



# GALATIANS

## Chapters 1-6

### Summary

In this letter, Paul chastises religious “influencers” who wrongly believe that covenant inclusion necessarily includes gentile conversion to Judaism. In Galatians, Paul sets the record straight, emphasizing salvation is by grace alone. At no time does Paul advocate for lawlessness. Rather, Paul explains another law at work in a true believer’s life — the Law of Messiah. In short, Paul urges his readers to do the Law, but do it in the power of the Spirit.

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## Rules We Follow

1. Scripture will not contradict itself
2. The Bible interprets itself; clearer passages help with unclear passages
3. Verses must be understood in context  
Pericope; letter or book; the whole of Scripture; cultural context

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

### Basics

1. To be freed from sin and eternal death is called **SALVATION**  
The cause: sin (Mt 1:21); The Consequence: wrath (Rom 5:9); The power: darkness and death (Col 1:13)
2. The process of being more like Jesus is called **SANCTIFICATION**  
In Truth (Jn 17:17); Transformation (2 Cor 3:18)
3. In Hebrew thought, to **BE HOLY** means consecrating or designating something from common use for sacred, divine purpose.
4. Salvation is a work of **THE SPIRIT**  
Eph 2:8-10; Titus 3:5
5. Sanctification is a work of **THE SPIRIT**  
The Power (Ex 31); The Apparatus (John 17:17)
6. Sin is **LAWLESSNESS**  
1 John 3:4
7. Lawlessness is living as if God's **AUTHORITY** and **INSTRUCTIONS** do not govern your life.  
Heart (Prov 28:9); Definable rebellion (Isa 30:9); Self-exaltation (2 Thess 2:3-4)

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<sup>1</sup> Since this is an introductory Bible study, we'll use the *Legacy Standard Bible* (LSB). In our non-introductory Bible studies, we use *The Scriptures* (TS).

In the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament), *nomos* (law) translates the Hebrew word *Torah*, which literally means "instruction," "teaching," or "direction" (from the root *yarah*, meaning "to shoot an arrow toward a target").

Therefore, *anomia* literally means "without Torah" or "Torah-lessness." It is the state of taking yourself off God's target and ignoring His covenant directions.

## Covenant

1. A covenant is the **BINDING AGREEMENT** of one or more parties to a defined set of covenantal **TERMS**
  - a. The Abrahamic Covenant is **UNILATERAL**  
Terms (Gen 12:1-3, 15:1-21); Sign: Circumcision (Gen 17:9-14)
  - b. The Mosaic/Sinaitic Covenant is **BILATERAL**  
Terms (Ex 20:1-17, 21:1-23:33); Sign: Sabbath (Ex 31:13)
  - c. The Davidic Covenant is **UNILATERAL**  
Terms (2 Sam 7:8-17) Sign: Eternal Throne/House (Isa 7:14, 9:6-7); Witness: sun and moon (Ps 89:34-37)
  - d. The New Covenant is **UNILATERAL**  
Terms (Jer 31:31-34); Sign: Blood (Lk 22:19-20); Seal: Ruach (Eph 1:13-14, 2 Cor 1:22)

Richard Hays 1983

Pistis Christou ["The Faithfulness of Christ"]: Hays's most famous claim centers on the Greek phrase *pistis Christou*, which appears repeatedly in Paul's writings. Traditionally, English Bible translations have treated this as an "objective genitive," translating it as our "faith in Christ". Hays argued forcefully that grammatically and contextually, it should be read as a "subjective genitive," meaning "the faith (or faithfulness) of Christ".

2. Because the Mosaic/Sinaitic Covenant was **BILATERAL** the Israelites thought in terms of **COVENANTAL NOMISM**.

### 3. In 1977 EP Sanders Proposes Covenantal Nomism<sup>2</sup> (flawed Jewish thinking)

- a. God had chosen Israel and
- b. Given the law.

The law implied both

- c. God's promise to maintain the election and
- d. The requirement to obey.
- e. God rewards obedience and punishes transgression.
- f. The law provides for means of atonement, and atonement results in
- g. Maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship.
- h. All those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement and God's mercy belong to the group which will be saved.<sup>3</sup>

### 4. Fixing the Flaws in Covenantal Nomism

Yahweh had chosen Israel and gave them His law. Yahweh promised to maintain the election while outlining the **BLESSINGS** for obedience, and for disobedience (because Yahweh's kingdom demands justice). The law points to the means of atonement (**YESHUA**), and His atonement results in the establishment and maintenance of the covenantal relationship. All those who are maintained in the covenant by the **SPIRIT** — manifested via obedience, atonement, and mercy by that same **SPIRIT** — belong to the group which will be saved.

### The Divine Chess Match: Yahweh Wins

- 1. To prevent the **DARK FORCES** from thwarting His plan, Yahweh did not reveal the messianic profile in a single, clear, systematic prophecy in the Old Testament. Instead, He scattered cryptic clues across hundreds of years and dozens of passages:<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> EP Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 422.

