

>> MY NAME IS CLIFF GOODWIN, AND I WELCOME YOU HERE TODAY FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL. I HAVE MY BIBLE OPEN AND IN HAND, AND I WANT TO INVITE YOU TO TAKE YOUR BIBLE DOWN AT HOME AND TO OPEN UP THE WORD OF GOD WITH ME SO THAT WE MIGHT STUDY TOGETHER DURING THIS TIME. I'VE OPENED MY BIBLE TO THE BOOK OF GALATIANS, PARTICULARLY GALATIANS CHAPTER 5. HERE IN JUST A FEW MOMENTS, WE WILL INTRODUCE OUR STUDY FROM A READING IN THIS TEXT. AS YOU'RE FINDING THAT PLACE AT HOME, I'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU OUR SUBJECT MATTER FOR TODAY. BASICALLY, ALL OF OUR THOUGHTS ARE GOING TO COME TO US FROM THE BOOK OF GALATIANS ITSELF. AND WE NEED TO APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT GALATIANS WAS WRITTEN NOT TO A SINGLE CHURCH, NOT A SINGLE CONGREGATION, BUT RATHER TO A GROUP OF CONGREGATIONS THROUGHOUT AN AREA, THE AREA KNOWN SIMPLY TO US AS GALATIA. THESE CHURCHES WERE IN JEOPARDY, THEY WERE IN HARM'S WAY BECAUSE OF THE INFLUENCES OF JUDAIZING TEACHERS, MEN WHO HAD COME IN THEIR MIDST, AND THEY WERE TEACHING THAT CIRCUMCISION WAS NECESSARY FOR THE SALVATION OF THESE GENTILE BELIEVERS, THINGS LIKE THAT. AND SOME WOULD BASICALLY SAY THAT THEY WERE TRYING TO IMPOSE THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW OF MOSES ON THESE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS. AND I BELIEVE TO A LARGE EXTENT THAT WOULD BE ACCURATE, THAT WOULD BE TRUE. AND SO WE'RE GOING TO ENTITLE THIS STUDY TODAY, THE DANGERS OF APOSTASY. THE DANGERS OF APOSTASY. BECAUSE THERE IS NO DOUBT, IN FACT, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT, I BELIEVE, AS ONE STUDIES AND READS AND PONDERES THE BOOK OF GALATIANS, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT APOSTASY IS POSSIBLE, THAT THE THREAT IS REAL, AND THUS THAT FAITHFUL CHILDREN OF GOD STILL NEED TO BE VIGILANT. THEY NEED TO BE CONSCIENTIOUS AND THEY NEED TO BE MINDFUL OF THEIR SPIRITUAL WELFARE AND NOT, AS SO MANY OFTEN SEEM TO DO, NOT SIMPLY CLICK THEIR SPIRITUAL LIVES ON CRUISE CONTROL, COASTING THROUGH LIFE AS IT WERE, PUTTING SPIRITUAL MATTERS ON A BACK BURNER AND BUSYING THEMSELVES WITH OTHER AFFAIRS, SECULAR CONCERNS THROUGHOUT LIFE. THAT'S NOT WHAT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS ABOUT. SO AS WE'VE OPENED NOW TO GALATIANS CHAPTER 5, WE'RE CONSIDERING THE DANGERS OF APOSTASY. I WANT US TO INTRODUCE THIS BY LOOKING AT VERSE 7. GALATIANS 5:7. PAUL TOLD THESE BRETHREN, HE SAID, YE DID RUN WELL. WHO DID HINDER YOU, THAT YE SHOULD NOT OBEY THE TRUTH? THAT'S REALLY A HAUNTING STATEMENT. AS WE READ IT AND AS IT SINKS INTO OUR HEARTS, INTO OUR MINDS, NOTICE THAT AT ONE POINT, PAST TENSE, AS WE READ IT IN THE ENGLISH, PAUL WAS ABLE TO TELL THESE FOLKS, YE DID RUN WELL. NOW THAT'S INDICATIVE THAT AT ONE TIME, YOU WERE FAITHFUL, YOU WERE TRUE, YOU WERE DEVOTED TO THE LORD, YOU