


ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

BIBLE COMMENTARY NO.49

GALATIANS

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CHAPTER 1

Moderns seem like Alice content to pass through wormholes to a fantasy world This epistle is written against the background of “disappointment” (1.6; 2.6, 12; 3.1; 4.9, 20; 5.7, 15, 26). But if we continue faithful through disappointment we often find circumstances change entirely. A Sunday school teacher resigned but then an army chaplain reported to her the words of a dying soldier who said “Tell her I am dying a Christian”. She went back to her pastor & rededicated her life. The gospel is the real bastion of sincere living, pure light and liberty that empowers without enslaving. Without grace the compassionate society suffers, promises are as pie-crust, sterility takes hold of religion. The date is circa AD57 and the letter was written from Ephesus or Macedonia (during the 3rd Tour) cf Acts 18.6. This is Paul's Wittenburg where he faces the Jewish world with his “I can no other, so help me God” – he will wrangle with Jerusalem and minister to the Gentiles

(1) PAUL, APOSTLE WHOSE LIFE IS FOREVER DIFFERENT 1-4

–7 views of Christ to renew a threadbare spirit.

Paul is not an apostle “*ἀπ ἀνθρώπων*” meaning he is not on the apron strings of any man, he is not “in succession” for the apostolate may have a gospel baton but its number was limited by the terms stated by Peter in Acts 1.22. The office was not invented by men but limited by the direct appointment of Christ. Matthias was voted upon – to fulfil scripture – scripture significantly classes his role as a “bishopric”. We cannot rule out that in a scene akin to Matt3.7 or Mark 10.21 or Paul saw Jesus earlier-but the crux as in v.1 is that he met *the risen* Lord Jesus Christ. The “transfigured Christ” of the mount was as the Christ of the Damascus Road. Ac20.4. In AD57 Paul was gathering men who wanted not narrow religion – Aquila, Timothy, Luke, Crispus, Justus, Titus, Gaius of Derbe – these men wanted a faith “worthy of all acceptance”

The reference to the blessing of Numbers 6.24ff is regular in Paul's letters. He exults in Christ High Priest of the New Testament. The “Father's place” in caring for believers is here associated as taught by Christ in Luke11.2ff

Jesus gave Himself “for/instead of” us *ὑπερ* to “take us out” of this age that “has come in”. Paul was living in the time of Nero (Nero took over from Claudius in 54AD aged 17). The word “evil” *πονηρος* means “causing hardship”. Archbishop Trench has this definition, “all that floating mass of thoughts opinions maxims speculations hopes impulses aims aspirations at any time current in the world which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define-but which constitute a most real & effective power-being the moral or immoral atmosphere which at every moment we inhale & exhale”. For Paul neither Claudius nor Nero – hailed as divine by the Romans had nothing in him, he looked to Christ **(1) Paul viewed Jesus as Son of God and (2) expiatory sacrifice.**

Let us begin by being sure we can say “Amen” to the power of Grace over our lives-that has released us from this world's mighty sway!

(2) GALATIA'S SWIFT MOVE FROM CHRIST DISAPPOINTS 5-10

"I am surprised (θαυμαζω-means to wonder at a juggler) you have changed opinion/recanted/re-interpreted so speedily." (Lit-ταξις) – to move from **viewing Christ (3) who called you while still in the circle of the grace** into another gospel.

Chrysostom called the "wolves in sheep's clothing" that troubled the early church – demanding a return to the "works of the law" **Judaizers**. Their 4 tests were "circumcision for salvation"; Abraham's lineage vital to God's call (Mt3.9); observance of the law (Mt19.20) in detail vital and attendance at Jewish feasts vital (Gal.4.1, 1Cor.5.7) There is here in v5 "another gospel" lit ετερος -that is, heterogenic-but it does not glorify God for the gift of Jesus His Son our atoning lamb. Certain have "mixed you up or confused you" (the root of *ταρασσω* is *ταρβος* meaning "to alarm or frighten". Their desire "to change your mind" or "to alter your course or direction" from **(4) viewing "Christ as the gospel"** *μεθιστεμαι*

"If we or an angel announce "good news" comparable or superior *παρα* to that of Christ let him be *devoted to Satan*. As we accosted friends so now again I say to you, 'If any is evangelising you above what you received let him be *devoted to Satan*' Up to now says Paul I have been persuading men "to repent" – do I now begin to persuade God to change his mind? That would mean "I am not a servant of Christ". Christians **(5) view Christ as Lord**

(3) PAUL'S GOSPEL WAS GIVEN BY REVELATION 11-17

*Paul says "In Christ the veil is taken away". This unveiling first dramatically took place on the Damascus Road. Testimonies had gone before but essentially the gospel is "an unveiling" – a "taking away of the scales from the eyes"-the experience John Newton captured well in his famous hymn **Amazing Grace** "I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see"*

γνωριζω I want to speak intimately

(a) The gospel I preached (*the Greek termination ιζω may carry the idea of "clear tone" and "plain articulation" and "swiftness"*)

Is not "in conformity with" men, nor did I receive it from a man before me, nor was it Talmudic teaching, but throughout it was **(6) an unveiled view of Jesus Christ.**

(b) Paul reminded them that they had his testimony – his way of life in Jewish circles. He had spoken of his "far-flung" persecutions – like distant sling shots. He "made havoc and despoiled the church"

(c) How he promoted the increase of Judaism more than his fellows – being more overwhelmingly zealous for the traditions of the fathers that were my dearest possession.

