Galatians*

Galatians 1:1-12 (1) Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)
(2) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:
(3) Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,
(4) Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:
(5) To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
(6) I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:
(7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.
(8) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.
(9) As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.
(10) For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.
(11) But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.
(12) For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.
Something was seriously wrong in the churches of Galatia to prompt such a sobering introduction. A careful reading of the entire epistle confirms this observation. While Paul was in Antioch after his first missionary journey (A.D. 49-50), he learned that the churches which Barnabas and he had

established in the faith, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, were being won over by false teachers. Galatia was not a city, like Rome or Corinth, but rather a Roman province containing many cities and numerous churches. Galatia was named after the Gauls who inhabited north central Asia Minor at the time, and thus, were the true ethnic Galatians. The southern portion of the Roman Galatia province was not originally part of Galatia, and was inhabited more by Greeks and Romans than by descendants of the Gauls. It was into this mixing pot that Paul came preaching the last and final covenant that Heaven would make with man. The "Churches of Galatia," to whom Paul addressed his epistle, had become confused and led astray by Judaizing Christians who were contending that believers should be circumcised and a great portion of the epistle written to the Galatians was about that very problem and the law verses faith in Christ. The great theme of Galatians is that of justification by faith without the ordinances of the law. Legalism in any form—whether circumcision or ritualism or anything else—will neither save a sinner nor perfect a saint. And that is what Paul wanted the Galatians to understand, turn with me to;

Galatians 6:11-15 (11) Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.
(12) As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.
(13) For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.
(14) But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.
(15) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Paul and Barnabas argued against the teachings of the

Judaizing Christians, who were claiming that Gentile Christians had to be circumcised and obey the Mosaic laws for Christian maturity and sanctification. Apparently the Judaizing Christians were causing quite a stir. So much so that Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem for consideration of the matter. This question was settled once and for all, in favor of salvation by grace through faith in Christ, completely apart from these ordinances of the law. This decision was fully supported by the Apostles and the elders at Jerusalem, turn with me to;

Acts 15:22-31 (22) Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:
(23) And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:
(24) Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:
(25) It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,
(26) Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
(27) We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.
(28) For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;
(29) That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.
(30) So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and

when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:
(31) Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.
The question does arise, however, if it was expedient for those under the Old Law of Moses, is it expedient for those who are following God by faith in Christ? The straightforward answer to this question is a simple, NO. When Jesus Christ died, He nailed the Old Law of ordinances to the cross (Colossians 2:14). The book of Hebrews explains that Christ made the Law of Moses obsolete and replaced it with the New Covenant. Paul also explained to Christians in Galatia that the Old Law was cast out and replaced by faith in Christ, let's read;
Galatians 4:21-31 (21) Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?
(22) For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.
(23) But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.
(24) Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.
(25) For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.
(26) But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
(27) For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.
(28) Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.
(29) But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.
(30) Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall

not be heir with the son of the freewoman.
(31) So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.
The regulations of clean and unclean foods, rules for animal sacrifice, ritual washings, annual feast days, sabbath days (Col 2:14-16), circumcision, and other ceremonial trappings were finished when Christ died on the cross, then in 70 A.D. the nation of Israel was destroyed never to exist under God again. It is true that some prohibitions in the ten commandments, such as the prohibition to murder or steal are repeated in the new covenant, however the law of ordinances were not. The only way to know what God expects of individuals under the new covenant is to study the 27 books in the New Testament that contain His will. The Judaizers who plagued the early church claimed to be Christians, and much of their doctrine was orthodox. They must have recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah and even acknowledged the value of His sacrificial death on the cross--otherwise they would never have gotten a hearing in the church. They did not overtly deny the gospel, but sought to improve it by adding the requirements, ceremonies, and standards of the Old ordinances to the New. But anything added to grace destroys it just as surely as does anything taken from it. When the old ordinances are added to His grace, then it ceases to be grace by faith in Christ, turn to;
Matthew 9:16-17 (16) No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.
(17) Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.
Ultimately, we can expect to be judged by this new covenant, and can understand why Paul spoke these words recorded in;
Galatians 3:1-9 (1) O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched

you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?
(2) This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
(3) Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?
(4) Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.
(5) He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
(6) Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.
(7) Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.
(8) And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.
(9) So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.
While preaching to the cities of Galatia, Paul is stoned and left for dead. What would you do at this point? Would you consider leaving missionary work? Just how strong are we? Please notice how Paul responds to this stoning, turn to;
Acts 14:19-22 (19) And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.
(20) Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.
(21) And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,
(22) Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them