WERE WALKING IN THE LIGHT OF HIS WORD. SO MANY DESCRIPTIVES COME TO MIND FROM THAT STATEMENT, YE DID RUN WELL; BUT THAT PAST-TENSE VERB IS TROUBLESOME, IT'S PROBLEMATIC. YOU DID RUN WELL. BUT THEN HE ASKED THIS QUESTION: WHO DID HINDER YOU? SOMEBODY HAD STEPPED IN. SOMEBODY HAD TAUGHT SOMETHING ERRONEOUS. WE KNOW THAT IT WAS OF A JUDAISTIC NATURE. THEY HAD TAUGHT SOMETHING ERRONEOUS. THEY HAD EXERTED EVIL INFLUENCE UPON THESE CHRISTIANS. AND HE SAYS, WHO DID HINDER YOU, THAT YOU SHOULD NOT OBEY THE TRUTH? NOW, THE LESSON FROM THAT FINAL PORTION OF THE VERSE IS THIS: WHEREAS THESE GALATIANS CHRISTIANS HAD OBEYED THE TRUTH PREVIOUSLY AND THEY HAD RUN WELL IN RUNNING THE CHRISTIAN RACE, IF YOU WILL, SOMEBODY HAD COME IN, SOMEBODY HAD TAUGHT ERROR, SOMEBODY HAD EXERTED EVIL INFLUENCE, AND NOW THESE SAME GALATIANS, AT LEAST SOME OF THEM, WERE NOT CONTINUING TO OBEY THE TRUTH. THEY WERE NOT CONTINUING TO RUN WELL THE RACE. THEY WERE NOT CONTINUING TO WALK IN THE LIGHT. YOU SEE THE POINT. AND SO GALATIANS 5:7 IS A GREAT STARTING POINT

FOR US TODAY, I BELIEVE, AS WE BEGIN SOMEWHAT OF AN ANALYSIS OF THIS EPISTLE AND WE START NOTICING SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF APOSTASY, BECAUSE WE'RE SEEING THE DANGERS OF APOSTASY. AND AS WE NOTICE THESE CHARACTERISTICS THAT COME TO US FROM THE BOOK OF GALATIANS, WE'RE GOING TO SEE JUST HOW DANGEROUS APOSTASY REALLY IS. AND IT BEGINS RIGHT HERE IN CHAPTER 5 WITH THE INTRODUCTION AND THE INFLUENCE OF AN EVIL CONTINGENCY, SOMEBODY WHO'S TEACHING THINGS THEY OUGHT NOT TO TEACH, THEY'RE INFLUENCING PEOPLE IN THE WRONG DIRECTION, AND NOW THEY'VE EVEN SUCCESSFULLY CAUSED OTHERS NOT TO RUN WELL THE CHRISTIAN RACE. THEY'RE FALLING AWAY. THEY'RE BECOMING UNFAITHFUL. NOTICE WITH ME THESE DANGERS. SO WE'RE GOING TO GO IN ORDER NOW. WE INTRODUCED IT IN CHAPTER 5, BUT LET'S GO ALL THE WAY BACK TO GALATIANS CHAPTER 1. AND LORD WILLING, AS TIME PERMITS, WE'RE GOING TO GO THROUGH ALL SIX CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK OF GALATIANS, AND IN EACH CHAPTER WE'RE GOING TO NOTICE A CHARACTERISTIC OF APOSTASY; AND THEREBY WE CAN RECOGNIZE THE DANGERS OF APOSTASY IN GENERAL. NUMBER ONE, IN GALATIANS 1, I WANT YOU TO REALIZE THAT THOSE WHO APOSTATIZE, THEY PROVE TO BE FICKLE. THEY PROVE TO BE FICKLE. NOW, MANY TIMES, IF WE'RE SPEAKING INFORMALLY, WE MIGHT REFER TO SOMEONE WHO'S WISHY-WASHY. AND WE KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS. ONE MOMENT THEY WANT TO DO THIS, FOR A WHILE THEY'RE HEADED IN THAT DIRECTION, BUT THEN THE NEXT MOMENT, THEY'VE CHANGED, THEY WANT TO DO SOMETHING ELSE, OR NOW THEY'RE HEADED IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION. THEY'RE SHOWING FICKLENESS. APOSTASY DEMONSTRATES A FORM OF FICKLENESS, DOES IT NOT? IN ORDER TO APOSTATIZE, ONE MUST FIRST HAVE BEEN A CHILD OF GOD, A DISCIPLE, A FOLLOWER OF JESUS CHRIST. NOW