

New Testament Epistle / Letter: Galatians Intro and 1:1-17

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All references in red are from: Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). *The Lutheran Study Bible*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

Writer: Paul

Date: AD 51–53

Purpose: To demonstrate that faith in Christ accomplishes both justification and sanctification.

Law Themes: The threat of subtle false teaching; hypocrisy; works cannot justify; the Law's curse; works of the flesh; the Law of Christ

Gospel Themes: One saving Gospel; God's gracious call; justified through faith in Christ; the gift of the Spirit; adoption as God's sons; freedom in Christ

Reading Galatians: A guardian calls the seven-year-old boy in from play to make an introduction. Pointing to a young man, he explains that tomorrow at dawn this fellow will lead the boy to and from school, making certain the boy has the tools of learning: wooden tablets and a stylus. Though the young man is a slave, the boy must mind him and learn from him until the boy is ready to be self-sufficient.

In the Letter to the Galatians, the apostle Paul refers to such first-century life situations in order to explain our relationship to the Law (moral, civil, and ceremonial commands) and the Gospel (God's promise to us in Christ). A typical schoolboy's guardian had temporary authority. Similarly, the Law given by Moses served as a temporary guardian...

Luther on Galatians: The Galatians had been brought by St. Paul [*by the Spirit through the Word*] to the true Christian faith, from the law to the gospel. After his departure, however, false apostles came along. They were disciples of the true apostles, but they so turned the Galatians around that they believed they had to be saved by works of the law and were committing sin if they did not keep the law...

To refute them, St. Paul magnifies his office; he will not take a back seat to any other apostle. He boasts that his doctrine and office are from

God alone, in order that he might silence the boast of the false apostles... He says it is not true, even if an angel were to preach differently... This he does in chapters 1 and 2, and concludes that everyone must be justified without merit, without works, without law, through Christ alone.

In chapters 3 and 4 he proves all this with passages of Scripture, examples, and analogies. He shows that the law brings sin and a curse rather than righteousness. Righteousness is promised by God, fulfilled by Christ without the law, given to us—out of grace alone.

In chapters 5 and 6 he teaches the works of love that ought to follow faith. (AE 35:384)

Challenge for Readers: *Ignoring Sanctification.* In the first part of Galatians, Paul focuses strongly on the chief topic of the Christian faith: that Christ justifies us by grace through faith. The dominance of this teaching can lead some readers to ignore Paul's other important message in the Letter: through faith Christ leads us in a new way of life....

Blessings for Readers: The proper distinction of Law and Gospel, described in Galatians, leads one away from the misunderstandings of God's Word mentioned above. Paul certainly affirmed a limited role for the Law in the life of a believer. He explained the life-changing blessings of the Gospel, which make us God's children and give us freedom to do good, not evil. Yet Galatians shows that, though we never outgrow the Law because we are sinners (cf 5:16–26), it is God's promise that assures our place in His family (4:5–7), with all the privileges He bestows by Word and Spirit.

As you study Galatians, pray that the Holy Spirit would teach you rightly to discern and apply God's Law and Gospel. He... will surely grant you a discerning heart.

OUTLINE:

- I. Greetings (1:1–5)
- II. The Problem (1:6–12)
- III. Background to the Problem, Moving toward a Solution (1:13–2:14)
- IV. The Solution (2:15–21)
- V. The Supporting Arguments for the Solution of 2:15–21 (3:1–6:10)
- VI. Summarizing Conclusion (6:11–18)

Greeting: 1:1-5

1. **1** Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— **2** and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: **3** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, **4** who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, **5** to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
 - a. Paul emphasized his calling – *through Jesus and God the Father!*
 - b. “Grace” – Even though we have sinned, *God loves us, so God’s love is based on who He is rather than on our performance!*
 - c. “Peace” – Even though we should be separated from God – because of our sins, *there is peace between us and God through Jesus – who took away our sins!*
 - d. Even though we were under God’s condemnation, *He gave His Son to deliver us and deserves all the glory!*

No Other Gospel: 1:6-10

2. **6** I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him [God the Father] who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— **7** not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.
 - a. Gospel means _____ !
 - b. Regarding our entrance into heaven, how many gospels are there? 1 2 3 4 5

c. What is “the gospel of Christ”? _____

3. **8** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. **9** As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. // “delivered over to divine wrath” (Friberg, BW).
4. **10** For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. // Paul never told people what they wanted to hear; instead, He served Christ. See 1 Thess. 2:4