(d) Except when *οτε* God was glad or content – **having separated me from my mothers womb** (cp "testimony below) – and called me through His grace from first to last – to reveal His Son in me that I might preach the gospel to the Gentiles I did not take counsel with flesh & blood *προσανατιθημι* nor go up to Jerusalem to the earlier apostles – but I went into Arabia and returned to Damascus. We may ask why? It was like Christ going to the desert. He had time to pray.

4 AFTER 3 YEARS IN DAMASCUS & ARABIA returns to his spiritual and parental homes

He returned to Damascus and then to Jerusalem and his old home of Tarsus – beyond the “stairs of Syria” (v21)

His visit to Jerusalem was to “get a detailed account” or “question” Peter *ιστορειω*. By occasion he also was introduced to James who became known as “camel-knees” from his prayerfulness – the LORD’S brother. Now Paul adds that the things he writes are absolutely true. But I myself remained unknown by sight to the churches of God in Judea. They were hearing “He that formerly persecuted us now is preaching the faith which he once laid waste and despoiled. And they glorified God in me.

The significance of the testimony is that it tells the story of formalist religion which needed to re-discover by revelation and grace and calling like that of Isaiah in Isa49.16 and Jeremiah in Jer 1.5 & 15 that the God who gives us life has a plan from the very start to bring us to new life in Christ and to use us for His glory.

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Think, believer, from time to time of what splendid providence and abundant grace was exercised in your coming into this world! My own birth was amid bleak forebodings in the dark days of World War II. It was May of 1942 when the Montgomery was in command of the 8th army pursuing Rommel in North Africa. Food was scarce and the threat of invasion loomed large at home. Mother listened while the doctor told her that the difficult birth ahead would adversely affect her health – did she want to abort? She answered “No!” and committed us to the Lord. Her health was affected but much relieved by another Christian doctor who “Left no stone unturned” in seeking a remedy. She gave her “Bobby” (that was me) to the Lord. In my 13th year the LORD spoke to my heart through evangelist Victor McManus and sealed that message through Andrew Brown who gave me an all important tract in Primrose Lane – the “lane that time forgot.” It was the invitation of a very mild and kind father, Robert Coffey, (senior) that brought me under the sound of the gospel in days when the Spirit of God was moving in our little town in the county Down. The Christian Workers Union hired a hall on the corner of the Causeway Road, Newcastle, Co. Down and there I sensed my need of Christ and made my first response. When I was 15 I told my mother that I believed God was calling me to be a preacher. She counted it the time to share with me the affecting story of my birth (I think of Ezekiel 15.4 and God’s great grace when I reflect on it nowadays). My believing parents sacrificed to enable me to do a crash course at Renshaws, Belfast and become a student entering university at 17, The LORD saw to it that I gained thorough training beginning very happily at 22 in Alexandra Presbyterian Church under the evangelical ministry of the Rev. Martin Smyth and retiring from Welling Baptist Church after 43 years from the course of regular ministry. Mother was herself converted under the auspice of the Faith Mission and father under the Baptist preacher, Pastor Shields. *Galatians 1.15 “It pleased God who separated me from my mother’s womb to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him” is a text very dear to me.* Now much I owe to my angel mother and what abundant grace the LORD has shown to me!

CHAPTER 2

It has been said that justification by faith is “the article of a standing or falling church” Spurgeon declared “This is all my theology – “Christ died for me” “I am wedded to this epistle” said Martin Luther; as he saw it “The law shows us “His back – the gospel His face”. In his “Babylonian Captivity of the Church” Luther wrote of this letter “Every word ought to be a thunderbolt”. Here we look at guidance; at Paul’s conference with Peter James and John and at the “faith failure” of Peter (vacillation)...Pillars cf Jn.5.24, James 3.23, Peter1.19.

DATES F.F.Bruce dates Paul’s conversion possibly as early as 33A.D; this in turn admits of a first Jerusalem visit by 35/6 A.D. and following the “sequential “*επειτα* statements of Galatians 2 places the 2nd visit at “**famine relief visit of Barnabas & Paul AD49, exactly the dating of the Jerusalem Council.** Helena – Jewish queen mother – bought corn in Egypt and figs in Cyprus for distribution to the hungry

populace according to Josephus during the procuratorships of Fadus & Alexander (44-48). This fits with Missionary tours 1(46-48); 2(50-52) and 3(54-58). The *Catchpole* argument adopted by **Professor Howard Marshall** is that the Paul Barnabas split is owing to the council acting in Paul's absence – this argument would result in dating the 1st tour as early as the first. Marshall's pleading against the *Jewett calendar* which pushes the relief visit to Acts 18 as a preamble to the 3rd tour is neither here nor there (cf Acts IVP). We read Thee best in Him who came to bear the cross of shame. Sent by the Father from on high our life to live our death to die...Gordon of Khartoum

THE VISIT TO JERUSALEM 1-10

Paul was a leading and comprehensive Old Testament scholar

The visit to which he refers was "by revelation". Guidance takes a variety of forms. Modern day "Satellite-based" guidance was developed by the Borroughs Corporation and can be thought of as comparable to God guiding *from above*. When the Nautilus travelled beneath the Artic cap it was by Inertial guidance – comparable to the movement of the Holy Spirit *in the soul*. Dr Alexander of Princeton believed in "*one step*" at a time as we walk in the light. Cf "One step at a time sweet Jesus – that's all that I'm asking from thee". To look only to "others" for guidance can be disappointing. Billy Sunday has the story of a lady on a train that depended on a fellow traveller who said "I'll be sure you get off right. "It's the next station" said he. She and her child alighted and, sadly, died in a blizzard in the wilderness as a result. It is said Irradium and Platinum provide a perfect yardstick varying less than 1 millionth part of an inch. Scripture is like that – used with Prayer and the Holy Spirit it gives sure guidance.

