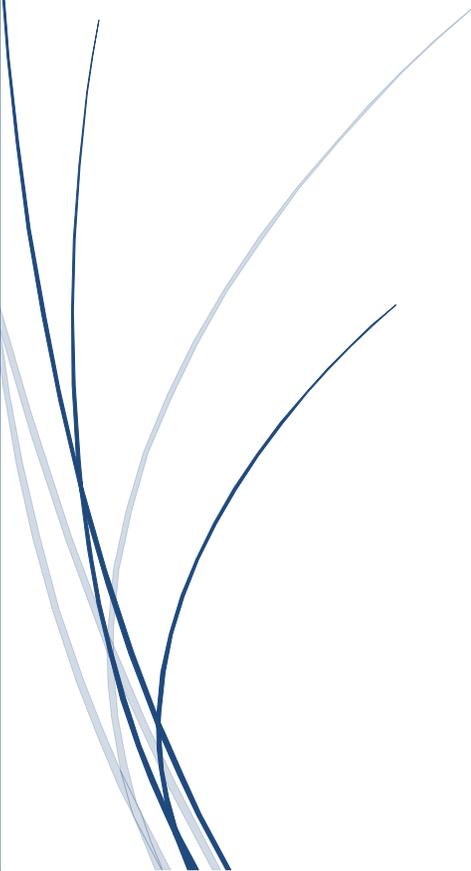




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# Galatians

A brief interpretation



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## Galatians Chapter 1: Whose Good News is it?

Typically, we stay away from biblical writings because so many possess strong opinions. Yet, we were impressed in a dream to look at Galatians, one of Paul's letters. We're not going to do a verse by verse examination. We'll look at the chapters as a whole and draw information from them that may rest below the surface.

Galatians opens with criticism. Paul admonishes church members for allowing another gospel to influence them. He tells them any who introduce a different gospel, whether from another person, an angel or even himself, brings false tidings and should not be trusted. In contemporary vernacular, they are presenting fake news.

As any can see, this is not a contemporary phenomenon. Leadership, at the time of this writing have made such claims. On the one hand, we are presented with scientific fact, on the other hand we are presented contradicting information from political figures. We could say on a third hand we have those in between with their own suspicions. Then there are the conspiracy theorists populating all groups. Normally, we would dispense with these conspiracy theories because they lack sound foundation. This is no longer the case. These loosely based conjectures are coming to us from our political leadership, known as the Powers That Be. What are we to do? Paul offers a suggestion, or rather makes a claim.

'...the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation....' This is taken from verses eleven and twelve and is part of a short paragraph. From this, we can imply Paul received his information through some form of meditation or dream, and at the very least a religious experience. The Divine communes with us during these times. Some cultures believe when we dream of the Divine, we are consumed or possessed by the Divine.<sup>1</sup> This is part of the information exchange process. Thus, in a manner of speaking,

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<sup>1</sup> (Robbins, 2005)

Paul was possessed by the Divine, or in his case Jesus the Christ. This is his claim for the origin of the gospel being taught.

Something we should keep in mind. Many of the disciples and followers of Jesus were of the lower class. By this we mean they did not have the advantage of an education that included around reading and writing. Also keep in mind this is speculation on our part. Another thought to hold is that one of the first responsibilities of a priestly apprentice is to record the sacred writings. In these instances, alterations, however minute, are known to have been made.<sup>2</sup> An accumulation of minute changes can have a big impact over time. While we are not begrudging the validity of the writing, we feel it is important to consider.

As a means of getting through the plethora of false claims being presented to us through various information outlets, we are suggesting each of you trust the one source that is difficult to deceive. While not impossible, this source is yourself. We are easily swayed through our emotions. Many seek to stir them because when agitated, the undisciplined can easily be ruled, leaving them with the sensation of being bobbers floating atop a turbulent sea. During these times, it's difficult to think. Also, there are those who find thinking difficult and rely upon their emotions to see them through the day. Rational thought is not something that comes by us naturally. The ability to reach sound conclusions requires conditioning and application. So many are suspicious of the process that they overtly avoid it, not realizing that some level of mastery is required in our common reality.