Paul Called by God: 1:11-24

5. **11** For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. **12** For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation [an uncovering, a disclosing] of Jesus Christ. // Paul could have said, “My gospel is correct because I received it from Jesus!”
6. **13** For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. **14** And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. **15** But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, **16** was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; **17** nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia [see map 8], and returned again to Damascus. // Lenski: “...there was no apostle in Damascus either at the time of Paul’s conversion or when he returned; and in Arabia there certainly was no one with whom it was possible to confer” (60). So, again, *he was taught by Jesus!*

New Testament Epistle / Letter: Galatians 1:18 – 2:21

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All references in red are from: Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). *The Lutheran Study Bible*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

7. ¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. ²⁰ (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) ²¹ Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²² And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ²³ They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." ²⁴ And they glorified God because of me.
- Paul did not say that he never lied, but, *in regard to his letters*, he did not lie!
 - Paul is a good example of a radical transformation – *so opposed to Jesus, then so zealous for Jesus!* His zeal made him a good candidate for conversion – *because he was thinking, then taking action on what he thought*. Many today seem to take more of a "whatever" attitude, which is not good. See Revelation 3:15-17.
 - With the change in Paul's life, *or in anyone's life*, God deserves all the glory. See John 6:44, 65; 1 Corinthians 1:30a.

Paul Accepted by the Apostles: 2:1-10

- ² Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.
 - Based on 1:18 and 2:1, it was 17 years ago when Paul was converted.
 - Luther: "By presenting himself with both of them [Barnabas and Titus] he intended to make it clear that he was at liberty to be a Gentile with Titus and a Jew with Barnabas ... [to prove] the freedom of the Gospel in each case" (AE 27:200).**
- ² I went up because of a revelation [something God had revealed to him] and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not

running or had not run in vain. // Since the false teachers in Galatia were questioning Paul's teachings, he wanted the Galatian believers to know that the influential Christian leaders in Jerusalem had already double-checked his teachings.

- ³ But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. ⁴ Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery— ⁵ to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. // Later in this letter to the Galatians, you will see that the big issue is the need for Gentile believers to be circumcised – so it is huge that the uncircumcised Titus was in Jerusalem with Paul, *yet he was not forced to be circumcised*.
- ⁶ And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me. ⁷ On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised ⁸ (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), ⁹ and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰ Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. // "those who seemed to be influential" – as Paul did not let those people change the teachings he had received from Christ (*nor did they want to change his teachings*), we should not let those of today

who seem influential – *those with impressive degrees or who hold important positions or who have influence over many people* – have any influence on us apart from the clear truth of God’s Holy Word!

Paul Opposes Peter: 2:11-14

5. ¹¹ But when Cephas [Peter] came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James [that is, from Jerusalem], he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴ But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”
- Have you ever been out of town and thought, “No one here knows me, so I can do whatever – and no one will know”? Maybe Peter felt that way when in Antioch, but then, *when the false teachers from Jerusalem showed up*, he and the others acted differently toward the Gentiles.
 - Paul was so bold, *so he called Peter out!* Since the believing Gentiles had been fully accepted without being circumcised, everyone should treat them as such in all circumstances – *no matter who is present!*
 - What about us, do we look down on others, or consider them to be second-class believers for various reasons? If so, let us remember that none are worthy to be God’s children – *not even us*, but all are fully accepted by grace through faith in Jesus! See Galatians 3:28.

Justified by Faith: 2:15-21

6. ¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be

justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

- Gentile sinners. The phrase represents the attitude of the pious Law-observing Jews toward nations without the Law.*
 - What does it mean for a person to be justified? _____
 - Why is it impossible for a person to be justified by doing the law? _____
 - How does faith in Jesus justify us? _____
7. ¹⁷ But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! // Think about Paul, he was a devout Jew – keeping all of God’s law as best he could, but, *having been shown that could not save him*, he received justification through Christ. If he was not justified through Christ (*which he was*), then Christ would be a servant of sin.
8. ¹⁸ For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. // Paul, *as taught by Jesus*, torn down the law as a way to be justified; now, if he said the law had to be kept – *as his opponents were saying*, he would be a lawbreaker – *which he is not*.
9. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. // “Paul used the law in order to be forever rid of the law.... Let law make you a sinner... Let law make you give up all hope... The moment you do that you are rid of law” (Lenski, 114). See Matthew 5:48; Romans 5:6; Romans 10:2-4.
10. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. // Luther: “By [faith] you are so cemented to Christ that He and you are as one person” (AE 26:168).
11. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. // *If obedience to the Law is in any sense regarded as part of God’s justification of the sinner, then Christ’s death becomes superfluous [unnecessary].*