<sup>3</sup> "An important interpretation of the first and last points is that election and ultimately salvation are considered to be by God's mercy rather than human achievement" (EP Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 422).

<sup>4</sup> My thoughts on the hiddenness of Yahweh's plan were formed, in large part, by the work of Michael Heiser. In this instance, see *Supernatural*, particularly chapters 10 and 11.

- a. A suffering, dying servant (Isa 53)
- b. A divine "Son of Man" riding on the clouds (Dan 7)
- c. A king born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
- d. A pierced shepherd (Zech 12:10)
- e. A priest-king in the order of Melchizedek (Ps 110)

But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom which has been hidden, which God predestined before the ages to our glory, which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."  
— 1 Cor 2:7-8

2. By the **SECOND TEMPLE** period, after centuries of foreign occupation (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome), Israel was intensely focused on prophecies describing a conquering military deliverer — a royal Son of David who would smash Roman oppression and exalt Jerusalem.
3. Israel overlooked or compartmentalized the passages describing a humble, suffering, and dying Messiah. In fact, ancient Jewish tradition often struggled so much to reconcile these two pictures that some rabbis postulated two separate Messiahs:
  - a. Mashiach ben Yosef (Messiah son of Joseph): A suffering servant who dies in battle.
  - b. Mashiach ben David (Messiah son of David): A triumphant king who reigns forever.

They failed to see that these were two comings of the same Person — Messiah Yeshua.

## Galatians 1:1-5<sup>5</sup>

1 Paul, an apostle — not sent from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead —

2 and all the brothers who are with me, to the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

4 who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

### Background Information for 1:1-5



1. Paul is likely on his **FIRST** missionary journey.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The structure of this study relies heavily on D. Thomas Lancaster's *Galatians* and commentary by Tim Hegg.

<sup>6</sup> Most scholars think the Apostle Paul wrote Galatians after completing his first missionary journey, likely while resting or staying in Syrian Antioch around A.D. 48 just before the Jerusalem Council.

| Journey     | Beginning Verse                  | Concluding Verse | Primary Starting / Ending Hubs                     |
|-------------|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1st Journey | Acts 13:4                        | Acts 14:28       | Antioch Syria → Galatia → Syrian Antioch           |
| 2nd Journey | Acts 15:36<br>(Departure: 15:40) | Acts 18:22       | Antioch Syria → Greece → Jerusalem / Antioch Syria |
| 3rd Journey | Acts 18:23                       | Acts 21:17       | Antioch Syria → Ephesus / Greece → Jerusalem       |
| 4th Journey | Acts 27:1                        | Acts 28:30-31    | Caesarea → Voyage / Shipwreck → Rome               |

## 2. The Two Antioch's

### a. Antioch of **SYRIA**.

Location: Northern edge of the Syrian province on the Orontes River, close to the Mediterranean coast (near modern Antakya, Turkey).

Significance: It was the third-largest city in the Roman Empire (after Rome and Alexandria). It served as the base for Paul and Barnabas's missionary journeys and was the place where believers were first called "Christians" (Acts 11:25-26)

### b. Antioch of **PSIDIA**.

Location: Inland in the region of Pisidia (within the Roman province of Galatia, near modern Yalvaç, Turkey).

Significance: Visited by Paul and Barnabas during their first missionary journey (Acts 13:14), where Paul preached his first recorded detailed sermon in a local synagogue.

## Contextual Information from the Book of Acts

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. — Acts 13:1-3

Now after Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia, but John left them and returned to Jerusalem. But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch. And on the Sabbath day, they went into the synagogue and sat down. — Acts 13:13-14

Brothers, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the word of this salvation was sent. For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning Him. — Acts 13:26-27

### 3. Understanding Jewish Identity

- a. The Jewish People trace their ancestry to Abraham, Isaac, and **JACOB**.
- b. Yahweh changed Jacob's name to **ISRAEL**.
- c. Because of a promise Yahweh made to Abraham, Yahweh **SAVED** Abraham's family (Israel) from bondage (enslavement) to Pharaoh and Pharaoh's gods.
- d. After Israel's salvation, Yahweh met Israel at Sinai to show them how to be His/God's set-apart or **HOLY** people — Yahweh's **PORTION**.
- e. For about **500 YEARS**, the Israelites struggled through belief and unbelief, trusting Yahweh, then not trusting Yahweh.<sup>7</sup>
- f. Then, after the third king of Israel failed, the kingdom of Israel divided.

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<sup>7</sup> The unbelief continues post division.

- a. To the north: ISRAEL.
  - b. To the south: JUDAH.
- g. While the NORTHERN kingdom abandoned Yahweh altogether, the JUDAH kingdom hobbled along practicing their religion (Jew-dah-ism). Some practiced for the right reasons. Most, however, did not.