In order to make responsible choices, a level of trust has to be accepted. We have to trust the information, the source of the information, or ourselves. Trust is our guide, whether it leads to poor decisions or beneficial ones. If we do not trust ourselves, then we must trust another. Trust is power being invested. Trusting others is more than giving our power away. We invest ourselves in them. While some would say this alleviates them of

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<sup>2</sup> (Farmer, Henderson, & Robinson, 2015)

responsibility, it does not. We are still responsible for the direction they take us. We reap the benefits and the detriments of the path they chose for us.

Paul is right. The true gospel comes from the Divine. It is up to us to seek communion with the Divine. It is we who accept our truth, or that of another. It is we who shall reap the benefits and the detriments of those we have chosen to align ourselves with. We must be as wise as thieves in this endeavor, for our Gospel comes through us.

## References

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## Access Your Good News

If we are able to access the Good News for ourselves, how are we able to do this? We would like to say it is easy, but this is not always the case. We can say it is something we must practice. In many other writings, we say that meditation is a pathway to many realms, states of mind, and more. In this instance, meditation is a pathway to the Gospel that awaits us.

There can be as many steps to this journey as one likes. We shall propose some for you to begin. All things, events, and rituals begin in the mundane. Through the mundane, we enter the sublime. Set a sacred place or better, a sacred ritual. Rituals are wonderful because the energy gathered through them is often charged with an intention. Our intention is to receive the Gospel set aside for us.

Let's begin with a prayer. Prayers are like poems, or they should be. While the words are important, the rhythm is even more so. This is where vibration plays an important role. The cadence of the words set up a vibration. Borrow one or write one. Select a poem that inspires beauty, truth, reverence, or awe. Practice it a few times in order to find its natural rhythm. If you're not sure, take the time to allow it to speak to you. This is one of those times that is hard to explain. As the piece is being recited, the natural rhythm of the words will reveal themselves. Allow them to guide you towards their power.

Candles always seem to carry a sense of ritual all by themselves. Perhaps it is the process. Strike the match, cup the wick against any wind, and allow the flame to warm and then ignite the wick. There can be majesty in such a simple act. Yes, we have lighters now, but this is about ritual, purposeful actions coupled with intention. So, use the matches. While going through this mundane ritual of lighting candles, recite the chosen prayer or poem. Use as many candles as you wish. The purpose is to create a sense of sacredness through ritual. When choosing a candle or two or more, select a style and color that inspires reverence. Some prefer the long-tapered candle, while others may prefer the short round ones, or even the tall thick ones. Build the space according to the desired sensation.

Incense is another way to enhance the sense of sacred space. Select a scent that is pleasant and relaxing. As with the selection of candles, choose a scent that inspires one to go within. For it is within our Gospel lies. All that is selected should be with care and delicacy. Some will use statues or pictures. Some prefer music, while others do not. Often, we use music during meditation as a timekeeper. This prevents us from becoming lost. While none of this is required, it is helpful if any are a novice. The important aspect is to create a sense of reverence for truth and beauty.

After the ritual has been completed, it is time to sit. A chair is as good as merely resting on a bench, a great stone or on the ground. One may use an image, a statue, a

flower, etc. with which to focus on. Eyes may remain open or they may be closed. So many avenues to the Divine.

Once you have made yourself ready, allow mind to come to you. Thoughts will enter and entice you with their needs of attention. Do not give them any. Allow them to enter and exit of their own accord. Do not chase after them. Remain still and Mind will become still with you. When this has occurred, memories may rise. This is normal. All that you have experienced, the distractions, the need to move, the desire to plan, all are natural and should not be avoided. Allow them to act of their own accord. When they have settled, you will have some control. Direct Mind to the time you experienced love from another, or the sensation you recognize as love. Remember this. When you have achieved this, rest in love. Allow the sensation the move through you and over you. Rest in love. Here, you may notice something out of place. It could be a sensation. It could be a thought. It could be a voice you think you are imagining. All this is natural. You are beginning to commune with the Divine.