New Testament Epistle / Letter: Galatians 3:1-29

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All references in red are from: Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). *The Lutheran Study Bible*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

By Faith, or by Works of the Law? 3:1-9

1. ³ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you [that is, exerted an evil influence on you, put a spell on you]? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. // Paul preached Christ's death so vividly that his audiences could almost see Jesus die with their own eyes.
2. ² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith [Rom. 10:17]? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?
 - a. Paul called them to come to their senses; if they thought for a moment, they would recall being saved by faith – *by faith alone*, so why would they even begin to think that circumcision would be necessary!
 - b. What about us, *are we completely convinced that we are saved by faith*, or do we sometimes begin to think that our salvation depends – *at least to some small degree* – on our actions? See 1 John 5:12.
3. ⁴ Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? // We are not aware of specifics; however, when the Galatians initially believed in Christ alone, there may have been others who gave them much grief!
4. ⁵ Does [God] who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— ⁶ just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? // As God declared Abraham to be righteous *by faith*, so the same was true for the Galatians, *and for you and me*; no one can ever make himself righteous.
5. ⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations

[thus both Jews and Gentiles] be blessed.” ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

- a. In the OT there was an emphasis on the descendants of Abraham – *because God had promised that His Son would be one of those descendants* – a blood relative!
- b. However, most important then and today is to be a *spiritual descendant of Abraham*, thus *to have the faith of Abraham*; as Abraham looked ahead with faith to the coming of the Messiah (*which is Hebrew for Christ*), so we look back with faith to the finished work of the Christ (*which is Greek for Messiah*)! Both mean “Anointed One”

The Righteous Shall Live by Faith: 3:10-14

6. ¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” // Why are all who rely on works for their salvation under a curse? _____
7. ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” // In other words, a person is either *saved by works AND lives by works*, OR he is *saved by faith AND lives by faith*!
8. ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree [a cross]” — ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.
 - a. We have all sinned, so we all deserve to be cursed; however, Christ has redeemed us from the curse – *from being eternally punished for our sins*!

- b. Since God is a just God, *He cannot overlook sin*; instead, *sin must be punished!* Since we sin, we deserve punishment; however, amazingly, Jesus received our sins and our punishment! In other words, He literally became a curse for us, *so He was forsaken by the Father!*
- c. Since Jesus did a finished work, the gifts of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit are available to all – not by works, but *through faith in Jesus!*

The Law and the Promise: 3:15-29

- 9. ¹⁵To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. ¹⁶Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. ¹⁷This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.
 - a. Verse 15: **This human example from legal practice teaches that no one can alter a legally ratified covenant or last will and testament. It is irrevocable.**
 - b. Verse 16: **Christ is the ultimate heir of the inheritance promised to Abraham.**
 - c. What came first – law or gospel?
 - i. Re: creation: God made a perfect world – gospel; God said regarding the one tree, don’t eat – law.
 - ii. Re: salvation: To Abraham God promised Christ – gospel; to Moses, *hundreds of years later*, God gave the law, but the law cannot cancel out the gospel that was given first. Instead, the law was given to show the people their sins and keep them focused on and trusting in the coming Savior!
- 10. ¹⁹**Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring [Christ]**
 - should come to whom the promise had been made, and it [law] was put in place through angels by an intermediary. ²⁰Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.
 - a. God spoke the gospel *directly to Abraham*, but God worked *through Moses* to get His law to the descendants of Abraham.
 - b. God carried out His gospel promise through Jesus, but it was *from* God the Father *through* God the Son!
- 11. ²¹**Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. ²²But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. // Paul emphatically rejected the false conclusion that Law and Promise stand in opposition to each other, as if they are rival systems of salvation. See Romans 3:20-22.**
- 12. ²³Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. // As soon as the first sin occurred, Christ was promised; the law was given to keep people aware of their need for the coming Christ!
- 13. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. // The law, like a guardian, guided people to Christ, but now, in Christ, *we are all sons of God!*
- 14. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ [*He is our wedding garment, Mt. 22:1-14*]. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise. // Our oneness in Christ means that we are fully saved, forgiven, redeemed in Christ; thus, **by grace through faith in Jesus for eternal life**, we are children of God and heirs of eternal life!