to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.
Paul never misses a beat, he gets up and goes right on preaching! He even goes back to Lystra and encourages the believers to continue in the faith. Picture it! Paul must have been badly bruised and bloodied. But there he stands encouraging the Christians. What does it take to discourage you from serving Christ? Paul doesn't get mad at God while he is serving Christ, and people stone him. Would you question God if something like this happened to you? Would you wonder why God didn't protect you in His service? Paul doesn't even complain. He took a licking and kept on ticking, preaching the Gospel. Just as Paul battled the Judaizers during his lifetime, so we must constantly battle the Judaizers of our own day. A most important doctrine for the Christian is one simple teaching: "The just shall live by faith." There is a great need in the world today for solid biblical teaching. Our sufficiency is found in Christ alone! Our salvation is found in Christ alone! Our redemption, justification, sanctification, and freedom are found in no other place than Christ alone! And yet there be teachers that steer believers away from the blessings in Christ saying; it is not necessary to be baptized into Christ. Listen, all spiritual blessings are in Christ. Faith in Christ is the effect of belief, and baptism into Christ is the effect of faith. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal 3:27). *There was a time in history when it was said, "All roads lead to Rome." Well, all roads may have led to Rome at one time, but all roads definitely do not lead to eternal life. We should not be led to believe that we can pursue eternal life in the same way that we navigate our way to geographical destinations. There is only one way spiritually. There is only one Gospel, and it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the ticket to Heaven, and we must all come to the Father by the gift of grace through faith in Christ apart from any meritorious works of our own,*

turn to;
Ephesians 2:4-10 (4) But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
(5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
(6) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:
(7) That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.
(8) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
(9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.
(10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.
You see, we are saved by grace through faith in Christ and not by works of the mosaic laws, such as animal sacrifice, ritual washings, annual feast days, sabbath day observances (Col 2:14-16), circumcision and a host of other unrelated works. On the day of Pentecost after the death of Christ, there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews out of every nation under heaven. When they asked what they must do, Peter's answer to them was contingent on the eternal and immutable faith in Christ, not on any works of the law. Hear what the spirit says through Peter; Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). *Legalism in any form—whether circumcision or ritualism or anything else—will neither save a sinner nor perfect a saint. Some consider baptism as ritualism and not necessary for salvation. But baptism for "salvation (Mark 16:16)" was established by Jesus Christ after His death on the cross, apart from the old law, and before He ascended into Heaven. To speak of baptism as some flippant, fly-by-night*

ritual insults the eternal plan of God. It is meaningful because God deemed it so. And if one truly takes the time to study the passages that discuss baptism, he will have a better understanding of its significance; Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him (Romans 6:6). *When Christ died He was attached to the cross with nails driven threw His flesh. Listen to this, Paul said;* I am crucified with Christ: (Gal 2:20). *And so are the faithful. Our attachment to the cross is by nails of faith, may our faith never be compromised that our attachment to the cross ever be lost. Faith in Christ is the effect of belief, and the ordinance of baptism is the effect of faith in Christ.*

God never intended for a person to think that water has the power to forgive sins of itself, any more than He expected Naaman to believe the power to cleanse his leprosy was in the Jordan River. In fact, the apostle Peter was very clear about this matter when he wrote that baptism is "not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter 3:21). Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia these words; For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ *(Galatians 3:27). Galatians stands as an eloquent and vigorous apologetic for the essential NT truth that people are justified by faith in Jesus Christ -- by nothing less and nothing more. That people are sanctified not by legalistic works of the old law, but by the gospel, by faith born of water and of the Holy Spirit, the grace and power of Christ. The false doctrine that one is "saved by faith only--without baptism" is eliminating obedience. One is saved by grace through faith, however, it must be a faith that is the effect of belief by hearing the word of God. If one were to think works have nothing to do with salvation, think again. The works of the flesh are a surefire way* ***not*** *to inherit the Kingdom of God. But one may say, I'm not guilty of the works of the flesh. What then, are emulations?, or lasciviousness?, or variance? Don't know, then how does one know one is not guilty?*

Emulations--(1) is an effort or desire to equal or excel others. (2) jealous rivalry.
Lasciviousness--(1) inclined to lustfulness; wanton; lewd: (2) to be eager, wanton, or unruly.
Variance--(1) a difference or discrepancy (2) a departure from the original
Surly the Chief Priests were in jealous rivalry with Christ. They incited the crowd to an unruly behavior because of their willingly departure from the original word of God that prophesied of the Messiah. The crowd was in blind reverence to the Chief Priests who were loathing the Christ and they cried out, crucify Him! After His resurrection but before He ascended into Heaven, Jesus established the ordinance of salvation, turn with me to;
Mark 16:14-16 (14) Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.
(15) And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
(16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.
Remember, faith in Christ is the effect of belief in His gospel, it follows then that baptism is the effect of faith because He declared the baptized shall be saved; therefore, only those who first believe the testimony of God, by faith repent of their sins, confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and are baptized into Him for remission of sins, have the full and explicit testimony of pardon. This is the gospel.
It's invitation is always open, also prayer requests for other reasons, in either case come while we persuade with song.

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The message ‘Galatians’ Revised 01282020
This message presented to; BaronOk-Aug2013/