At the moment this occurs, one may become excited and lose the connection. Again, this is normal. One the path has been traveled; it is easier to find your way again. During these instances try to remember as much as possible. Most will seem lost, only to surface again when required. Write as much of what is learned as you can. This is your Gospel. You may find great profoundness in the words that come through and may wonder how this could be. No, its not that you may wonder because you will. You may doubt yourself and the words written. This is natural. Rejoice in your success. Share your Good News with others, as your sojourn into the true-life experience is beginning.

## Galatians chapter 2

When we look through the second chapter of Galatians, we find the theme to be one many partake in. A first glance suggests there are separate gospels, one for the Jewish sect and one for the Gentile sect. The theme is one of misrepresentation.

The 'Good News' is for all, though it may appear to be slightly different from one to another. It is through these differences many separate themselves. Paul traveled with many companions to many places. On one occasion, he traveled to Antioch where he found Cephas and Barnabas, who were associates of James. They had separated themselves from the Gentiles lest they angered members of the Jewish sect. Let me share the problem.

It had been decided by the Apostles Paul and Peter there was no division between the Jewish and the Gentile sects. The Good News is accessible to all. Yet, this was not agreed upon by all. For instance, James appears to disagree. Cephas, an associate of James, separated from the Gentiles and convinced Barnabas to do the same. This was despite their teaching among the Gentiles. What happened was a separation occurred through them between the Gentile and the Jewish Christian sects. In other words, Cephas and Barnabas were teaching one thing, and practicing another. There is no separation between the sects. There is no separation. They are, in actuality, one people.

This is what has happened and continues to occur. There are Baptists, Evangelicals, Lutherans, Muslims, Buddhists, Spiritualists, and so on. This is incorrect. We have divided ourselves in the hopes of becoming better. Many teach one thing and practice another.

Part of the purpose of the First Spiritual Church of Prayer is to teach the equality of religions, past and present. As part of that teaching, we promote the idea of meditation and through meditation one accesses their Gospel, their 'Good News.' For us to suggest

otherwise is to practice hypocrisy. While our flavor is of the Spiritualist nature, it is not in opposition to Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Wiccan or any of the religious systems of the past or present. We do not separate ourselves. We accept and often expand upon those teachings. We have merely identified the path we walk towards unification. We cannot say we are different from the others we can only speak of the gospel we follow because it is suitable for us. If we teach something and then do not practice it, then we are false teachers.

### Galatians chapter 3

The third chapter of Galatians focuses on the law and faith. Paul speaks of limitation versus Spirit. In a sense, he is speaking of being asleep or dead versus being awake or alive.

He goes on to say, 'For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse...Now it is evident that no one is justified by the law.'

We can follow the letter of the law and be right, but not justified. We all know the law is not about justice and that justice should be about the law. Laws are not necessarily rules, but guidelines. We operate best when we know what is expected. One of the Ten Commandments is we should not steal. If we follow the law, then to steal at any time is punishable. At no time is theft a good thing. However, justice is not about the law. Justice is about what is fair. If I have abundant food, it is within my rights to keep it from you. Is it fair? No, it is not. The law also states not to kill. The law says nothing about justifiable homicide. That rests within a court of justice to determine. The law simply states I shall not kill.

I have abundant food. You want some I say no, but you choose to steal some anyway. Perhaps you have a family to feed, I don't know. The question is, is it right? No, it is not right under the law. However, justice is not about the law. Justice is about what is fair.

While the theft was not within my rights, it was the correct thing to do and this is where faith enters the picture.

Faith is like trust. When we do something on faith, we are trusting we will be exonerated. While this is not often the case, it does happen. More often than not, the law is modified in order to satisfy justice, or what is right. Is it right for me to keep all of that food and not allow any for those in need? No, it is not. Is it right for you to steal from me to satisfy your needs? No, it is not. Then we ask is it fair for me to keep food from you? No, it is not. Is it fair for you to steal food for you needs? Yes, it is. This is the difference between justice and the law. One is strict while the other is flexible.

When Paul says, 'The one who is righteous will live by faith,' he is telling us when we do what is fair, it is faith that will assist us. Faith is about trust. When we do something, we are not supposed to do, we are trusting that whoever is the authority will treat us fairly. In other words, we are relying on them to alter the law to reflect what is fair. We still have to satisfy the law, but through trust, through faith, the law can be lessened.