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE AND JUSTIFICATION verses 6 & 16

Paul quotes two scriptures to buttress his approach to Peter and withstanding of his attitude about basing fellowship on circumcision rather than faith in Christ.

Paul quotes two OT passages – Deuteronomy 10:16ff (v6) and Psalm 143:2 (v16).

(1) "Whatever they were makes no difference to me: God accepts no man's person: they who seemed something in conference added nothing to me."

Deuteronomy 10 reads "The LORD your God is God of gods, and LORD of lords, a great God, a mighty and terrible one **that regards not persons**"

(2) "We have believed in Jesus Christ, *that we might be justified by the faith* of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (v.16) is a direct quote from Psalm 143.2 "**In your sight shall no living man be justified**".

TECHNICAL POINTS CONCERNING THE JERUSALEM VISIT 1-6

On this visit Titus was taken to Jerusalem. He was a Greek and some think engaged with Paul from early days though unmentioned in Acts on account of family ties with Luke – but we need not exclude him from Luke's "we"(cf Ramsey)

Paul commissioned a report. Barnabas represented one side – Titus the other – the word might describe "moving draughts on a board" *ανατιθεμι* – for Paul showed how he evangelised Gentiles obviously within the "Jew first" synagogue visit style he adopted. He urged that he was 'running hurriedly' to reach as many as he could *τρεχω* and he was running a course set for him *δρομεω* by the Lord. His "private communication" was to those who were esteemed or highly thought of. But throughout the conference false brothers had to be present – who came in to spy – i.e. examine and report *κατασκοπησαι* elsewhere the freedom we had in Christ. To

these Paul and his group did not yield in submission for an hour, meaning that they were not even allowed in to the substantive debate – but were sidelined by Paul’s representations – for the sake of the truth of the gospel keeping its ground. NB The private session was a six man session – confirming the Acts 15 position
 But from those who mattered (*whatever they formerly were is not my concern – God is no respecter of persons*) – to me those who were reputed place upon me no other hostile burden i.e. showed no opposition – knowing I was entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, as Peter had trust for circumcised people (*for He who had energised Peter’s apostolate to the circumcised energised me for the Gentiles*)
 Knowing the grace given me James Peter and John being the reputable pillars, gave Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to Gentiles and they to Jews-only that we remember the terribly poor Jews, which matter I had already given study /priority to do in a once-for-all effort **εσπουδασα...ποιησαι**
 So we learn “the gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus” suffered long ago from “pluses” and “burdens added” and still does.

PETER’S DISSIMULATION AT ANTIOCH AND PAUL’S REBUKE 11&14b-21 The law cannot bring life or righteousness

When Peter came to Antioch Paul withstood him to the face because “he was to be censured” or “he caused himself to be ill thought of” Before certain came from James he ate with Gentiles, when they came he “lowered his sail” and “went over the horizon” fearing the circumcision. He was unwilling for a storm. The remainder of the Jews began to act falsely (*hypocritically*) with him so that even Barnabas left at once in their playacting. When Paul saw that they were not walking straight or uphill – i.e. taking the hard way to the open truth of the gospel he spoke historically to Peter and publicly too.

“If you really are living now according to Gentile custom and not by Jewish tradition why do you force Gentiles to live according to Jewish customs? We are Jews by birth and not Gentiles who fail as to keeping the law; we know that no man living is justified from the works of the law (Psalm 145.2) – if not through faith of Jesus Christ, and we have believed once for all into Christ Jesus-that we might be justified from faith of Christ and not from works of law. Wherefore there is not any flesh that may be justified from works of law. But if while seeking to be justified in Christ’s circle we discover that we ourselves are sinners – surely Christ is minister of sin! (The idea is “we are denying a principle” and “demonstrating Christ failed” – but no, we are failing) God forbid – “If I build up again the things that I tore down, I place myself in the position of a transgressor.”

1 For by the instrumentality of law I died by law, that I might live anew as in spring in God

2 I am consciously self-crucified with Christ – but I live anew as in spring

3 It is not still I that lives this spring-like life

4 On the one hand Christ is living it out in me

5 On the other the life I now live in the flesh I live in the circle of the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me. These five points are like the blows to drive five nails into the cross!