New Testament Epistle / Letter: Galatians 4:1-31

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All references in red are from: Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). *The Lutheran Study Bible*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

Sons and Heirs: 4:1-7

1. ⁴ I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, ² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. // Under the Roman legal system, the status of a child still under the care of a guardian was roughly that of a slave (both were unable to enjoy the inheritance).
2. ³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. // That refers to ...the condition of slavery to which both Jews and Gentiles were subject prior to Christ's coming—the Jews to the Law and the Gentiles to their pagan way of life.
3. ⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.
 - a. Fullness – like a glass filling to the top!
 - b. Jesus – is God's only Son!
 - c. Born of a woman – so Jesus is “true God, begotten of His Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary...”
 - d. Born under the law – so not above the law, but required to keep the law, which He did perfectly on our behalf (Mt. 5:17).
 - e. To redeem us – to objectively buy all people back, to open the way to membership in God's family.
 - f. Adoption – God chose us; then He took very radical action in Christ to make us His very own children.
4. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” // Notice the work of the Spirit as described here: “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16 NAS).

5. ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. // God has done it, so let us give Him thanks and praise!

Paul's Concern for the Galatians: 4:8-20

6. ⁸ Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. // Think about this: People who do not know Jesus as Savior are without the blessings of the Bible and the Holy Spirit; therefore, they are deceived and enslaved by the forces of evil.
7. ⁹ But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? // Notice that the Galatians had not yet been severed from Christ, but they were moving in that direction!
8. ¹⁰ You observe days and months and seasons and years! ¹¹ I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain. // Those Gentile Galatians were already *beginning* to follow the Jewish laws *with what they were observing*, so they were on a path away from Christ – *trusting in their keeping of the law rather than Christ!*
9. ¹² Brothers, I entreat [beg] you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are.
 - a. In the past: Paul was under the Jewish law, *but the Gentiles were not*.
 - b. In the present: Paul was free from the Jewish law, *but the Gentiles were beginning to place themselves under it*.
 - c. So Paul said to them: “become as I am” – *thus not under the law for salvation!*
10. You did me no wrong. ¹³ You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, ¹⁴ and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn

or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.

- a. Since the ailment *[though its nature unknown]* was the cause of Paul's original visit, perhaps it required rest and recuperation and thus a stay in Galatia.
 - b. Evidently Paul's appearance was repulsive, inviting disdain and disgust. [But] the Church had honored Paul by recognizing his apostolic authority as a messenger and representative of the risen Christ.
11. ¹⁵ What then has become of your blessedness *[your happiness from being saved in Christ alone]*? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? // Today we might say, "You would have given your right arm to me."
 12. ¹⁷ They *[the false apostles from Jerusalem]* make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out *[exclude non-circumcised Gentiles from the Church]*, that you may make much of them *[by becoming their followers]*.
 13. ¹⁸ It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you, ¹⁹ my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! // Mothers remember, and others try to imagine, the pain and distress experienced by a mother as she is giving birth; she wants it over ASAP! That is similar to Paul's pain and distress as he longed for the Galatians to again be firmly in Christ!
 14. ²⁰ I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you. // I think Paul wanted to shout at them!

Example of Hagar and Sarah: 4:21-31

15. ²¹ Tell me, you who desire to be under the law *[thus keeping the law in order to be saved]*, do you not listen to the law *[thus the Holy Scriptures and what they teach]*? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman *[Hagar]* and one by a free woman *[Sarah]*. ²³ But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. //

The teachers likely argued that the uncircumcised Gentiles corresponded to Ishmael and were illegitimate sons, not true descendants of Abraham. Paul, conversely, declared that uncircumcised Gentile believers corresponded to Isaac, the son of the promise. Paul contrasts the births of Abraham's two sons according to the status of their mothers *[Hagar – slave, natural conception of Ishmael; Sarah – free, supernatural conception of Isaac]*.

16. ²⁴ Now this may be interpreted allegorically *[symbolically]*: these women are two covenants.
 - a. One is from Mount Sinai *[where the law was received]*, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. ²⁵ Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in *[spiritual]* slavery with her children.
 - b. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem above *[that is, the Church, the spiritual Jerusalem]* is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷ For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one *[Sarah]* who does not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than those of the one who has a husband." // Those words of Isaiah recalled the miraculous blessing of once-barren Sarah to comfort Israel exiled in Babylon with the hope of restoration and increase of children. As Sarah had a child, they would be blessed!
17. ²⁸ Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh *[Ishmael]* persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit *[Isaac]*, so also it is now. ³⁰ But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of the free woman." ³¹ So, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free woman. // No matter how hard we try to keep the law, it does enslave us and cannot save us. Therefore, let us and everyone never trust in our keeping of the law, **but ONLY IN CHRIST!**

