

Galatians 6

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Galatians 6

Galatians 6:1

"Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Paul is nearing the end of his letter. He has built a complete case against following after the law of Moses. Now he is going to take advantage of this opportunity to give his readership some practical spiritual instruction. A trespass is a violation of God's will. The trespass of the overall context of Paul's letter is of course Judaizing, however, he extends the boundaries to include any trespass. He admonishes them to carry out this directive in a spirit of gentleness. In Paul's letter to Timothy, he expounded more on this spirit of gentleness that is to be the goal of every Christian when dealing with those who may be in genuine error. 2 Timothy 2:24-26, *"And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."*

"looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Paul cautions his readership to be careful and see that they do not allow themselves to fall into temptation of any kind when dealing with those who have gone astray or are in error. One has to maintain their spirit of gentleness and not allow themselves to strike out with malicious intent or cruel behavior. There comes a time when a Christian must make a stand against error and then such things as church discipline and disfellowship are called for, but it is vital that we all know and understand that these things are not license to in any way act unbecoming of a Christian. Haughtiness, arrogance and self righteous conduct is what Paul is warning against here. The restoration of those in error is to be carried out with a spirit of gentleness and with the goal of restoring the erring brother and sister to their good standing before God. A hurtful or malicious spirit is never acceptable.

Galatians 6:2

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Christians are not to be isolationists. Paul exhorts his readership to get involved with their brethren. The context here is the restoration of those in their midst who had erred from the truth. Paul is telling them not to just stick their head

in the sand and do nothing about their situation. He is telling them to be pro-active with them, show them you care through actions and not just words.

“and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

Here is a direct reference to the “law of Christ”. Paul has written much in this letter about the rejection of the law of Moses in favor of the faith of Christ. Many times Paul’s reference to the law of Moses is just simply “the law” or “law”. Paul did not refer to the law of Moses as the “law of Moses” every time he referred to it. Many people today pull these references entirely out of the overall context of Paul’s letter and use them to set forth the idea that there is no law under the new system of faith which a Christian must keep. Their goal being to eliminate the need for strict obedience to the will of God. They will take Things under the new covenant which are obviously law which must be kept, and lump them in with the abolished law of Moses

Proponents of the “no law under Christ” position do not take a critical enough look at their own belief. When one puts this doctrine to the test it is very obvious from the beginning that it cannot be true that there is no law under the present system of faith. Those who claim no law under faith like to use Paul’s teachings out of context to support their doctrine. For example, in Galatians 5:14, Paul wrote, *“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* Proponents of the no law under faith doctrine will produce this scripture which lists love as a requirement for fulfilling a law they say does not exist. Such a claim is utter nonsense. That is like arguing against a system of traffic laws by producing a speed limit one has to obey. It’s as if common sense and logic are utterly thrown to the wind. Either there is law under the system of faith or there is not and the production of a single ordinance which must be kept under the system does not disprove the existence of law altogether.

Digging just one layer deeper in this investigation, one can look at two verses of scripture to produce yet another insurmountable obstacle to the ‘no law under faith’ doctrine: Romans 3:23, *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*, and 1 John 3:4, *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”* Since all have sinned, and sin is a transgression of law, then it stands to reason that there must be a law to transgress, or else no one could sin and fall short of the glory of God. When one starts subjecting this doctrine to a critical Biblical review, it become readily evident that we do indeed have law under the present day system of faith. Such a notion should be outright rejected as utter nonsense.

There is law under the present system of faith. In other words, there are things one must do in order to keep the faith of Christ. We are going to examine a few of these things which one must do in order to keep the faith of Christ.

1) The most obvious one in this case is to *“bear one another’s burdens”* which is mentioned in this very verse. This is something the Galatian Christians were commanded to do in order to fulfill the law of Christ. Fulfilling the law of Christ in this context does not mean the entire law of Christ is observed through the keeping of this one command. Bearing one another’s burdens will fulfill the law of Christ in so much as that aspect of it is concerned. For example, while on a trip, one’s spouse may caution the driver to observe the posted speed limit in order to fulfill the traffic law. The concerned passenger did not mean or imply in any way that all of the traffic laws in existence were automatically observed by keeping the one speed limit. Neither did Paul mean or imply that all of the law of Christ was kept when one bears another’s burden. The law of Christ is kept in so far as that aspect of it is concerned.