#### 4. The Groups Paul is Writing To

- a. “Brothers” are JEWS.
- b. “Sons of Abraham” are PROSELYTES.
- c. God-fearing Gentiles are NON-JEWISH BELIEVERS.

#### 5. The Situation

- a. The “Brothers” are feeling THREATENED.
- b. There was cultural, societal, political, and economic pressure to become FORMALLY JEWISH.

#### 6. Cultural entrance to putting oneself “under the law.”<sup>8</sup>

- a. They had to undergo ritual CIRCUMCISION.
- b. They had to participate in a ritual IMMERSION.
- c. If possible, they had to offer a SACRIFICE.

#### Galatians 1:6-10

6 I marvel that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel,  
 7 which is really not another, only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.  
 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to the gospel we have proclaimed to you, let him be accursed!

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<sup>8</sup> In Judaism, to become legally Jewish was to become *halachically* Jewish. One's *halacha* is one's *walk*. In the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7), Jesus was delivering his “halacha” or interpretation on the Law of Moses and errant teaching of competing religious teachers (rabbis).

9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is proclaiming to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let him be accursed!  
 10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a slave of Christ.

### Background Information for 1:6-10

1. Paul is writing to the **NEW BELIEVERS**, warning them about the **PROSELYTIZERS**<sup>9</sup>
2. The Yahweh-fearers were new followers of Yeshua who met the criteria outlined by the Apostles in **ACTS 15** but had elected not to undergo formal conversion.

“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: that you abstain from things **SACRIFICED TO IDOLS** and from **BLOOD** and from **THINGS STRANGLED** and from **SEXUAL IMMORALITY**, from which if you keep yourselves, you will do well. Farewell.” — Acts 15:28-29<sup>10</sup>

3. Paul is writing to the new Galatian believers because he fears they are confusing the saved-by-**GRACE** gospel with a saved-by-**WORKS** gospel — which is **NOT THE GOSPEL** at all.
4. Traditionally, Christian expositors have referred to these non-gospel peddlers as “Judaizers.” Today’s scholars, however, more accurately refer to the agitators as **INFLUENCERS**.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 20.2.3–4): Josephus records the conversion of King Izates of Adiabene. One Jewish teacher, Ananias, advised Izates that he could worship God fully without being circumcised, emphasizing inner devotion. However, another strict teacher, Eleazar, arrived later and insisted that failure to undergo physical circumcision was a violation of the Law. The influencers in Galatia held the strict view of Eleazar, turning a physical ritual into a requirement for covenant standing—which Paul branded as a man-made gospel of human legalism.

<sup>10</sup> A thorough treatment of Acts 15 is beyond the scope of our present study. However, for context, Acts 15 concerns formal conversion evidenced by circumcision. The four items outlined in Acts 15:28-29 concerned the basics of belief as each item represented devotion to another god. Note: the Apostle Paul differentiated circumcision post-conversion from the eighth day infant circumcision commanded by Yahweh in Lev 12:3. When Luke records of James and the Apostles, “to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials,” their intent is to speak of the minimums of following Yeshua; the new believers would learn the rest as they attended their local synagogue, for “Moses has those who preach him in every city, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath” (Acts 15:21).

<sup>11</sup> See Mark Nanos’s *The Irony of Galatians: Paul’s Letter in First Century Context*.

We can feel the tension in the Acts narrative.

And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. — Acts 21:20-21

Galatians 1:11-24

- 11 For I make known to you, brothers, that the gospel which I am proclaiming as good news is not according to man.
- 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
- 13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.
- 14 And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being far more zealous for the traditions of my fathers.
- 15 But when God, who had set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased
- 16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might proclaim Him as good news among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,
- 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.
- 18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.
- 19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.
- 20 (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying!)
- 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.
- 22 And I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which are in Christ;
- 23 but only, they kept hearing, “He who once persecuted us is now proclaiming the good news of the faith which he once tried to destroy.”
- 24 And they were glorifying God because of me.

## Background Information for 1:11-24

1. Paul contrasts the gospel transmitted to him by **LOGIC** with the gospel transmitted by **FAITH**

In 1st-century Judaism, religious legitimacy depended on human transmission. The Mishnaic text *Pirkei Avot* [1:1] illustrates this model: "Moses received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets transmitted it to the Men of the Great Assembly..."

2. Paul is so compelled by his revelation that he refers to the gospel he preaches as **MY GOSPEL**.  
Rom 2:15-16; Rom 16:25; 2 Tim 2:8-9
3. In Paul's day, it was utterly radical to think that a gentile, a *goy*, could inherit eternal life (a place in the world to come, the *olam haba*) without becoming halachically Jewish. While this was always true, the point of Galatians is to show **WHY IT'S TRUE**.
4. Paul calls this special revelation "**OBEDIENCE** of faith."