New Testament Epistle / Letter: Galatians 5:1-26

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All references in red are from: Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). *The Lutheran Study Bible*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

Christ Has Set Us Free: 5:1-15

1. **5** For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.
 - a. Freedom from what? _____
 - b. Matthew 11:28; Romans 10:4
2. **2** Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. **3** I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. **4** You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.
 - a. *In a sense* we could say there are two ways to heaven; identify them here:
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - b. Christ + Anything = Hell
 - c. Christ + Nothing + Heaven
3. **5** For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope [*certainty (because God's promises cannot fail)*] of righteousness.
 - a. "through the Spirit" – apart from His work, we are lost!
 - b. "by faith" – given, then maintained by the Spirit as we cooperate with Him!
 - c. "righteousness" – Now God SEES us as righteous; in the life to come, we will ACTUALLY BE righteous!
4. **6** For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.
 - a. ...one's physical condition has no impact on one's relationship to God.
 - b. Luther: "Faith... is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God.... O it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good incessantly" (AE 35:370). "Love ought to follow faith" (Ap IV 111). // Love is the *evidence of faith!*
5. **7** You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? **8** This persuasion is not from him who calls you. **9** A little leaven leavens the whole lump.
 - a. Paul wanted the Galatians to think about the source of their change, it was not ____!
 - b. Luther: "In theology a tiny error overthrows the whole teaching" (AE 27:37).
6. **10** I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view [*than the one I am reemphasizing to you*], and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. **11** But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed.
 - a. Paul was not preaching circumcision for salvation; however, before he took Timothy to serve with him, he did circumcise him (Acts 16:3); why? So as to not offend the Jews to whom they would bring the good news; part of trying to be "all things to all people, that by all means I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22 ESV).
 - b. Paul countered that the Jews' continued harassment proved that he did not require circumcision of converts.
 - c. The cross offends human pride, which seeks to be justified by the Law. The cross knocks the props out from under all religious systems advocating salvation by human merit (3:10–13; 6:14).
7. **12** I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves! // *emasculate*. Some see an allusion to the cult of Cybele, which originated in Pessinus in Galatia. Devotees of the goddess practiced sacred castration.
8. **13** For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love

serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

- a. *Freedom* – means freedom from the condemnation of the law.
 - b. *Freedom in Christ* ought not become a basis for pandering to the desires of the fallen human nature.
 - c. What is love? _____
 - d. What does it mean to *love your neighbor as yourself*? _____
9. ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. // A vicious dogfight to the death, animals snapping at one another with bared fangs, portrays the ugliness of bitter partisan strife in the congregation. Rather than that, let us work together for good!

Keep in Step with the Spirit: 5:16-26

10. ¹⁶ But I say, walk [*live, conduct oneself*] by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.
- a. Lenski: "Both the tyranny and the curse of anything in the nature of law are thus removed. ...to be completely free from law, wholly under grace, is alone freedom indeed" (284).
 - b. *As ones who believe in Jesus, we have received the new nature but we also continue to have the old nature. Paul used these words in Romans 7 to describe his internal struggles:* ¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.... ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

- c. We are fallen sinners who are bound to sin, yet as God's new creation we want to serve and obey Him. Paul neither ignores his sinfulness nor gives up. He relies on Christ alone. Luther: "The old man is infected with all vices and has by nature nothing good in him [Romans 7:18]. Now, when we have come into Christ's kingdom [John 3:5], these things must daily decrease. The longer we live the more we become gentle, patient, meek, and ever turn away from unbelief, greed, hatred, envy, and arrogance" (LC IV 66–67).
11. Regarding these sins, Lenski wrote: "Works betray and advertise their source" (284).
- a. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do [*literally, "doing" (present participle)*] such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 - b. "shall not inherit" = "shall never possess this inheritance, because they are doing these works of the flesh, they cannot be reborn and become the King's sons" (Lenski, 290).
12. As the list above has the flesh as its source, so this list has the Spirit as its source: ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. // "Faith must be the mother and source of works that are truly good and well pleasing to God..." (FC SD IV 9).
13. ²⁵ If we live [*spiritually*] by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit [*thus walk with Him as our guide*]. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited [*boastful*], provoking [*challenging*] one another, envying [*being jealous of*] one another. // Christian freedom means walking, conducting oneself, by the Holy Spirit's power and leading.