2) We have to believe. Jesus said in John 3:18, *“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”*. Those who do not

believe are condemned, therefore it is part of the law of God to believe. This is something one must do in order to keep the faith of Christ. Those who say there is no law under Christ therefore need to explain why one then has to believe.

3) We have to repent. Jesus said in Luke 13:3, *"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."* Repentance as a component of faith is a requirement, therefore it is part of the law of Christ. Those who say there is no law under Christ therefore need to explain why one then has to repent.

We could go on and on and include confession, baptism and continued obedience but the point is, if there is anything which one must do in order to live the life of faith, then the doctrine of 'no law under Christ' cannot be true.

Paul has been contrasting the law of Moses and the system of faith in Christ throughout this letter. Here he gives this system of faith another designation. The law of Christ is simply another reference to the faith of Christ. There are many different designations used in scripture to "the faith". Each one of them refers to the same thing and represents a specific aspect of it.

The faith is sometimes referred to as the gospel which represents the good news aspect of it. The faith is sometimes referred to as simply the faith which represents our belief and hope in a system whereby we can be reconciled to God. The faith is referred to in the context of Galatians 6:2 as law which represents a rule or pattern of behavior which one must engage in. All of these things and many others represent an aspect of the system of faith in Christ which we live by.

Galatians 6:3

"For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

Keeping in mind that the immediate context here is of restoring those who had been deceived into the Judaizers doctrine a Christian engaged in this must exhibit humility. If one approaches an erring brother with a holier than thou attitude, he damages his own credibility and hinders his efforts. In addition to that, anyone who thinks they are elevated in stature over others because of their spiritual standing is deceiving themselves. We are all sinners on the same journey. Were it not for the mercy and grace of God we would all be condemned and we must never let ourselves forget that.

Jesus taught the principle of humility in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:10-14, *"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."* (NKJV)

James wrote in 4:6, *"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."*

Peter wrote in 1 Peter 5:5-6, *"Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 6*

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God”.

Galatians 6:4

“But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor.”

The best way to help restore those in error is to practice what you preach. One proves their work when they live their faith. Those who live contrary to the will of God are going to be more likely to listen when they see those around them proving their faith by living it.

“and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor”

The Judaizers were seeking glory from others V16. When one demonstrates their work in the Lord, then they can rejoice inwardly with the quiet and calm assurance that befits a Christian. The faithful Christian must never seek the glory and admiration of others. Paul touches on this again in the final sentences of this letter.

Galatians 6:5

“For each man shall bear his own burden.”

This verse begins with the word “for”. This usually introduces an explanation or continuing thought from the previous statement. So in order to properly understand this verse, one needs to consider the preceding text. Paul exhorts his readership to first prove their work, or in other words, practice what they preach, or put action to their words. One’s glorying or rejoicing over this will be a private thing and not something they wear in front of others like a trophy or a badge. The previous verse was an exhortation of labor. Paul told them to do something and to be pro-active in the lives of others. And now Paul assigns personal responsibility to the mix. Keep in mind the larger context of the proper re-assimilation of erring brethren to the truth.

In verse 2, Paul told them to “*Bear ye one another’s burdens*” and now we learn that we have a burden to bear in this matter and we are responsible for it. Christians are not only expected to help bear the burdens of others, they are also responsible for bearing their own. And those Christians who may have burdens to bear that no other Christian helps with are still responsible for their own burdens. The fact that one’s brother has been commanded to help bear his burden does not mean it is not still his burden to bear. Christians are absolutely required to help one another in the time of need. But the responsibility for the burden lies squarely on the individual no matter who may or may not come to their aid.

For example, one may give a certain task to a servant and make them responsible for completing it. While doing this, another servant may be required to assist the first servant in the completion of the task. The servant responsible for the completion of the task is required to accomplish that task whether or not the second servant helped him or not.

Another example is, this Bible student is a project manager for the company he works for. His employer sends him out to complete a project and sends people with him as laborers. If this project manager fails to complete the project, his employer is not going to accept the excuse that his helpers did not help him. This project manager is to bear the burden of the project and is responsible for it no matter what. In a similar fashion, Christians are to bear one another burden’s. We are to help one another. But those burdens remain the sole responsibility of the one who owns them regardless of whether he or she gets any help or not.