Now to Him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles, leading to obedience of faith; to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.  
— Romans 16:25-27

5. Paul believed inclusion in the Body of Messiah was a matter of **GENUINE FAITH** not of **LEGAL** conversion to Judaism.

Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches. 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. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called. — 1 Corinthians 7:17-20

6. Ritual circumcision **POST-FAITH** is not the same as the command to be circumcised in Leviticus 12:3.





### Perspective A: Bilateral Ecclesiology (Commandment-Based Defilement)

The Logic: Sin is the transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4) as it applies to you. Leviticus 11:1-2 explicitly addresses the B'nei Yisrael (sons of Israel). Because a Gentile (ger) was never commanded in Leviticus 11 to observe Israel's national species list, eating pork is not a sin for a Gentile. Because it is not a sin, it produces no spiritual guilt or tumeah, and therefore does not defile the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Key Proponents: Scholars like Matthew Thiessen, Mark Nanos, and David Rudolph.

### Perspective B: Universal Creation Order (Sanctuary-Based Defilement)

The Logic: Clean and unclean animals were distinguished at Creation and Noah's Ark (Genesis 7:2), long before Sinai. Under the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit physically indwells the believer, making the body the literal locus of Yahweh's sacred space (mishkan). Bringing a species that Yahweh designated as tamei (unclean) into

Yahweh's sanctuary—even if by a Gentile—introduces ritual uncleanness into the sacred space, defiling the vessel.

Key Proponents: Messianic / Torah-observant theologians who view Kashrut as a universal holiness standard for all who join God's household (e.g., Tim Hegg).

## Summary

In the First Century Jewish world, the conflict addressed in Galatians — specifically the requirement of *brit milah* (circumcision) for Gentile converts — was a central debate within the burgeoning Messianic movement. The letter functions as a defense of the *Besorah* (Good News) against the “influencers” who insisted that non-Jewish believers must submit to the full yoke of Halachah (specifically ritual conversion laws) to be considered part of the covenantal family of Israel. Paul argues that through Yeshua (Jesus), Gentiles are grafted into the promises made to Abraham apart from such Halachah. Thus, the believing Gentile is no longer Gentile (of the nations), but one with spiritual Israel — the people of Yahweh, with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities thereof.

For the believer, all of this is a joy.

“If you love Me,” Yeshua said, “you will keep My commandments.” — John 14:15

## Insight: Paul's Inspired Letters

Why did Paul's message stand the test of time? His message, by divine revelation, facilitated both (a) the prophetic inclusion of the nations (gentiles) and (b) upheld Yahweh's Torah (though the rumors suggested otherwise).

## Insight: What is a True Jew?

“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.” — Rom 2:28-29

“Do we then abolish the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.” — Rom 3:31

A true Jew is someone who understands what sin is (rebellion and transgression), has repented of that sin, and having trusted in Yeshua to cover that sin and filling them with the Ruach HaKodesh, that person goes on to walk in the applicable commandments of their Creator.

## Galatians 2:1-2

1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.  
2 And I went up because of a revelation,<sup>12</sup> and I laid out to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, lest somehow I might be running, or had run, in vain.

## Background Information for 2:1-2

1. Paul is likely reflecting upon the events of **ACTS 11** (and pre-Jerusalem Council in Acts 15)
  - a. The Apostle Peter, because of a vision, had taken the gospel to a **GENTILE** named Cornelius [Acts 10:34-35].
  - b. Scattered Believers from Jerusalem (because of Stephen's death), "made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to **JEWS ALONE**" [Acts 11:19].

Essential question: Why did these scattered believers speak only to Jews? Because the arrival of the Messiah was, in their mind, only for **THE JEWISH PEOPLE**.<sup>13</sup>

They Had Good Reason — So What's Going on Here?

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<sup>12</sup> "Now in those days, some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and indicated by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the *reign* of Claudius. And as any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a *contribution* for the service of the brothers living in Judea. And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders. — Acts 11:27-30

<sup>13</sup> Paul's opponents argued that in the Messianic era, all Gentiles must become *Gerim Tzedakim* (proselytes) to be saved. Paul counters that forcing Gentiles into proselyte conversion subverts the prophetic promise: if a Gentile becomes a Jew, God is no longer the God of the *Nations* (Romans 3:29).

"These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them, saying, "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." — Mt 10:6

"But [Yeshua] answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." — Mt 15:24

2. Then, having gone up to Jerusalem to meet with the post-resurrection Messianic **BEIT DIN**, Paul wondered if the Council had actually approved of His gospel message.
3. Paul's letter to the Galatians is likely a **COMMENTARY** on what occurred in that meeting.

Galatians 2:3-10

3 But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

4 But this was because of the false brothers secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to enslave us.

5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.