“I must not put aside the grace of God – for if sharing righteousness was by law from first to last surely Christ died in vain”

All this is in total accord with Psalm 143 which further says “I stretch forth my hands unto Thee, my soul thirsts after Thee, as a thirsty land”...and ‘Cause me to hear thy loving kindness in the morning, for in thee do I trust, cause me to know the way

wherein I should walk' and 'Quicken Thou me O Lord for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness sake bring my soul out of trouble'

Summary: *A man who had become separated from his wife and estranged from his family held more dearly than any I have known to Galatians 2.20. Though guilty before the law A/B was acquitted by God's grace. The judge featured in the old tract "A traveller's guide between life & death" imposed a steep sentence on his erring son in the dock-but himself stepped down to pay. Said a pianist to a friend "At your age I said "I"; at 25 "I & Mozart"; at 40 "Mozart & I"-now "Mozart". Bengel called it "the marrow of Christianity"*

CHAPTER 3

This chapter takes us through important teaching on conditions for "receiving the Holy Spirit; on the basis of justification; on how the curse is removed; on the covenant and its central plank; on the law and its purposes; on being sons of God – faith clothing and heir-ship. Here Satan's spell is broken

Influence: –

My life shall touch a dozen lives before this day is done, leave countless marks of good or ill e'er sets the sun

This the wish I always wish, the prayer I always pray; Lord may my life help other lives it touches on the way

WHO CAST THE SPELL? 1-5

THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN BREAK THE SPELL (cf Gospel & the mind)

Paul is disappointed that the Galatians have fallen under the power of others. They were like people under a spell or charm. Who can develop doubt of truth but the devil himself? He can even cast doubt on the efficacy of the cross! Christ was by public proclamation and ultimate authority *προγραφή* (His commission before his advent) presented as "crucified" (i.e. the propitiatory sacrifice). We all need to answer the 4 Pauline questions

- (a) Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obedient faith or by energetic fulfilling of law?-Spirit's still small voice...
- (b) Can you complete the battle/spiritual service that you began through the Holy Spirit in the flesh? cf Temptation.
- (c) Have you suffered a little/so much *τοσαυτος* – probably – if it is probable? I.e. did it cost too much?
- (d) Does God give his Spirit /energising miracles by law works or by obedient faith Cf Ephesians 6 14-17 The Holy Spirit supplies all the means of soldiering

SCRIPTURE BREAKS THE SPELL –THE BASIS OF JUSTIFICATION 6-9 (cf The Gospel & the will)

Other lives are instructive-biography. Paul is ever pointing to Abraham. He takes three occasions:

- (1) Gen.15.6 After the battle with kings Chedorlaomer, Tidal, Amraphel and Arioch the LORD said to him "I am thy shield." "Look now toward heaven – so shall thy seed be!" Abraham believed in the "seed" i.e. **Christ**.
- (2) Gen.12.3 **Get out** of Ur; I will make you a great nation, and bless you. Abraham's action demonstrates that faith and leaving world's side are compatible with the best in life.
- (3) Gen.18.18. Before Sodom was destroyed God said to Abraham "In you **all nations** shall be blessed" God trusted him to "command his house" – His persistent prayer for the sparing of 50, 40, 30, 20 or 10 was answered by the sparing of Lot.

Paul shows from the last text that scripture “foresaw nations blessed” by gospel faith. This promise was and is at work the world over. Gospel faith leads to the removal of the curse vv10-14. Blood redemption can break the spell of which Paul speaks. We have now four texts quoted by the Apostle that demonstrate man’s critical condition

(a) Deut27.26 “Cursed be he who fails to keep rising *mic* to all the law to do it” Paul uses the word “continue” to emphasise that this is a lifelong trial in ethics and doomed to fail

(b) Habakkuk 2.4 “My just man will live by faith that is centred in me” This is the only basis of relationship with God

Lev18.5 “They must keep my statutes & judgments, he who by sacrifice does so will live in them-I am Lord

Deut21.23 “Cursed is everyone hanged on a tree” Why a tree? The Hebrew *xl* word gives us the answer – it speaks of “*that which grows harder by the year*” and symbolises contumacy

But redemption breaks the spell of Satan... Christ “took us out of the marketplace of slaves” becoming a curse instead of us. That gentle heart broke on the cross where our hard hearts ought to have been!

COVENANT AND PROMISE BREAK THE SPELL 15-16

Paul calls this an everyday example. He uses “gnomic presents” – i.e. “truisms” of any age. You can’t annul or keep adding to a covenant. Marriage is a timeless example. The covenant promises literally **flowed** *επηθυσαν* from God – but always centred on “a seed”. Gen12.7 “Unto thy Seed” 13.15 “All land...to thy Seed” 17.7”Between me Thee & thy Seed” 24.7 “God that swore to give the land to my Seed will send his angel” (to guide the servant to Rebekah) Abraham’s faith is here shown that God would guard the lineage until the **Seed** was born. The promise was given to Abraham **by grace**. His own eternal happiness, the land and widest blessings **by grace**

HOPE CAN BREAK THE SPELL (The gospel and encouragement)

The law cannot invalidate the promise but drives us to it (Enforcing the gospel appeal to the conscience)

God brought Israel out of Egypt after 10 plagues **on the very anniversary night of their coming in**. So Gen46.28 and the entrance to Egypt was like a great 21st birthday party for Benjamin. Judah arrived first with Joseph as they came – he prepared his chariot and rode to Goshen. The meeting of Joseph and Jacob is most tender. “Let me die when I have seen your face.” Those tears of love – those fears unfounded – those years of separation & purpose are all parcelled up in this meeting.