THAT APOSTASY HAS CREPT UP, THEY HAVE FALLEN AWAY, ARE THEY NOT PROVING THEMSELVES FICKLE? THEY WHO AT ONE TIME SAID JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD, I WANT TO BE UNITED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM TO HAVE MY SINS WASHED AWAY, BUT NOW, NOW THEY'RE GOING A DIFFERENT ROUTE, NOW THEY'RE FOLLOWING SOMETHING DIFFERENT. IF THAT'S NOT A FORM OF FICKLENESS, PRAY TELL, WHAT IS IT? AND LOOK WITH ME TO GALATIANS 1, BEGINNING AT VERSE 6. I MARVEL. THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT WAS SO UNBECOMING AND PERHAPS EVEN UNEXPECTED THAT THE APOSTLE SAYS, I MARVEL. I MARVEL THAT YE ARE SO SOON REMOVED FROM HIM THAT CALLED YOU INTO THE GRACE OF CHRIST UNTO ANOTHER GOSPEL. AND SO THE LANGUAGE IS EVIDENTLY CLEAR. THE WORD REMOVED, WE KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS. ANOTHER GOSPEL, WE KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS. THAT'S ANOTHER OF A DIFFERENT KIND. VERSE 7, HE SAYS, THIS OTHER GOSPEL, WHICH IS NOT ANOTHER, A DIFFERENT GREEK WORD HERE. IT'S NOT ANOTHER OF THE SAME KIND, MEANING IT'S NOT A RELIABLE ALTERNATIVE, IT'S NOT AN ACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTE. IT'S A COUNTERFEIT. YOU'VE BEEN REMOVED FROM GOD, YOU'VE BEEN REMOVED FROM THE ONE WHO CALLED YOU INTO THE GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST, AND YOU'VE BEEN CALLED UNTO ANOTHER GOSPEL ALTOGETHER, WHICH IS NOT ANOTHER OF THE SAME KIND, VERSE 7, IT'S A COUNTERFEIT; BUT THERE BE SOME THAT TROUBLE YOU. YOU SEE, THESE TROUBLERS IN CHAPTER 1 AND VERSE 7, THEY MUST BE THE SAME AS THE HINDERERS IN CHAPTER 5 AND VERSE 7. AND SO THIS WOULD BE A GOOD PLACE AT WHICH TO PUT DOWN A REFERENCE FROM ONE PASSAGE TO THE OTHER. THERE BE SOME THAT TROUBLE YOU. HOW ARE THEY TROUBLING YOU? THEY WOULD PERVERT THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. NOW, DOES ANY MAN HAVE ANY AUTHORITY WHATSOEVER TO PERVERT, ALTER, OR CHANGE THE GOSPEL TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST? YES OR NO? AND THE ANSWER IS A RESOUNDING NO. NO MAN HAS THAT AUTHORITY. BUT NOT ONLY MEN: LOOK AT VERSE 8. PAUL SAYS, BUT THOUGH WE OURSELVES, IF WE AS THE APOSTLES, OR AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN, PREACH ANY OTHER GOSPEL UNTO YOU THAN

THAT WHICH WE HAVE PREACHED UNTO YOU, PAUL SAYS, LET HIM BE ACCURSED, ANATHEMA, LET HIM STAND UNDER THE CURSE OF GOD HIMSELF. THAT'S HOW SERIOUS THIS IS. AS WE SAID BEFORE, VERSE 9, SO SAY I NOW AGAIN, IF ANY MAN PREACH ANY OTHER GOSPEL UNTO YOU THAN THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED, LET HIM BE ACCURSED. NOW, THE WAY THAT READING ENDED THERE, AS WE ENDED WITH VERSES 8 AND 9, THE EMPHASIS OF COURSE, IS ON THE SERIOUS NATURE OF THE SIN COMMITTED BY THESE FALSE TEACHERS. THEY STAND UNDER THE ANATHEMA OF GOD. THEY ARE ACCURSED OF GOD, VERSES 8 AND 9. BUT IN VERSES 