6 But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.

7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised

8 (for He who worked in Peter unto his apostleship to the circumcised worked in me also unto the Gentiles),

9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

10 Only they asked us to remember the poor—the very thing I also was eager to do.

The Issues in 2:3-10

1. The core conflict in Galatians is not "Grace vs. Torah," but rather "**FAITH VS. LEGALISM**."

2. The “false brothers”<sup>14</sup> were insisting on **CIRCUMCISION** not simply as an act of obedience to God, but as the formal **RITE** of proselyte conversion (*giyyur*) required for justification and full inclusion into Israel.<sup>15</sup>

“How then was it counted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised ...” (Rom 4:10-11).

3. An Analogue

- a. Baptism cannot save
  - b. Therefore, baptism as a prerequisite for salvation is false
  - c. Still, baptism is good, if done rightly
4. By refusing to circumcise Titus, Paul is protecting the truth that Gentiles are **JUSTIFIED** by **FAITH**, just as Abraham was. this does *not* mean Titus lived a Torah-less life (ignoring Sabbath, festivals, or kosher laws); it simply means he was not forced to change his **STATUS** from Gentile to ethnic Jew to be saved.

Galatians 2:11-14

- 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.  
12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James,<sup>16</sup> he used to eat with the Gentiles, but when they came, he began to shrink back and separate himself, fearing the party of the circumcision.  
13 And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

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<sup>14</sup> Understanding this passage requires recognizing the first-century debate between the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai. The Shammaites generally held a much stricter view of Gentile inclusion, practically requiring formal proselyte conversion for a Gentile to have a share in the World to Come. The “false brothers secretly brought in” likely belonged to a Shammaite-leaning sect of believing Pharisees (similar to the group mentioned in Acts 15:1, 5).

<sup>15</sup> During the Maccabean crisis, it appeared that the spread of Hellenism might completely erase Judaism. Jews were persecuted for circumcising their children or refusing unclean foods (1 Macc 1:60-63). In that setting, identity markers such as circumcision, dietary laws, and Sabbath observance became vital for the survival of Judaism itself — a sign of God’s faithfulness in preserving His people and their covenant identity (Fig Tree Ministries).

<sup>16</sup> James the Just, the half-brother of Yeshua.

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before everyone, “If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews,<sup>17</sup> how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews (*ioudaizein*)?”<sup>18</sup>

## Background Information for 2:11-14

### Paul Stands Up for Ezekiel's Prophecy

“So you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. And it will be that you shall divide it by lot for an inheritance among yourselves and among the sojourners who sojourn in your midst, who bring forth sons in your midst. And they shall be to you as the native-born among the sons of Israel. They shall be allotted an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. And it will be that in the tribe with which the sojourner sojourns, there you shall give him his inheritance,” declares Lord Yahweh. — Ezek 47:21-23

1. In verses 11-14, Peter has given into **PEER-PRESSURE**. Likely, the conflict centers on first-century Jewish purity laws called *taharoth* (extra-biblical traditions regarding table fellowship) and the sociological **PRESSURE** to force Gentiles into formal proselyte conversion.
2. Peter's **INITIAL WILLINGNESS** to eat with the Gentiles was in alignment with both the Torah and a previous vision.

### The Cart: **MEANING**

“And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised took issue with him, saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” But Peter began speaking and proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying, “I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision ...” — Acts 11:2-5a

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<sup>17</sup> Peter had already received a vision from Yahweh (Acts 10) declaring that Gentiles were not “unclean” and that faith in Yeshua, not Torah observance, brought them into covenant. Acting on this freedom, Peter had been eating freely with Gentile believers in Antioch, effectively setting aside strict Jewish separation laws. In this sense, Peter was “living like a Gentile” by not keeping kosher separation at the table.

<sup>18</sup> In the first-century context, *ioudaizein* meant “to undergo the ritual of proselyte conversion to become legally and ethnically Jewish.”

The Horse: **VISION**

“And on the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. But he became hungry and was desiring to eat. And while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the sky. And a voice came to him, ‘Rise up, Peter, slaughter and eat!’ But Peter said, ‘By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything defiled and unclean.’” — Acts 10:9-14

Peter **SEARCHES** for Meaning

“Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be ...” — Acts 10:17

3. The “certain men from James” likely brought a strict sectarian *halakhah* which dictated that even if a Gentile ate clean food, the Gentile's **UNCIRCUMCISED STATUS** rendered them ritually impure [*tamei*].
4. By withdrawing **TABLE FELLOWSHIP**, Peter was implicitly telling the Gentiles: If you want to eat with us and be full members of the Kingdom, **FAITH IN YESHUA** is not enough — you must become a Jewish proselyte.<sup>19</sup>

Galatians 2:15-21<sup>20</sup>

- 15 “We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles;
- 16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

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<sup>19</sup> Jewish literature such as the *Book of Jubilees* strictly forbade eating with Gentiles to avoid contamination.