Then as Israel was led safely across the sea – 430 year later to meet God at Sinai – the law was given

(a)The law was given because of transgressions to limit & judge – till Jesus came with pardon and power cf v19

(b) The law was a chain – angels as jury & executors – Moses as giver & enforcer – and God. Moses was not alone.

(c) But God is one & retains single powers. In other words he can rescind or revoke and overrule the law

(d) The law is not contrary to the promises – for only if a law had power to give life and righteousness could it vie with promise

- (e) The scripture locks everything in life in the category or class of “sinful” So that only by faith or promise is life
- (a) Before faith comes we were guarded – locked in on every side–until faith was revealed
- (b) It is as if the law was our pedagogue – an ever-present monitor in our lives

THE JOY OF SALVATION BREAKS THE SPELL (The gospel and the imagination)

Here stands an historic statement “We are all one in Christ – neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free, male or female”. The contextual fact is this has to do with entrance to standing with God. Kleine Snodgrass makes it do service for the “ordination of women” etc. Role distinctions are found in Gen 1 and Paul appeals to Gen.2 in 1Cor.11, Eph.5, 1Tim.2. This text has become an exegetical “wax nose” that can be twisted to suit any theory. Paul Jewett thinks this first epistle of Paul was his best and believes for his own reasons that the apostle receded to Judaistic views in his pastorals. Paul is rather describing the time when a young man removes the crimson – edged toga praetexta & dons the toga virilis. So as in Isa61, Zech3.2-4 & Isaiah 61.10 as “sons” we are clothed in “the garments of salvation” – what joy!

cf Thomas Chalmers who introduced Glasgow’s **poor** to school, pastored the Tron Church, developed Parish system and helped William Carey the first modern missionary – he **established 200 churches** and became the First Moderator of the Free Kirk.

CHAPTER 4

Paul is specific about three stages of Christian development, the earliest *νηπιος* period with the danger of Mr.Worldly Wiseman; the *τεκνια* period of keen affection for spiritual mentors & growth into Christ but complicated by meeting the rut of tradition; the *υιος* ‘Abba or conversational’ period of joyful freedom sturdy endurance in persecution & holiness.

THE HEIR IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A SPIRITUAL CHILD OF GOD 1-7

There is need for milk – there is very considerable lack of understanding of God’s sovereign plan. The Young Christian like the nobleman’s child is little better than a household servant though “to the manor born.” He is under guardians and administrators (trustees) until the time appointed by the Father. As the learning of the alphabet and basic sounds belongs to this stage of training so the creation and law that demonstrated sin were first grasped Only with the gospel did the doctrines of a Saviour & redemption come to view. Here Paul brings in precious teaching on the person and work of Christ – “God sent His Son – born of a woman”. There is a vital truth in *γενομενον* – which is a participle from *γινομαι* ; the truth conveyed is that Christ “came into a state of being” and not that He was humanly fathered *γενναω*. Christ by redemption *εξαγοραση* paid the price for our forgiveness – which in turn dissolved the legal constraint upon our past–and opened to us adoption status *υιοθεσιαν* – sending His Spirit in our hearts so that we began to clamour and bawl amid tears(the idea mirrors repentance)for our Father *αββα*.

THE HEIR IS ADOPTED 8-19

Before that wonderful spiritual experience of conversion to Christ the Galatians had many so-called “gods” but they had not the divine nature or character. Now very much aware of God *γγνωσκω* how is it that you have been “converted” again to the weak and poor first concepts derived from Moses – which could not reveal Jesus. The disappointment of Paul that he may have wrought in vain is directly related to their

return to the calendar and the zodiac (Isaiah 37.19, Jeremiah 2.11) instead of the cross – the New Year and jubilee year and sabbatical redemption. The once-for-all atonement of Christ is not enjoyed.

Paul goes back to his reception in Galatia

- (a) Become like me – get engaged – inclined to me as I was to you – I didn't injure you
- (b) You know that through weakness of body I brought you good news – my trial brought nor contempt nor scorn
- (c) You received me as an angel of God – as if I was Jesus Christ
- (d) Who was the one pronounced blessed of yourselves
- (e) I testify you would if possible have dug out your eyes and given them to me
- (f) How am I become a personal opponent because I pre-diagnosed or divined the truth *αληθευω*? (Amos 5.10)

Now he unmasks the Judaizers

- (a) These people are warm or zealous – but it is not nice – they want to lock you up to be warm to them alone!
- (b) But it is good to be warm always towards the one honoured and dear – not just in my presence with you
- (c) My children *τεκνια* over whom I am in “the throes of pain” once more – till Christ is formed in you – I wish I could be present with you right now and change my voice for I would be in a stream of tears among you.

THE HEIR IS MARCHING TO ZION 21-31

Paul refers to the Genesis allegory of the princess and the fugitive. Gen 16.11; 21.6; 21.10; 21.16-17; 25.9

There was a problem – one son was born free under promise – one born in bondage – two covenants are implied

- (a) The Lord's prophecy of Ishmael (God hears) “a wild ass of a man – his hand against all – hostile to his brethren”
Hagar runs away because she despised Sarah and was disciplined. The angel said “Go back”. She did.
- (b) Sarah said, “God has brought me ‘laughter’” & “Put away the bondwoman and her son – for he won't share!”
- (c) Hagar put the boy under a bush a bowshot away. God heard and said “Lift the boy – I will make him great nation”
- (d) Ishmael was there at Abraham's death at 89 years of age 75 years after the break-up.