6 AND 7, PARTICULARLY VERSE 6, WE NOTED THE FICKLE NATURE OF APOSTASY: MEN AND WOMEN WHO AT ONE POINT LOVE CHRIST, THEY DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO CHRIST, THEY'RE FOLLOWING CHRIST, BUT YOU LET SOMEONE ELSE COME ALONG WITH A DIFFERENT MESSAGE, A PERVERTED, PSEUDO GOSPEL, AND NOW THEY DEMONSTRATE FICKLENESS. THEY'VE LEFT CHRIST AND THEY'VE GONE AFTER ANOTHER. CAN YOU SEE THE DANGERS INHERENT IN APOSTASY? THEY ARE REAL AND THEY ARE PERILOUS. NOW LET'S GO INTO CHAPTER 2. AND FOR THIS, I WANT US TO GO TO THE VERY LAST VERSE OF CHAPTER 2. THE SECOND CHARACTERISTIC OF APOSTASY, NUMBER ONE WAS FICKLENESS ON THE PART OF THE INDIVIDUAL; NUMBER TWO, APOSTASY IS FRUSTRATING TO THE GRACE OF GOD. FRUSTRATING TO THE GRACE OF GOD. LOOK AT GALATIANS 2:21. PAUL SAYS, I DO NOT FRUSTRATE THE GRACE OF GOD; FOR IF RIGHTEOUSNESS COME BY THE LAW - MAY I PARAPHRASE? IF MEN AND WOMEN COULD HAVE BEEN SAVED BY THE LAW OF MOSES ALONE, THEN CHRIST IS DEAD IN VAIN. IN OTHER WORDS, WHY DID CHRIST EVER COME INTO THIS WORLD? WHY LIVE AS A MAN AND SUFFER TEMPTATION AND REJECTION AND HARDSHIPS? WHY GO TO THE CROSS OF CALVARY, SUFFER, BLEED, AND DIE? WHY? WHY WOULD JESUS DO THIS AT ALL IF SALVATION HAD BEEN ENTIRELY POSSIBLE UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW ALONE? WHY HAVE JESUS? SEE, THAT'S PAUL'S POINT. NOW, THIS IS FRUSTRATING TO THE GRACE OF GOD. GOD IS NOT A MAN AS ARE WE. GOD DOES NOT BECOME FRUSTRATED IN THE SENSE THAT YOU AND I WOULD BECOME FRUSTRATED, BECAUSE ALMOST ALWAYS OUR FRUSTRATION IS CONNECTED TO THINGS THAT WE DIDN'T SEE COMING OR THINGS THAT WE DON'T UNDERSTAND, THINGS THAT WE CANNOT FOREKNOW. WELL, GOD DOESN'T FIT INTO ANY OF THAT. GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. EVERYTHING THAT OCCURS, EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS, GOD UNDERSTANDS, GOD KNOWS. SO HE DOESN'T BECOME FRUSTRATED IN THAT HUMAN SENSE. IN FACT, THIS WORD THAT IS TRANSLATED IN GALATIANS 2:21 AS FRUSTRATE, IT IS ACTUALLY TRANSLATED MOST OF THE TIME IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AS DESPISE. SO PUT THAT WORD IN, AND YOU'LL GET MORE OF THE IDEA. PAUL SAYS, I DO NOT DESPISE THE GRACE OF GOD. THIS WORD MEANS TO SET AT NAUGHT, TO MAKE NULL AND VOID, TO REJECT. THAT'S WHAT APOSTASY DOES. IT FRUSTRATES THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE SENSE THAT GOD HAS DONE ALL OF THIS FOR THE SINNER'S SALVATION, ALL OF THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION, THE SENDING OF HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, JESUS DYING ON THE CROSS. ALL OF THIS GOD HAS DONE FOR THE SINNER; AND THE SINNER FOR A WHILE, PERHAPS, HE ACCEPTS, HE BELIEVES, HE OBEYS FOR A WHILE. BUT THEN WHEN HE REJECTS CHRIST AND REJECTS HIS GOSPEL TEACHINGS IN FAVOR OF SOME OTHER DOGMA, SOME OTHER BELIEF SYSTEM - IN THE CASE OF THE GALATIANS, IT WAS INVOLVING