The law is dead because it does not consider what is fair. The law has not part in fairness. It merely informs people of what is expected of them and the consequences of violation. Just as when Paul asks if the law is opposed to the promises of God. The law is dead because it cares not what happens. It is based on dualism. It is based on what is right and what is wrong, night and day. Justice is housed in faith. Justice is alive because it takes into consideration the motivation behind an act. If you stole food from me to feed your family because you could not find work, then true justice will take that into consideration and modify the law accordingly. Would this mean it was okay to steal? Try it again and find out.

The is not concerned with equality or inequality. What we are seeing today is the law in action. The populace has been given permission to commit acts of prejudice. We have

laws that allow others treat people in a fashion they would not treat their friends. We have laws that wipe away dignity. Today, we also have people who are acting in faith. We're not referring to those who are instigating violence. We are referring to those who participate in protests. They are invoking faith. Faith that justice will aid them. Faith that those laws that allow others to abuse their neighbors, their community, their families will be altered.

When look to the law for guidance, we should also rely on justice to shape it. Justice is not about creed, ethnicity, or beliefs. This is what justice is to be blind about. Justice is about what is fair. When we live with faith, we are trusting in fairness. We are not dismissing the law, for we need the law. We are looking to faith to temper the law.

Under the law, there is division. Through faith, there is unity. Faith does not recognize Gentile or Jew. Faith does not recognize Hispanic, African, or Caucasian. When we are truly awake, there is only us.

#### Galatians chapter 4

Our next venture into Galatians is about enslavement and freedom. Many will take this to be a comparison of being enslaved and free. In order to know freedom, one must become enslaved and so we were. We were not enslaved unto the law, as is written. We are enslaved through ignorance.

Ignorance is to respond without proper information. More likely it is a lack of proper understanding. In keeping with what has been presented earlier, we had not realized the separation we imposed upon ourselves. Many of us, before coming to Spiritualism began as something else. Usually one of the mainstream denominations. We have heard the terms recovering Catholic or recovering Jehovah's Witness. If we are stepping away from

something, we recollect it because we have not yet let go of one and grasped the other. The problem here is that technically, we have merely exchanged labels.

Coming from one of the mainstream denominations is good. We have a point from which to build. We can exchange poor bricks and mortar for better. Some of them came from a different label. It doesn't matter. The foundation remains firm. The question is are we any different than before?

Many of the other religions have their particular rules and doctrines. They are needed in order to instruct. Spiritualism has its rules and doctrine, though many will deny this. One merely need refer to their Declarations of Principles. These are the shackles that enthrall us. To become free, we must move beyond these instructions. In order to do that we must first let go.

Rules are often guidelines. They convey what is acceptable and provide direction. Our parents established guidelines to provide direction. However, a time comes when we step away from our parents and continue on. Once we have freed ourselves of their law, do we go back? Probably not. That is what's being presented in the fourth chapter of Galatians. We know the law and are familiar with the law. Dare we move beyond the law? At the beginning of Galatians, Paul declares he received his gospel from other than humankind. He received his Good News from the Divine. He moved beyond the law. This we must do also. Move beyond the law and strengthen our relationship with the Divine. There's more.

As we move beyond the law, we must learn discernment. As we move beyond the law, we must gain confidence. We must determine if what we receive is beneficial or detrimental to us. We must test what is received. As we test what is received, we gain confidence and through that confidence our faith is strengthened. Faith receives. What we receive, we give away. Through faith, we learn love. Here is the freedom being referred to. When we experience faith and love, can we return to those guidelines? They guided us to

where we are at today. To remain with them after experiencing the Divine is.....I don't know.

We were enslaved by what we thought we knew. We grew comfortable with what we believed we knew. When we discovered there was more and that what we knew was less than what was available, we discovered we had become enslaved. Only by pursuing our discovery are we able to become free or to rise from the dead. Once alive, can we ever die?

## Galatians chapter 5

The fifth chapter of Galatians is connected to the fourth. In a sense we're continuing our discussion, though it moves in a different direction. Here, it is about the difference between the law and spirit. In different terms, this could be the difference between following doctrine and the guidance received through communication with the Divine.

