in writing this, and I am writing them myself.

12) Those who attempt to make a good impression by trying to force you to be circumcised really want only to avoid being persecuted for their commitment to Christ. 13) For not even those who practice circumcision comply with [the requirements of] the Law of Moses, yet they want you to be circumcised so they can take credit for this physical evidence [of your compliance with the Law of Moses]. 14) But the last thing I want to do is brag [about such things]. For [if I had any bragging to do at all], it would be about [salvation through] the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is through Him that this [sinful] world has been crucified [i.e., died]

as far as I am concerned and I have been crucified [i.e., died] as far as it is concerned. 15) For it does not matter whether a person practices circumcision or refrains from practicing it; what really matters is [whether or not he is] a new creature [in the eyes of God].

16) To all those people who live by this rule, may there be peace and mercy [from God] in their lives; that is, upon [those people who are truly] God-s AIsrael@ [i.e., the church].

17) From now on no one should harass me [about such matters] for I carry around on my body the scars [left there in my service] for Christ.

18) May the unearned favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be in your inner person, brothers. May this be so.