<sup>20</sup> At this theological hinge point, Paul is contrasting two different systems of justification: a works-based system of human merit and Jewish ethnic boundary markers (incorrect) versus the faithfulness of the Messiah (correct).

- 17 But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!
- 18 For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.
- 19 For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God.
- 20 I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”

#### Paul Argues with Peter in 2:15-21

1. Paul is forcibly reminding Peter that even **ETHNIC JEWS** are justified strictly **BY FAITH**, not by their Jewish pedigree or by adopting the rituals of proselyte conversion.
2. In Pauline theology, **THE TORAH** is holy, righteous, and good (Rom 7:12).
3. **"WORKS OF THE LAW"** refers to a sectarian, legalistic misuse of the Torah.<sup>21</sup>
4. Review [Gal 2:16]: What the New Perspective on Paul (NPP) brought to the table: Richard Hays's most famous claim centers on the Greek phrase *pistis Christou*, which appears repeatedly in Paul's writings. Traditionally, English Bible translations have treated this as an "objective genitive," translating it as our "faith in Christ." Hays argued that grammatically and contextually, it should be read as a "subjective genitive," meaning "the faith (or faithfulness) of Christ."
5. In verse 18, Paul sought to **DESTROY** the man-made **DIVIDING WALL** of sectarian *Halakhah* (the traditions of men requiring Gentile conversion).
6. When Paul says, "For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God" (v. 19), Paul is not saying he **STOPPED OBEYING** the Sabbath or eating kosher. Rather, he died to the *condemnation and penalty* of the law.

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<sup>21</sup> *Miqsat Ma'aseh ha-Torah* (Dead Sea Scrolls 4QMMT) details examples of "works of law" — man-made *halakhic* rulings or interpretations based on certain verses of Scripture. "When Paul writes in Romans and Galatians that "works of law" are not a condition of salvation ... he is talking about "halakhic rulings" like those typified by the 20 or so examples in MMT." (Reece Commentaries)

- a. Paul was once **ALIVE** apart from the Law (Rom 7:9)
- b. But then the Law **KILLED** him (Rom 7:9)

### The Role of the Law Pre-Salvation: Romans 7:7-12

What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! Rather, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law. For I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, worked out in me coveting of every kind. For apart from the Law sin is dead. Now I was once alive apart from the Law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; and this commandment, which was to lead to life, was found to lead to death for me. For sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

### 2 Corinthians 3:7-9

But if the ministry of death, in letters having been engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, which was being brought to an end, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be even more in glory? For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.

- 7. The Torah was never given to Israel as a means to achieve salvation; it was given as a standard of **RIGHTEOUS LIVING** for a people *already* redeemed by grace (as seen in the Exodus).<sup>22</sup>

“And do not enter into judgment with Your slave, For no one living is righteous in Your sight.” — Ps 143:2

“Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.” — Hab 2:4

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<sup>22</sup> Paul is directly combating this first-century Jewish theology. Mainstream Pharisaism and Qumran sectarians were teaching that justification and covenant standing were maintained by adhering to these strict boundary markers.

8. In verses 20 and 21, the mystical union with the Messiah means the believer's old self — the one trying to earn salvation through fleshly efforts and religious pedigree — has been **EXECUTED**. The life now lived in the flesh is **ANIMATED** by the Spirit. The Spirit empowers the believer to walk in the *righteous requirements* of the Torah **OUT OF LOVE**, rather than legalism.

"For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh so that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." — Rom 8:3-4

### Galatians 3:1-5

- 1 foolish Galatians, who bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?
- 2 This is the only thing I want to learn from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?
- 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?
- 4 Did you suffer so many things for nothing — if indeed it was for nothing?
- 5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

### Paul's Argument in 3:1-5

1. Paul is not **SCOLDING** the Galatians for desiring to live obediently to the Torah. Rather, he is rebuking them for **ABANDONING** the foundational truth of how they entered the New Covenant.
2. What's Paul asking?
  - a. Verse 2: Did the Spirit come because they performed "works of the law" (i.e., the sectarian boundary markers and the ritual of proselyte conversion)
  - b. Verse 3: Why through circumcision are you trying to be re-saved?
3. The "Brothers" in Paul's time viewed the New Covenant as a two-stage process for Gentiles:

- a. Stage 1 = Faith in Jesus (Spirit)
- b. Stage 2 = Proselyte conversion (Flesh)

Paul is declaring that the Gospel is a **ONE-STAGE** process.

### Galatians 3:6-9

6 Just as Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness,

7 so know that those who are of faith, those are sons of Abraham.

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you."

9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

Paul's Argument in 3:6-9

1. Paul anchors his argument in Genesis 15:6.<sup>23</sup>

"Then [Abraham] believed in Yahweh; and [Yahweh] counted it to [Abraham] as righteousness."