A FORM OF JUDAISTIC TEACHING. WHEN HE DOES THAT, HE IS IN ESSENCE SETTING AT NAUGHT ALL THAT GOD HAS ACCOMPLISHED IN CHRIST. HE IS MAKING IT AS FAR AS HE'S CONCERNED, NULL AND VOID, AND HE'S REJECTING IT. AND SO NUMBER ONE, APOSTASY DEMONSTRATES A FICKLENESS ON THE PART OF THE DELINQUENT, YES; BUT NUMBER TWO, APOSTASY IS FRUSTRATING THE GRACE OF GOD IN A SENSE. HE'S REJECTING AND DOING AWAY WITH, INASMUCH AS HE CAN, EVERYTHING THAT GOD HAS DONE FOR HIM. HOW SAD FOR ONE TO DESPISE

THE GRACE OF GOD IN THAT MANNER. NEXT, LET'S MOVE INTO CHAPTER 3. GALATIANS 3:1 READS, O FOOLISH GALATIANS! WHO HATH BEWITCHED YOU, THAT YE SHOULD NOT OBEY THE TRUTH, BEFORE WHOSE EYES JESUS CHRIST HATH BEEN EVIDENTLY SET FORTH CRUCIFIED AMONG YOU? AND SO NOW IN THE VERY NEXT VERSE, AND YET A DIFFERENT CHAPTER, WE'RE READING A THIRD CHARACTERISTIC OF APOSTASY. NOT ONLY DOES IT DEMONSTRATE FICKLENESS, NOT ONLY IS IT FRUSTRATING TO THE GRACE OF GOD IN A SENSE; BUT NUMBER THREE, AND SIMPLY PUT, APOSTASY IS FOOLISH. HOW FOOLISH, REALLY AND TRULY, FOR MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE HEARD THE GOSPEL PROCLAIMED AND TAUGHT IN ITS PURITY AND IN ITS SIMPLICITY. AND I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THAT'S THAT TO WHICH THE APOSTLE PAUL IS REFERRING IN VERSE 1 WHEN HE SAYS, BEFORE WHOSE EYES JESUS CHRIST HATH BEEN EVIDENTLY SET FORTH, CRUCIFIED AMONG YOU. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? WELL, COULD IT NOT MEAN THAT PAUL SAID I WAS RIGHT THERE IN YOUR MIDST, AND I PREACHED PASSIONATELY, AND I PREACHED FERVENTLY THAT JESUS CHRIST HAD BEEN CRUCIFIED FOR YOU, AS HE HAD BEEN FOR THE ENTIRE WORLD. AND PAUL'S POINTING OUT TO THEM, I BELIEVE, YOU'VE HEARD THIS MESSAGE, YOU'VE RESPONDED TO THIS MESSAGE, YOU'VE BELIEVED AND OBEYED THIS VERY MESSAGE, THE GOSPEL PREACHING OF THE CROSS; AND YET NOW YOU'VE ALLOWED SOMEONE ELSE, AN INTERLOPER, IF YOU WILL, TO COME IN, AND HE'S BEWITCHED YOU. HE HAS PULLED THE WOOL, AS IT WERE, OVER YOUR EYES SO THAT YOU'VE BECOME BLINDED. YOU'RE MISLED. AND HE DESCRIBED IT THERE SIMPLY AS FOOLISHNESS. O FOOLISH GALATIANS. YOU AND I UNDERSTAND THAT THAT IS STRONG LANGUAGE. IT'S A VERY STRONG TERM FOR SOMEONE TO BE DESCRIBED AS BEING FOOLISH IN THE LITERAL SENSE OF THAT WORD. BUT WHAT WE LEARN HERE IS THAT APOSTASY IS A STRONG MATTER. IT IS A SERIOUS MATTER; AND THEREFORE, IT IS DESERVING OF SERIOUS VERBIAGE, SERIOUS WORDING AND ATTENTION. O, FOOLISH GALATIANS. WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT THAT. ANYTIME A CHRISTIAN MAN, A CHRISTIAN WOMAN, ANYTIME THEY MAKE THE CHOICE, WHETHER IT'S THROUGH NEGLIGENCE OR WHETHER IT'S THROUGH REBELLION, WHATEVER THE CASE MAY BE, THE CHOICE IS THEIRS. AND WHENEVER THEY MAKE THE CHOICE TO TURN AWAY FROM FOLLOWING JESUS, TURN AWAY FROM HIS PLAIN AND SIMPLE TRUTH, AND THEY GO AFTER ANYTHING OR ANYONE ELSE, THE RESPONSE OF