The Two covenants:

Hagar coordinates with Sinai and as Israel brought Sinai laws to Jerusalem that is the vision of Judaism. Sarah co-ordinates with Zion above because from there came Christ and there we are headed. Isaiah prophesied “More are the sons of the desolate one than of her having a husband.” i.e. Sarah. “Rejoice you who do not bear or have pain in labour – erupt in song right from the diaphragm or stomach”.

As in Genesis the son born in the ordinary way physically persecuted the son born according to the prophecy of the Spirit of God – and so it is still. Sarah's word is God's word – “Cast out the bondwoman and her son” The man of faith like Abram is obliged to choose between working to please and being chosen – between company that is wild and worldly – endemic to this and every age, and fellowship that is spiritual.

In v12 and v28 and finally in v31 he speaks of them as “brethren”.

- 1 He travailed (v19) so they would be *born again* – and is once more in tears.
- 2 He rejoiced and called on them to *erupt in joy* as born from above – cf Sarah’s laughter (v27).
- 3 He wants the brothers to *stand together* against being fettered by a religion of works. *Unity & being led by the spirit – cf the wife of Isaac – that perfect example of felicity and faith upheld in the Book of Common Prayer (5v1)*

CHAPTER 5

Paul explains his manner of living under the empowering of the Holy Spirit. The apostle is disappointed that Galatians were forfeiting their freedom & enrolling as Jews in the mistaken belief that this was a fast track to holiness. He called on them to “wait”; to “walk in step”; “to be led”; to “grow”.

The challenge is to genuine “Son-ship”

Paul sees these new believers as having found the joy of their new standing only to be faced with an insidious new taskmaster more severe than any pedagogue. Christ “bought” us that we might be free and “liberally give ourselves in His service” Paul urges them to “stand” in a battle against another of the devil’s schemes (cf Eph 6. 11,13,14) For the Gentile to turn to Judaism is spoken of as a “yoke of servitude”. Here the middle imperative of “entangle/caught in a trap or stratagem” (an idea used by Xenophon & in game hunting) *ενεχομαι*. “Yoke” signifies a “permanent burden” cf Battle of Pydna 168 BC Aemilius Paulus the general. After 2 years war Greece conquered & given freedom!

(1)WAIT FOR AND RECEIVE FROM THE SPIRIT 1-15

Paul uses a compound word *απεκδεχομαι* to put his position – as a “former self-righteous Pharisee who felt he had arrived at purity by law” but now an “expectant believer in Christ to whom was imputed standing & greater Christ-likeness imparted by the Holy Spirit.” We are some distance from *απο* obtaining the goal of *εκ* absolute righteousness – but we are to “receive and wait” *δεχομαι* holding two kindred meanings.

Paul urges twice – first factually then by testimony from experience that for any Gentile to allow himself to be circumcised is no advantage. The term “advantage”/ “help against (sin)” or “advance” is allied to the term “debt”

The idea comes from the use of a “broom”. Get rid of the broom that cleared your sin and you are left with sin accumulating like dust. The “law” does demand perfect conformity. To act so is “to set oneself free of Christ” and enter Judaism – to render one’s connection with Christ a “thing of the past” *καταργεω* In the circle of Christ there is no strength in “circumcision” or “un-circumcision” but strength to battle and restrain *ισχυς* from being energised by love through faith.

Paul’s metaphors: Employment, shipping, love, machine, race, baking, trees, slavery.

(a) Christ has become like one you lay off as unemployed.

(b) You lost hold – like one falling from a ship during shipwreck.

(c) We eagerly await righteousness as lovers await their marriage.

(d) Faith works by love – its energy.

(e) You were running speedily – who checked you or knocked you out of the race *ανακοπτω* cf. *εγκοπτω* – cut in on you with pertinacity or like a “ship’s cable” changed your course. It is not of the LORD to deflect you from confidence in truth.

(f) A very little yeast leavens the dough. *Christ’s warning on the Pharisees is in play.* Paul says, “I have placed trust in you in the circle of Christ that you would not think any other position practically wise & right.

- (g) He who agitates or throws you in disorder or disturbs *ταρασσω* will bear or deliberate on the judgment, whoever he is.
- (h) Those who drive you from home/cause secession it were better that they are hewn off (like tree limbs or eunuchs!) priests of Pessinus – castrated
- (i) “You were called resting on the support and price paid for your freedom – not to a base of operations for the flesh but to serve one another – for the law is fulfilled in this “Love your neighbour as yourself”. If you bite at one another and devour each other watch that you are not mutually destroyed. This single quote in v 14 from Leviticus 19.18 tops up “defrauding, robbing, cursing the deaf, stumbling the blind, maintaining equality before the law for rich and poor, tale-bearing, endangering a neighbour, hating, not rebuking, avenging, grudging. And says “Love him sincerely” and you have fulfilled the law.
- NB** v11 Chrysostom “For even the cross which was a stumbling block to Jews was not so much as not requiring legal obedience”...cf Stephen

(2) WALKING IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT 16-18 One of ancients “The one I love is crucified-why do I stray behind?”