2. Paul shows that "Sons of Abraham" are not those who have undergone proselyte conversion; rather, Sons of Abraham are those who have **BELIEVED IN YESHUA**.

3. Inclusion in the world to come isn't a matter of **ETHNIC STATUS**; it's a matter of faith.<sup>24</sup>

### Galatians 3:10-14

10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to do them."

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<sup>23</sup> Genesis 12:3 & 22:18 establishes the promise that "all families of the earth will be blessed" through Abraham's seed. Isaiah 40:9, 52:7, & 61:1: The concept of the Gospel (*euangelion*) is rooted in the Hebrew *basar* (Good News), which announces Yahweh's cosmic reign and the gathering of the nations to worship the God of Jacob.

<sup>24</sup> In Paul's day, one's identity was strictly tied to ethnicity and ancestral customs. Non-Jews occupied a socio-legal gray area, and formal conversion (becoming *gerim*) offered a socially recognized status. The "influencers" in Galatia capitalized on this status anxiety, insisting that Gentiles must become ethnic Jews through rabbinic/sectarian rituals to attain eschatological salvation. Paul uses Abraham's *emunah* to prove that trust in YHWH's promises, not sociopolitical assimilation, is the true mark of covenant inclusion.

11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident, for “The righteous shall live by faith.”

12 However, the Law is not of faith; rather, “He who does them shall live by them.”

13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—

14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

#### Paul's Argument in 3:10-14<sup>25</sup>

1. Remember, “works of the law” refers to sectarian boundary markers and the **MISUSE** of the Torah as way to be saved.
2. If we rely on our flesh for salvation, we stand condemned because a single infraction brings upon us a **CURSE** (i.e., the penalty of law-breaking).<sup>26</sup>
3. God's Law is not designed to save; it is not of **FAITH**.
4. Instead, God's Law is an instruction book for **RIGHTEOUS LIVING**.

#### Paul's Assertion in v. 12: The Torah's Function

Torah Foundation: “So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does them, he shall live by them; I am Yahweh.” — Lev 18:5

Prophets/Writings Parallel: “I gave them My statutes and made them know My judgments, which, if a man does them, he will live by them.” — Ezek 20:11

Conclusion: The Torah was given to provide a **STANDARD** of living (sanctification) for those already redeemed, not a mechanism to generate the faith required for justification.

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<sup>25</sup> Paul is not arguing that the Torah itself is a curse, nor is he saying that obeying God's instructions brings a curse. Instead, he is dissecting the fatal flaw of relying on a legalistic system (i.e., proselyte conversion) to secure standing before Yahweh.

<sup>26</sup> Traditional scholarship often interprets the “curse” as the burden of having to obey Jewish customs. In ancient Near Eastern suzerain-vassal treaties (which the Sinai covenant mirrors), the “blessings and curses” were contractual consequences. The curse is simply the judicial penalty for breaking the covenant (death and exile). Yeshua frees believers from the *penalty* of the law, not the *righteous standard* of the law.

## Paul's Assertion in v. 13: The Atoning Curse

Torah Foundation: “[His] corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (because cursed of God is he who is hanged).” — Dt 21:23

Prophets/Writings Parallel: “Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our peace fell upon Him, And by His wounds we are healed.” — Isa 53:4-5

Conclusion: Yeshua acts as the ultimate substitutionary offering, absorbing the curse of the law to fulfill the prophetic requirement for redemption.

### Galatians 3:15-18<sup>27</sup>

15 Brothers, I speak in human terms: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.

16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.

17 And what I am saying is this: the Law, which came 430 years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to abolish the promise.

18 For if the inheritance is by law, it is no longer by promise, but God has granted it to Abraham through promise.

### Paul's argument in 3:15-18<sup>28</sup>

1. As in a human covenant or will, once it's been signed and notarized, it can't be **ANNULLED** or **ALTERED**.
2. The Influencers were trying to alter the Abrahamic Covenant.
3. **JEWS** and **GENTILES** inherit eternal life in the same way they always have — by faith. Though important, another covenant that came about centuries later cannot annul or alter a covenant that came before it.

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<sup>27</sup> Paul is not arguing that the Torah of Moses is flawed or abolished; rather, he is defending its proper sequence and function in God's redemptive timeline.

<sup>28</sup> James D.G. Dunn argues that when Paul condemns “works of the law,” he is targeting Jewish boundary markers — specifically circumcision, dietary laws, and Sabbath observance. While I concur with Dunn on this point, we at YH contend Paul's arguments center on salvation, not sanctification.

#### 4. Paul's Assertion in v. 15: The Unchangeableness of the Abrahamic Covenant

Torah Foundation: "On that day Yahweh cut a covenant with Abram ..." — Gen 15:18

Prophets/Writings Parallel: "My covenant I will not profane, Nor will I alter what comes forth from My lips." — Ps 89:34

Conclusion: God's unilateral promise to bless the nations through Abraham cannot be **AMENDED** by later sectarian demands for Gentile conversion.