The primary burden in view of this context is the burden born by those who are outside the will of God to return to good standing and for those who are assisting them in this process. It's a shared burden but in the end, the responsibility of it lies solely on the owner of that burden. The application for us today is that we are as individually responsible for whatever burdens we have and if we fail in these responsibilities, we cannot point to our brethren and say it's their fault I failed. If you failed, you are going bear the consequences. If they failed to help you, they are going to bear the consequences for that. *"For each man shall bear his own burden."*

Be Generous and Do Good

Galatians 6:6

"But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

The ASV rendering of this verse does not adequately convey the meaning of what Paul wrote here. The NKJV is much clearer and renders it thus: *"Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches."*

This is one of the teachings which authorize paid preachers and the congregational support of teachers, elders or others who labor in the gospel. Other verses of scripture which complement this are:

1 Corinthians 9:9-14

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? 10 Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? 12 If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? 14 Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

1 Timothy 5:17-18

"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

It is entirely appropriate to compensate those who teach and preach God's word. It is however not required in those instances where one does not need to be supported.

Galatians 6:8

"For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life."

is a reference to living after the lusts of the flesh as Paul had just outlined in Galatians 5:18-21; and sowing to the Spirit is the equivalent of living the kind of life that exhibits the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24). Those who live after the lusts of the flesh will be condemned while those who develop and exhibit the fruits of the Spirit will receive eternal life.

Galatians 6:9

"And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

This is an exhortation for perseverance. The Christian is to maintain an obedient faith throughout their lifetime. Jesus wrote in Revelation 2:10, *"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."* Jesus wrote in Matthew 24:13, *"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."* The Hebrew writer taught in Hebrews 10:36, *"For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise"*.

This idea of reaping a harvest is the reward of eternal life mentioned in the previous verse. Our home in heaven is something we are to strive for. Paul wrote in

Romans 2:5-11, *"But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness – indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God"*.

Of course we need to understand and acknowledge the fact that our obedience does not merit or pay for our salvation. God does not owe us anything because we submit to His will. Nothing mankind can do could ever make the sacrifice of Jesus Christ unnecessary. Mankind simply cannot be reconciled to God without the cross. Jesus paid a debt that mankind could not pay and the debt He paid can never be reimbursed by mankind. But this fact does not mean we have no obligations in this matter. Indeed we do, and failure to meet these obligations results in a situation where we will have to pay the penalty for our sin. And even though one should be punished forever, he will never ever fully pay for his sin.

Galatians 6:10

"So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith."

Christians are expected to be benevolent. Working good has a broad application. Paul mentioned goodness as one of the fruits of the Spirit. Here he specifically mentions it and associates it with work. Good is something to be worked. While benevolence is definitely a part of this, it is not limited to simply providing for the physical needs of others. There are spiritual needs of other to be addressed as well. Working good means all the good and right things that can be done for others, both spiritual and physical which will help them to the ultimate goal of salvation.

"So then, as we have opportunity"

We are to watch for opportunities and take advantage of them as they present themselves.

"let us work that which is good toward all men"

This means everyone, both inside and outside the body of Christ.

" and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith."

While the command to do good is extended to all, those inside the body of Christ are to receive preference. When it comes to the physical and spiritual needs of others, Christians are to make sure other Christians needs are cared for. Christians are obligated to take care of their own first. It would be inappropriate to extend benevolence to someone outside the body of Christ and allow a Christian widow to starve.

The entire letter of Galatians is addressed to the churches of Galatia. This command is given to the individual congregations of the body of Christ in Galatia. The application for us today is that we as congregations of the body of Christ are to work those things which are good towards all men, either in or outside the body of Christ.

There are two groups of people represented in this context. Those who comprise all men and those who are of the household of faith. Paul commanded the churches of Galatia to do good to all of them with a special emphasis on those who are in Christ. This includes benevolent acts which are supported directly or indirectly by the congregation.

We need to recognize and be aware that the rules of good stewardship are applicable here as well. Christians are not to support or condone acts of evil, therefore it would be inappropriate to extend benevolence to those who obviously have no intention of repenting and will use the benevolence extended to them for evil. We are not to use benevolence to cast our pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6). We are not to use benevolence to condone that which is evil (2 John 10). But we can as a congregation help those in need who are not of the household of faith so long as we do so within the constraints of God's will elsewhere.