This is the way to live a life above the prevalent carnal style that is prevalent and absorbing. Constantly one must walk – the moment one falters natural lust strengthens. Walking *περιπατεω* means “being taught/gradually educated – by companioning the Holy Spirit. The result is that **the lust or yearning of the flesh will not develop** – cf. **James 1.15** This is not the aborting of sin – it is the cutting of the link between the seed and its implantation in the mind – i.e. there is a Holy Spirit interceptor which keeps the mind pure Early Christians were far more conscious and concerned about their psychology being God glorifying than we are.

In support of this read James 1:1-15 and Romans 8:1-17. The flesh yearns against the Holy Spirit. On the other hand the Holy Spirit has yearnings counter to the flesh. These are constantly in contradiction to one another – so that the things you don’t want to do – these you do – if you are out of step!

(3) WAY OF THE SPIRIT 19-21

Sidlow Baxter was in the habit of emphasising “the expulsive power of a new affection” I once walked in the “Damson Valley” of Lakeland with Rev. Geoffrey King (whom I counted a friend). Geoffrey was a Keswick speaker and valued London Pastor during the Second World War. He pointed out to me some leaves that were still clinging to the trees and emphasised the spiritual lesson that spring growth would soon see them off.

Another name for the Holy Spirit is the Holy Ghost. Once you get into the things of Jesus the Holy Spirit is involved at every point. It is like Proverbs 30.19 *αγω* has precisely this effect. The “man and his maid” are so in tune that they move as one – they delight in each other and cannot be prized apart. The present relationship matters. Cf John Owen “The flesh lusts the spirit longs – cherish grace, keep godly interest vigorous, spare not sin – it has a life of its own” The energies or mind-controlling activities of the flesh – lust giving birth – produces the following brood of sins. Whatever is in opposition to the Holy Spirit – sexual immorality; adultery; uncleanness; unbridled public indecency; idolatry; use of drugs; hostility; strife; jealousy; temper that flares up; selfish ambition; organised division; heresy or cliques choosy of company or ideas contrary to bible truth; the desire to have what belongs to another; murder, carousal or drunkenness; singing dancing & parading the streets (the context is the Bacchus festival) – and things like these. I warn you as I predicted that

those who practice *πρασσοντες* these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The failure to break with such conduct and fleshly control of one's life results in the loss of the heavenly inheritance

(4)WAIN OF THE SPIRIT 22-24

The Greek word *καρπος* was used mainly of "corn". The idea of the fruit here is of something produced as a yield or harvest from a distant planting. There must have been seed for there to be corn. Again the idea of "waiting" is seen in James 5.7 where we have the farmer who ploughs "waiting for the precious fruit *καρπος* of the earth". So we must understand Paul's main address is not about vines or apples but about gradual growth and development of Christ-like character-all coming from "except a seed fall into the ground and die it abides alone-but if it die it produces much fruit *καρπος*. Now the concept we have to change is that this means attention to mortification or "self on the cross" or dying to self. The harvest of the Holy Spirit is "Love-wonder & pleasure at vast commitment, joy – in the circle of the Holy Ghost, peace *ειρω* patient stitching up like peacemakers, patience, kindness – kind or useful disposition to neighbours (Lightfoot), goodness-energising principle(Trench) *συνη* – communicated by grace, faithfulness – God's gift, gentleness – willingness for Christ's mastery, self-control – the mastery of immediate self *κρατος* and *εγγυς*" There are 9 aspects of the spiritual harvest and 9 "buts" of consequences in the chapter, Paul argues

But I give witness that circumcision makes you debtor to the whole law (3); but he who distresses you bears his condemnation (10); but if I am still heralding circumcision why am I persecuted? (11); but if you bite & devour each other you will be mutually ruined (15); but be companion taught by the Spirit & you won't bring to fruition the carnal desires (16); but if you are led by the Spirit you are not under law (18); but the works energised by the flesh are manifest (19); but the harvest of the Spirit is not under legal control (22ff); but Christians in conversion have crucified the passions and lusts.

(5)WARRIORS UNITED ENTHUSIASTIC & ADVANCING IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT 25-6

The vigour and flaming burning zeal of Christian living means "marching in rows with the spirit" – like an army. They should not be *κενοδοξοι* conceited and filled with empty glory, not calling out Goliath defiance *προκαλουμενοι*, not envying the good fortune or position of others *φθονουντες*. Living in step with the Spirit yields the kind of life that is content with His development of character in us.

CHAPTER 6

This chapter gives the remedy when a Christian sins within the context of support, self assessment and responsibility; it encourages liberality to bible teachers reminding us of commitment to the Lord's harvest. Paul concludes by contrasting his cicatrices or scars with the ritual brands making the new creature his canon

(1)RESTORATION AND SUPPORT 1-5

It is disappointing to “have a fall” and believers can be disappointed when a “man”; “one who is “looking up”; one with “beauty of countenance” – when such a man “sins” *προλειπω* “swoons in weakness or is absent from his post by default.”

(a) Forgiving is associated with the image of a physician “Restoring – characterised as “Setting a bone” *καταρτιζω* it is painful for the one who hurts and strenuous for the physician – but after a few visits to the man resumes his life in a healthy normal way. It is also used of refitting a ship – so weakness promotes carefulness. That’s how it should be with “transgressions” which temporarily injure the body of Christ. cf Pilgrim’s Progress “A little before Christian & Hopeful on the left hand of the road a meadow and a stile to go over into it – called By-Path Meadow. “T’is according to my wish said Christian – here is the easiest going”

Proverbs 25.11 is appropriate meditation. “*As apples of gold in silver pictures or shining scenery*” are apt words.