THE BIBLICAL WRITERS WOULD BE THAT'S FOOLISHNESS. IT'S SO FOOLISH. IT IS SO SHORT-SIGHTED TO APOSTATIZE AND FALL AWAY FROM JESUS. THAT'S CHARACTERISTIC NUMBER THREE. NOW LET'S MOVE INTO CHAPTER 4. AND IN CHAPTER 4, I WANT US TO LOOK PARTICULARLY AT VERSES 10 AND 11. WE'VE SEEN THE FICKLENESS OF APOSTASY, THE FRUSTRATION OF APOSTASY, EVEN THE FOOLISHNESS OF APOSTASY; BUT FROM GALATIANS CHAPTER 4 NOW, WE BEHOLD THE FEARFULNESS OF APOSTASY. FRIENDS, I CANNOT OVEREMPHASIZE, I CANNOT OVERSTATE THE REALITY THAT WHEN A CHILD OF GOD FALLS AWAY, HOW FEARFUL, HOW FEARFUL A MATTER THAT IS. IN CHAPTER 4, VERSE 10, PAUL SAID, YE OBSERVE DAYS AND MONTHS AND TIMES AND YEARS; I AM AFRAID OF YOU, SAYS THE KING JAMES VERSION. THE IDEA IS, I AM AFRAID FOR YOU. THAT'S REALLY THE SENTIMENT. I AM AFRAID OF YOU, LEST I HAVE BESTOWED UPON YOU LABOR IN VAIN. HOW MUCH CLEARER, COULD THERE BE ANY CLEARER A WAY OF STATING THAT APOSTASY IS POSSIBLE THAN HIS SAYING, I'M AFRAID LEST I HAVE BESTOWED UPON YOU LABOR IN VAIN. NOW, ONCE AGAIN, BACK THERE IN VERSE 10, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THESE ARE SOME MORE ASPECTS, PERHAPS, OF THEIR JUDAISTIC ERROR TO WHICH THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN LISTENING AND NOW TO WHICH THEY WERE INCLINED. HE SAYS, YOU'RE OBSERVING DAYS AND MONTHS AND TIMES AND YEARS. UNDER THE RELIGIOUS CALENDAR OF THE LAW OF MOSES, THERE WERE ALL KINDS OF OBSERVANCES, ALL KINDS OF FEASTS AND SACRIFICES, SOME TO BE OFFERED ON A

WEEKLY BASIS, OTHERS AT A MONTHLY ALLOTMENT, OTHERS ONCE A YEAR. AND PERHAPS THAT'S WHAT'S COMING TO THE SURFACE HERE IN VERSE 10. YOU'VE BEEN INFLUENCED FURTHER BY THESE JUDAISTIC TEACHINGS. AND PAUL SAYS, I'M AFRAID FOR YOU. APOSTASY IS A FEARFUL THING. BUT NOW, CHAPTER 5, LET'S KEEP MOVING ON THROUGH THE BOOK. NUMBER 5, WE SEE THE FALLING AWAY INVOLVED IN APOSTASY. LOOK AT GALATIANS 5:6. FOR IN JESUS CHRIST, NEITHER CIRCUMCISION AVAILETH ANYTHING, NOR FOR THAT MATTER UNCIRCUMCISION; BUT WHAT AVAILS IN CHRIST IS FAITH WHICH WORKS BY LOVE. THAT'S THE VERSE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY OUR INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT, YE DID RUN WELL. YOU UNDERSTOOD AT ONE TIME THAT IT IS FAITH WHICH WORKS BY LOVE. THAT'S WHAT MATTERS IN JESUS CHRIST. YOU ARE NOT CONCERNED WITH CIRCUMCISION VERSUS UNCIRCUMCISION. AT ONE POINT, THAT DIDN'T MATTER TO YOU. YOU PLACED YOUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, YOU OBEYED HIM, AND YOUR LIVES WERE CHARACTERIZED BY WORKING HIS WILL IN LOVE. YOU DID RUN WELL, VERSE 7, BUT WHO DID HINDER YOU, THAT YE SHOULD NOT KEEP ON, THAT YE SHOULD NOT CONTINUE OBEYING THE TRUTH? YOU SEE THE IMPACT OF THAT, THE POWER BEHIND THAT STATEMENT. BACK UP TO VERSE 4. HE SAYS CHRIST IS BECOME OF NO EFFECT UNTO YOU. NO EFFECT WHATSOEVER. CHRIST IS DOING YOU NO GOOD, IN OTHER WORDS. WHOSEVER OF YOU ARE JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW, YE ARE FALLEN FROM GRACE. ISN'T IT STRANGE, ISN'T IT SADLY IRONIC THAT SOME WILL ALLEGE A CHRISTIAN CANNOT FALL FROM GRACE. OH, REALLY? PAUL SAYS HERE, THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE NOW TURNING TO THE LAW OF MOSES, YOU'RE TURNING TO CIRCUMCISION IN THE FLESH, YOU'RE TURNING MAYBE TO THE OBSERVANCES OF THOSE DAYS, MONTHS, TIMES, AND YEARS. HE SAYS, YE ARE FALLEN AWAY. THAT'S ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC OF APOSTASY. SOMEBODY WHO ONCE IN VERSE 1, THEY WERE STANDING FAST IN THE LIBERTY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, NOW THEY HAVE FALLEN AWAY. THEY'RE NO LONGER STANDING; THEY ARE FALLEN. AND THAT SHOWS US THE DANGER OF APOSTASY. ONE MORE CHAPTER AND ONE MORE POINT. GO WITH ME TO GALATIANS CHAPTER 6 AND READ WITH ME AT VERSE 12. AS MANY AS DESIRE TO MAKE A FAIR SHOW IN THE FLESH, THEY CONSTRAIN YOU TO BE CIRCUMCISED, ONLY LEST THEY SHOULD SUFFER PERSECUTION FOR THE CROSS OF CHRIST. AND SO OUR SIXTH CHARACTERISTIC OF APOSTASY AS WE SEE IT IN THIS EPISTLE IS ITS FLESHLY NATURE. NOW, IN THESE PARTICULAR CASES, THAT'S EASILY SEEN. THE JUDAISTIC TEACHERS WERE IMPOSING CIRCUMCISION ON THESE GENTILE CHRISTIANS. AND SO THAT WAS A FLESHLY RITE IMPOSED IN AN OTHERWISE SPIRITUAL FAITH, NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY. AND SO IT'S EASY TO SEE HOW THE APOSTASY COULD BE DESCRIBED AS FLESHLY. BUT I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND IN BROADER TERMS AND MORE GENERIC TERMS THAT REALLY ALL APOSTASY FROM CHRIST IS FLESHLY IN A SENSE; AND THAT'S BECAUSE APOSTASY IS PULLING US AWAY FROM TRUE SPIRITUALITY THAT IS IN JESUS CHRIST AND THAT IS ENGENDERED AND TAUGHT AND PRODUCED BY THE TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. BACK UP WITH ME HERE IN GALATIANS 6 AND LOOK AT VERSE 7. BE NOT DECEIVED; GOD IS NOT MOCKED. FOR WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP. FOR HE THAT SOWETH TO HIS FLESH, THINGS OF THIS LIFE AND OF THIS WORLD, HE SHALL OF THE FLESH REAP CORRUPTION; BUT HE THAT SOWETH TO THE SPIRIT SHALL OF THE SPIRIT REAP LIFE EVERLASTING. THESE JUDAIZING TEACHERS, THEY WERE REJECTING THE TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AS REVEALED IN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. THEY WERE REJECTING THOSE. THEY WERE REACHING BACK TO THE OLD LAW OF MOSES, AND THEY WERE COMPELLING THESE GENTILE CHRISTIANS TO SUBMIT TO THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION, A MERE FLESHLY RITE NOW ON THIS SIDE OF THE CROSS. AND SO APOSTASY IS SEEN TO BE FLESHLY, TO BE CARNAL, PULLING US AWAY FROM TRUE SPIRITUALITY. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR STUDYING WITH ME

HERE TODAY, AND MAY GOD HELP YOU AND ME AND ALL OF US AS HIS CHILDREN TO
RECOGNIZE THE DANGERS OF APOSTASY. THANK YOU.

>> (SINGING)