Again, there are the terms of circumcised and uncircumcised. We can view these as representing our mainstream and fringe religions. The uncircumcised would be the fringe religious practices such as Shamanism, Wiccan, and Spiritualism, while the circumcised would be the mainstream practices such as Christianity's denominations, Islam, and those we are more familiar with. If we follow the doctrines of one or the other, we are bound by them. However, if we practice what is received through the Divine, we move beyond them. This does not indicate the Divine teachings are above the doctrine, only that they are beyond the it. Doctrine is the foundation we build upon. It is a necessary part, a part we are meant to move through. Through the Divine, all are one. As we indicated before, within the Divine there are only the divine. Moslems, Wiccans, and Theosophists do not exist within the Divine because they are separations. The Law separates, while the Divine unifies.

Chapter five also discusses freedom, love, and faith. We are called to freedom. We are called to unify with the Divine. Through the Divine we experience freedom through communion. What are we called to do? We are called to faith and love. We are called to receive from the Divine and to share what is received. Only through this do we truly experience the Divine, which is freedom.

What are we freeing ourselves from? We are freeing ourselves from the law or the doctrine of our religious practice. Galatians also describes the difference between the freedoms of the Divine and the confines of the Law. Through the law, we experience anger, dissension, strife, etc., we experience those emotions and activities that separate us from one another. This is what is being experienced socially. This is a necessary part of growth, but it is not an end. Through experiencing the Divine we experience peace, joy, gentleness, and similar activities. Although the law does not prevent us from experiencing these, our preference for the law does.

Another lesson here is the application of that freedom, of the Divine experience. All religions appear to have a certain experience in common. We call it the religious experience. For some, this can be groundbreaking. For others, it becomes a source of addiction. They become obsessed with the sensation of power. These are those who have not matured in life. Their obsession is one of power. They become obsessed with the influence they can exert upon others and the emotional investment others place in them. Paul instructs us not to indulge ourselves in our newfound freedom. We are instructed not to bite one another. We are instructed not to consume or be consumed by others.

The lesser mind, the inexperienced mind can easily latch hold of the experience of the Divine, seeking to claim it for itself. They are who we must be wary of. They will insist there is only their way to receive. They will insist only they may show us the way. In their foolishness, they will demand loyalty. There is only one we should be loyal to. We should be loyal to ourselves. For through ourselves do we commune with the Divine. Only through

ourselves do we receive the 'Good News.' We must take care and not impose our Gospel upon others, but become a signpost pointing the way to theirs.

Doctrine serves one purpose, and it is the same purpose we serve unto others. That is to point the way. Anything we provide is akin to doctrine, and it is our purpose to aid them in moving beyond teaching towards experience. Only through experience can any find their Gospel.

### Galatians chapter 6

The last chapter of Galatians is a summary of what came before. Be watchful of those who seek to separate us from the Divine. The only way they can do so is to put forth a doctrine. Whether it is another's or of their own making. Doctrine is merely the foundation upon which to build. What we build upon it is for us and no one else.

Paul gives a sign to be watchful of those who believe they are something because they often have nothing. They have neglected to test their own works. Other teachings encourage us to test others by the fruit of their works. So, we must test our works. Our works must benefit those who chose to apply them. If they serve only us, then we are false teachers and have deceived ourselves into thinking they serve others. This is what false teachings are about. They are self-serving. Any who seek to capture others deceives themselves and shall receive accordingly. While Paul has written this, we know through experience this is true. As we grow closer to the Divine, our responsibilities to the Divine increase, as do the rewards.

Opportunities for us to guide will appear naturally. We may fulfill our duties, or we deceive ourselves. The difference between the two rests with us. Only we know when we are being deceptive. Only we are the foolish ones. We mislead ourselves, whether through ignorance or purposefulness. Our reward is not the same as those who take advantage of

those who are naive. Consider this, Paul instructs us to beware those who boast, yet in closing says, ' From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body.

There is no separation in denominations, of religions, or race. There is only us and the Divine. When this becomes apparent and practiced, the experience of life will never again be as it was before.

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