New Testament Epistle / Letter: Galatians 6:1-18

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All references in red are from: Engelbrecht, E. A. (2009). *The Lutheran Study Bible*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

Bear One Another's Burdens: 6:1-10

1. **6** Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.
 - a. Lenski noted that the “transgression” is not a “deliberate sin; [Paul] deals with sins into which one may be ‘tempted’ in some way.... But also sins that are due to ignorance, weakness, the deceptive power of sin, the persuasion and the bad example of others” (297-298).
 - b. Also, note that the task is only for someone who is spiritual; Lenski noted that “it is always an action that requires expert skill.... [Like] setting a broken limb, mending nets” (298).
 - c. Finally, “we remember that temptation may catch us also as it has caught this or that brother” (Lenski, 298). So we are to keep watch on ourselves!
2. **2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. // Helping someone caught in a transgression is one type of burden-bearing, there are also many others. As Christ saw and bore the burden of our sin, so we are called to see and bear the burdens of others.
3. **3** For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. // “...such a man thinks that he is something and needs no help from his brethren in bearing any burdens he may have... Thus also he will have no heart for his burdened brethren. For what makes us tender and helpful... is the realization that we ourselves are nothing and that we, too, need our brethren” (Lenski, 300).
4. **4** But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. **5** For each will have to bear his own load. // “The diligent tester... will find that he does amount to something... He will, of course, thank God for that.... What Paul says is that this tester will get no wrong estimate by pitting himself against the other person and deciding that he is better than that other person... He will stand on his own feet...” (Lenski, 301).
5. **6** Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. // “The one who instructs has the good things; the one being instructed is to proceed to participate in them... the pupil is to institute ‘fellowship’ with the teacher so that he, the pupil, may be enriched” (Lenski, 303).
6. **7** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. **8** For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
 - a. Those words describe the law of the harvest; we not only reap what we sow, but, thinking about the difference between seeds and what is harvested, we reap a MUCH GREATER AMOUNT than what we sow!
 - b. Paul referred to two kinds of sowing:
 - i. To the flesh: ^{ESV} **Galatians 5:19-21** Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 - ii. To the Spirit: ^{ESV} **Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;
against such things there is no law.

- c. Also, "...we must not be deceived as to any possibility of God being mocked" (Lenski, 305).
 - d. This passage is similar: ^{NAS} **Romans 8:5-6**
For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace... // In other words, which nature is *dominating* our lives – the old, flesh-driven nature OR the new, Spirit-driven nature?
7. ⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.
- a. Have you ever tried to do good toward someone – *hoping for a positive response*, but then, *after much time passed without the desired response*, you gave up? Y N
 - b. Giving up under those circumstances is normal; however, in the passage above, God is promising a blessing – *in due time*, thus according to His time, not ours. Therefore, *He wants us to keep pressing on and not giving up*, knowing that God's blessing is coming – some day!
 - c. The good we do is to be done for everyone – *as opportunities come our way*, but the good is especially to be done for our brothers and sisters in Christ!
"Help them and promote their interest— in every way and wherever you can— purely out of love for God and to please Him. Do this in the confidence that He will abundantly reward you for everything" (LC I 328).

Final Warning and Benediction: 6:11-18

8. ¹¹ See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. // Paul dictated the rest of the letter to scribes, but here he

wrote it himself to make it authentic – like us signing a type-written letter.

9. ¹² It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. // If the Judaizers actually would preach the cross of Christ (i.e., the Gospel) like Paul and drop insistence on circumcision, they would incur the wrath of non-Christian Jews. By compelling circumcision, they deleted "Christ alone" from their message and thus [satisfied] hard-line Jewish critics.
10. ¹³ For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. // To enhance their own standing in Jewish eyes, the circumcision party hypocritically bragged about their success in getting Gentile converts to accept circumcision.
11. ¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified [made dead] to me [according to my new nature], and I to the world. // "Although believers are regenerate and renewed in the spirit of their mind, in the present life this regeneration and renewal is not complete. It is only begun. Believers ... struggle constantly against the corrupt nature and character, which cleaves to us until death" (FC Ep VI 4).
12. ¹⁵ For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation [2 Cor. 5:17]. ¹⁶ And as for all who walk by this rule [the cross and the new creation], peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.
13. ¹⁷ From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. // See 2 Corinthians 4:8-10
14. ¹⁸ The grace [undeserved love] of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit [with you], brothers. Amen.