The Corinthians did it and were commended for it in 2 Corinthians 9:11-13, *"while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. 12 For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, 13 while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men"* (NKJV)

Glory Only in the Cross of Christ

Galatians 6:11

"See with how large letters I write unto you with mine own hand."

Paul is about to close his letter. As he does so, he is going to make some concluding remarks about the Judaizers in his farewell. It was common for Paul to have someone else help him write his epistles. He would dictate and his assistant would write. For example in Romans 16:22, we read, *"I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord."* Paul dictated while Tertius wrote.

Apparently Timothy helped to write Colossians, and both letters to the Thessalonians with Silvanus.

Colossians 1:1, *"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother"* (NKJV)

1 Thessalonians 1:1, *"Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."* (NKJV).

2 Thessalonians 1:1, *“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”* (NKJV).

It was customary for Paul to take pen in hand at some time during the letters and write part of it himself in his own hand:

In Colossians 4:18 Paul closed his epistle with these words, *“This salutation by my own hand – Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.”* (NKJV)

In 2 Thessalonians 3:17, we read, *“The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.”* (NKJV).

Paul used this to authenticate these epistles. Obviously he had a very distinct form of handwriting. Some scholars believe he used what was called Greek “uncials”. These were large letters which at first could be drawn with a single pen stroke similar to cursive writing. These Uncial letters evolved into more elaborate letters into what we see today as those large single ornamental letters that mark the beginning of a paragraph or a book.

We do not know why Paul customarily had others write his epistles at his direction. It has been suggested that this is evidence supporting his poor eyesight. What we can correctly infer from these texts is that this was a form of Paul's authentication of his epistles similar to our modern day signatures on a document. Obviously Paul had a distinct form of writing that was known to those who would receive his epistles. And similar to a signature today identified the person authoring the document. This was Paul's seal of authentication which was intended to let his readership know they were reading the instructions of the Apostle.

Galatians 6:12

“As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised; only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.”

This verse demonstrates that while Paul is engaging in practical instruction at the end of his letter he is still dealing with the Judaizers. The Jewish persecution of Christianity at this time in history was quite severe. The Judaizers were obviously trying to accommodate Jewish opinion in order to avoid persecution.

Galatians 6:13

“For not even they who receive circumcision do themselves keep the law; but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.”

The Judaizers had a motive and a strategy for what they were doing among the Gentile churches of Christ. Some of their agenda is revealed in this context. As the Judaizers gained more of a following they were evidently persuading Christians who had become Judaizers to procure, by any practical means, the circumcision of as many of the Gentile converts as possible. Their ultimate goal was the conversion of as many of the Christians as possible back into Judaism. They were not even keeping the law of Moses themselves. They were not interested in whether or not what they were teaching was the truth or not. Their motivation was to ease the Jewish persecution of Christians and to promote themselves within their immediate society. They cared nothing for the law of Moses, yet they were trying to encourage others to follow it. They started with circumcision to get the process started. Once that was achieved, they then went on to add more and more of the law of Moses in a gradual and steady process. With the unbelieving

Jews fueling this process with persecution, no doubt this would ultimately end with the proselytization of the Christians completely back into the Law of Moses until nothing of the cross of Christ remained.

What Paul meant in this verse was that It is from no zeal for the Law that they do what they do, for they are at no pains to keep the Law of Moses; but only with the object of currying favor with the Jews.

Galatians 6:14

"But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Paul contrasts his own motives with those of the Judaizers. Paul's cares nothing at all about the opinions of men nor has he any ambitions of glory before them. His only purpose is to live for Christ and to promote true Christianity to mankind. He refuses to compromise the truth even to the point of death which he eventually demonstrated when he died at the hands of a Roman executioner.

Galatians 6:15

"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

1 Corinthians 7:18-19, *"Was any man called when he was already circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but (what matters is) the keeping of the commandments of God"* (NASB).