*The dung-hill raker-spider-hen, the chicken too to me, have taught a lesson let me
then conformed unto it be*

*To move me for to watch and pray, to strive to be sincere, to take my cross up day by
day, and serve a Lord so dear*

John Bunyan puts it like this

*“A comely sight indeed to see,
A world of blossoms on our apple tree,
Yet far more comely would this tree appear,
If all its dainty blossoms young apples were”*

Solomon (Proverbs 25.11) like **John Bunyan** knew the worth of “fruit”

(b) The Physician learns to support as well as remedy. So Christians are to be “gentle after being strong” *πραοτης*

(c) And each should fix his eye *as a surveyor spy or military sentinel* to spot dangers that may be there.

1. Each believer is to be like a porter *Βασταζω* (e.g.) like the porter at Palace Beautiful who encouraged each to confess “my first name was ‘graceless’, who reminded pilgrim of the “scroll or scripture” lost at the arbour, introduced him to “others” for fellowship and to worship. Each has a *Βαρη* or weight often of pain work melancholy or affliction
2. The law of Christ here is “the second mile” doctrine of carrying another’s load – Matthew 5.41. To refuse this compulsion because of pride or self-importance is to fail to understand our own needs and emotions *φρεν*
3. Let each test his own work *like a Spartan recruit δοκιμαζω* in his fervour to serve within the army and bear his own personal or family load *φορτιον* as each ship bears its cargo, each beast its burden, and each woman her child with pride & rejoicing.
4. Lam3.27 “It is good for a man to bear the yoke in youth” At the other end of the scale I once heard an aged believer of 100 summers who was slowly making his way downstairs utter the words “**I have a great load**”. He then added quoting Psalm 68.19 “**He daily loadeth me with benefits.**”

(2)REAPING AND SOWING 6-10

1 Let those share common benefits *κοινεω* with the one who lectures in the word of God *κατηχουμενος*. This refers equally well to general teaching and to teaching fundamentals – as the modern Alpha course or baptismal preparation courses.

2 God is not mocked **μυκτηρίζω** “cheated” – whatever a man sows he will reap.
Carnal gain ends in “corruption”

3 “Doing good” has a special connotation. It means a man must not “fail in courage and run away or culpably omit **εγκαταλείπω** something”. We will reap if we do not “relax the string of the bow”, if we do not “give way” or “break up” **εκλύω** cf 2Kings 13.19 Elisha to Jehoash on victory over Syria “You should have shot 5/6 times”.

4 Let’s trade with our gifts for the good of all, especially the household of faith.
εργαζομαι applies equally to talents and to earnings capability. As this principle applies in opportunities in business so it does in spiritual things.

(3) REGENERATION AND SCARS 11-18

1 Paul’s hand writing was nothing to boast about – even in this earliest letter was “large” & telltale. There is no reference to an amanuensis – although that cannot be ruled out. This may be the only hand-written letter of Paul’s own in the New Testament or he possibly demonstrated in one section just how seriously his eyes were failing him.

2 He immediately follows with “those who desire to look well in the flesh – that occasion you to be circumcised do so to persecute you for the cross of Christ...”

3 Further he says “they circumcise to boast in the flesh of Galatians as converts to Jerusalem below – Israel in the flesh”

4 “May I never boast”, he continues, “save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” The order of the world-its behaviour ornament credits and regulators are “dead and gone” In Jesus circumcision and un-circumcision are without strength to conquer sin – to atone – or to in-breathe. Only “the new birth” avails. As many as are “marching to this battle order” and living to “this carpenter’s rule” **κανον** “peace to them” and the Israel of God – people who have a new standing and a new access to God in Christ. For the rest let no one exhibit himself for me **παρεχω** for I carry the burden of the marks of Christ in my body. He obviously had whip/lash marks in his body-marks it may be of stoning at Lystra. His concern was that in their Spirits they had **GRACE** – the favour or beauty of divine life and song deep down in their hearts. **Paul’s concern is to exhibit or reveal Christ**

Ah – here comes the terrible mistake at the bottom of so much of our religion. A man thinks “I have my business and family duties and what relates to my citizenship – this I cannot change. Besides this is my religion and service to God. This is not right – Christ bought the sinner with His blood – freedom from slavery – have you anything to do little branch with bearing grapes?” – Andrew Murray

*Cf Amos 7.1 “Remember the King’s mowings” – “The lord showed me – and lo it was the latter growth after the King’s mowings” Grass grows better after it is cut. Evan Hopkins of the Welsh Revival said “Christ looks for men & women of undying allegiance that springs from self-renunciation – it’s not weekenders or spare-timers He is short of...” CT Studd donated a fortune – reserving £3,400 for his young bride – who in turn read *Christ’s word to the rich young ruler* and put it as a further challenge to her husband. Alexander Duff en route to India was swept up on SW Africa – a library built over a life-time was lost, but one book remained – his bible; he knew the flower of thought would bloom again when he found it on the shore.*

In the broken clod is the bountiful harvest, in the pollared oak the exquisite wood, in the pruned vine the finest vintage, in the crucified life the greatest Christ-likeness.

FINIS