With the close of the law of Moses, circumcision as a tenant of that law was forever removed. It no longer mattered one way or the other. Those who had been circumcised under the law of Moses had nothing to fear as long as they were faithful Christians. Those who had not been circumcised were not required under the law of Christ to undergo it. Circumcision became irrelevant unless one did it as an act of commitment to the law of Moses which carried the consequence of falling from the grace of God as we learned in Galatian 5:4. The Judaizers had been insisting that circumcision according to the law of Moses as a means of identifying oneself as a child of God was mandatory.

"but a new creature."

Here is the contrast which replaced circumcision as the means of identifying oneself as a child of God. Becoming a *"new creature"* is what replaced circumcision under the law of Moses.

In 2 Corinthians 5:15, Paul wrote, *"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, (he is) a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new"* (ASV). The conditional "if" used in this verse demonstrates that being "in Christ" is a requirement for being a *"new creature"*. One is a new creature if one is in Christ. Consequently one is not a new creature if one is not in Christ. Paul taught in Galatians 3:27 and Romans 6:3 that one is baptized or immersed *"into Christ"*.

There are several scriptures which speak of aspects of this new creature. In John 3:3-7 Jesus gives us the requirement and the parameters for being born again. In verse 4 Jesus says, *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* In Verse 5 Jesus went on to say concerning this rebirth process, *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* Being a new creature requires being born again.

In Titus 3:5, Paul wrote, *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”*. Regeneration carries the meaning of being generated again. This is another term for being reborn.

In Romans 6:3-4, *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”* (NKJV). This newness of life Paul is referring to here is connected with being born again, regenerated, a new creature. Some translations render this as “new creation”. All of these terms point to a change that is made in one’s life. When we are baptized into Christ, we are completely and utterly forgiven of all of our past sins. We are in the body of Christ and therefore restored or reconciled to a state of fellowship with God. We are adopted into His family as His children.

John 1:12-13, *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”* (NKJV). Being reborn is not after the flesh, meaning not our physical bodies, but being born again of God.

The becoming a new creature or creation; being born again; regenerated to walk in newness of life; meaning a new way of living; has replaced circumcision as the means of identifying oneself as a child of God. In this present age, we refer to it as being a Christian. Whether or not one is circumcised is no longer of any spiritual significance and has nothing whatsoever to do with being a child of God. What does matter is being a baptized, born again, regenerated creature who abandons his former behavior and walks in a new life.

Plea to Walk According to the Rule of Christ

Galatians 6:16

“And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace (be) upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”

What Paul wrote in verse 15 was a rule. We learned in chapter 5, verse 4 that to be circumcised as a commitment to the law of Moses carried the consequence of falling from God’s grace. Here we have Paul reinforcing this as a rule. And those who walk by this rule of the law of Christ will receive peace and mercy. The logical opposite of what Paul says here is that those who do not walk by this rule in verse 15 will not be the recipients of God’s peace and mercy.

This command of Paul demonstrates that the law of Christ which he referred to in verse 2 of this chapter is indeed a law with rules of conduct which must be observed by those who desire to be the children of God. Christians must be obedient to all of the law of Christ and not just the portions of it stressed in this final chapter of Paul’s letter. In 1 Peter 1:25, we read, *“But the word of the Lord endures forever.” Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you* (NKJV). The gospel contains all of God’s will for mankind. We must live in accordance with it all.

“the Israel of God.”

Israel is the adopted name of Jacob which was often used to refer to his descendants. The original Hebrew word came from two root words which meant to be mighty and to prevail. Paul deliberately chose these words to drive home the point that those who are born again, regenerated, new creatures are the Israel of God. The Judaizers had been telling the Galatians they needed to be circumcised to be identified with Israel, which is another term used to

describe the children of God. Paul just told them the exact opposite. Those who are the new creation in and through Jesus Christ are the Israel of God. Being "In Jesus Christ" has replaced circumcision as the means of being a child of God which is the same thing as being the Israel of God, the descendants of Jacob. The Israel of God would indeed be mighty and would prevail with the gentiles as fellow heirs of the promises of Abraham through Jesus Christ.

Galatians 6:17

"Henceforth, let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus."

On Paul's first missionary journey, he went through Galatia. One of the places he visited on that journey was Lystra where he was stoned and left for dead. His readership would read these words and remember that Paul suffered greatly in order to bring them the truth. Paul paid a heavy personal price for the evangelism of the Galatian Christians and now he is calling that to the attention of his readership. The Judaizers were men who were teaching them a false doctrine. What Paul had taught them at the beginning and now in this epistle, was coming from God and not men. Paul is telling them he isn't going to allow men to trouble, persecute or sway him from the truth. And they witnessed first hand just how serious Paul was about that because he was stoned for it right in their midst.

Paul's Hope of Grace to the Galatians

Galatians 6:18

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen."

Call to mind that Paul opened this letter with no words of praise for his readership. He basically introduced himself and set a tone of hurt surprise, sorrow and indignation which continued on throughout the epistle. Paul condemned their actions and the actions of the Judaizers starting in verse 6 of the first chapter. When one goes back and examines the original text, this would have been Paul's third sentence into the letter.

In this final word "*brethren*," one sees the loving heart of Paul yearning for his fellow Christians in Galatia. It is a final word of love and hope for all of them. He had not given up on them. They were still brethren. Now it is in the hands of the Galatian Christians on how they would proceed. In this epistle, they had everything they needed to refute the doctrine of the Judaizers. Paul made a complete and thorough case for his authenticity and for the authenticity of the gospel he had first preached to them. Everything the Judaizers had told them about being circumcised, and following the of Moses and how one becomes a child of God and heir to the promises of Abraham had been refuted. Through Jesus Christ, they not only had everything they needed to become the children of God, they had more than those living under the law of Moses. The law of Christ had been set forth as being superior to the law of Moses in every way.

Those things which they were taught apply to us as well. Today, we see all sorts of people who are reverting back to the law of Moses in some form or another. Musical instruments were a part of the law of Moses and are not found anywhere in the law of Christ. Some people burn incense which was a part of the law of Moses and not found anywhere in the law of Christ. Modern day Sabbath Day Adventists offer their worship on the Sabbath day which is not found anywhere in the law of Christ. Those living today need to heed the things Paul wrote to the Galatians. In this epistle we see a stern warning for such things. The law of Moses teaches us principles which endure today, but as far as a rule of faith, it is to be utterly abandoned in favor of the law of Christ.

Did this letter have the desired effect on Paul's readership? The best evidence we have in favor of that is the existence of it in our Bibles today.

Through this letter, we today can learn that we as gentiles are:

1. The Children of God
2. The Israel of God
3. Fellow heirs with Abraham and with Jesus Christ
4. A new creature
5. In Christ through baptism
6. Released from the bondage of the old law.
7. Released from the condemnation of the old law.
8. And heirs of eternal life which is something the law of Moses by itself could never accomplish.

Galatians 6 Paraphrase:

Brethren, if any of you do something sinful, those of you who are walking upright should help restore them gently. But be careful, because in your zeal to help you might fall into to sinful behavior yourselves. Help each other with their troubles. When you do this, you are obeying the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help others, you are only fooling yourself.

Prove your works by putting them into practice for others. Make sure your own work is good and then you will know if you have done anything to be proud of. You must each accept the responsibilities that are yours. Never Stop Doing Good Those of you who are being taught God's word should share the good things you have with the one who is teaching you.

Do not ever fool yourselves into thinking you can deceive God in any way. What you plant is what you are going to harvest in the end. If you live to satisfy the lusts of the flesh, the harvest you will get from that will be eternal death. But if you live in obedience to the Spirit, your harvest from the Spirit will be eternal life. We must never give up on doing good to others. The harvest of eternal life will be ours if we will persevere to the end. We should help anyone who is in need whenever there is an opportunity, especially to those who are of the family of God.

I am writing this now in my own handwriting so you will know this letter is coming from me. Those men who are trying to force you to be circumcised are only doing it to keep themselves from being persecuted for the cross of Christ. They are circumcised, but they don't obey the law of Moses themselves. They want you to be circumcised for their own personal gain.

May I never strive for personal gain anywhere but in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Because of the death of Christ on the cross this sinful world is dead to me, and I am dead to it. It does not matter anymore if anyone is circumcised or not. The only thing that matters now is whether or not we are a new creation in Christ. Do not let anyone get in the way of what I have taught you anymore. Remember that I myself was persecuted among you and I have the scars to prove it.

My brothers and sisters, I pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with your spirits. May it be so.

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