#### 5. Paul's Emphasis of a Singular Seed in v. 16<sup>29</sup>

Torah Foundation: "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed ..." — Gen 22:18

Prophets/Writings Parallel: "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up one of your seed after you, who will come forth from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom." — 2 Sam 7:12

Conclusion: Yeshua is the ultimate Seed. He demonstrated the perfect *emunah* (active covenant faithfulness) that secures the **PROMISE** for both Jew and Gentile.

#### 6. Paul's Use of Chronology in v. 17

Torah Foundation: "Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years." — Ex 12:40

Prophets/Writings Parallel: "You will give truth to Jacob and lovingkindness to Abraham, which You swore to our fathers from the days of old." — Mic 7:20

Conclusion: The laws given at Sinai provide the behavioral **CONSTITUTION** for the redeemed people, but they do not retroactively change how a person enters the redeemed family.

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<sup>29</sup> Connecting the singular "Seed" to Paul's broader theology requires understanding the subjective genitive. Justification is not secured primarily by the believer's cognitive act, but because Jesus embodied the perfect *emunah* that Israel lacked.

19 Why the Law then? It was added because of trespasses, having been ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

20 Now a mediator is not for one person only, whereas God is one.

21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed be by law.

22 But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.<sup>31</sup>

23 But before faith came, we were held in custody under the Law, being shut up for the coming faith to be revealed.

24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor unto Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

#### Paul's Instruction

1. The law was given to Israel to define **SIN** and curb **IDOLATRY** (v. 19)
2. In vv. 19-20 the necessity of a **MEDIATOR** (Moses) is to highlight the bilateral nature of the Sinaitic Covenant.<sup>32</sup>
3. The law was never intended to give life; rather, it's purpose is to help us **WALK** in life (v. 21)<sup>33</sup>
4. When Paul writes, "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor," he doesn't mean does the child is suddenly free to become a lawless barbarian (e.g., murdering, stealing, or eating idolatrous sacrifices). Rather, Paul is asserting there's been a shift in the person's **STATUS**.

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<sup>30</sup> Paul anticipates the immediate and logical objection to his argument regarding the Abrahamic promise: if justification comes entirely by faith, and the Sinai covenant cannot alter or add to that promise, what was the point of giving the Torah to Moses at all? Paul's answer is a defense of the Torah's true, divine function, protecting it from being weaponized as a legalistic checklist for Gentile conversion.

<sup>31</sup> Another use of *pistis Iesou Christou*. Translating this as a subjective genitive ("the faithfulness of Jesus Christ") shifts the theological center entirely onto the Messiah.

<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, the New Covenant is both unilateral and bilateral. While Yahweh is "one," it's also true that the Son mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises (Heb 8:6; see also Heb 9:15, 12:24).

<sup>33</sup> E.P. Sanders and the "New Perspective" framework demonstrate, ancient Judaism operated on "covenantal nomism": God brings Israel into the covenant purely by grace, and keeping the Torah is the faithful response to remain within that covenant, not the means to get into it.

## Galatians 3:26-29

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise.

## Paul Obliterates the Categories

1. All people, no matter the category (Jew, Greek, slave, free, male, female), **INHERIT** eternal life in the same way.
2. The Jewish people reserved the phrase "**SONS OF GOD**" for Brothers and Proselytes. Paul puts an end to that.
3. For Paul, baptism in Christ is a **TRUE** baptism; meaning, to be immersed into Yeshua's life, death, resurrection by faith.

## Romans 6:4-7

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died has been justified from sin.

## Galatians 4:1-7

1 Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything,

2 but he is under guardians and stewards until the date set by the father.

3 So also we, while we were children, were enslaved under the elemental things of the world.

4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.<sup>34</sup>

6 And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

8 However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.

#### Background for 4:1-7

1. Paul continues his legal defense of Gentile inclusion by employing a standard Greco-Roman and Jewish legal metaphor: the **INHERITANCE RIGHTS** of a minor child.
2. Illustratively, the time for custodial administration has ended; the time for **SPIRIT-EMPOWERED** obedience has arrived.
3. For the Yah-Fearers, the "elementary principles" were the literal **PAGAN DEITIES** and elemental **SPIRITS** they formerly worshipped (see v8).<sup>35</sup>
4. Paul equates becoming legally Jewish with **RETURNING** to the "elementary principles."<sup>36</sup>
5. Yeshua was a native Israelite who perfectly kept the **TERMS** of the **SINAITIC COVENANT**. Yeshua came to **REDEEM** those under the penalty of those terms.
6. The phrase "under the Law" can mean:
  - a. Under the **CONDEMNATION** of the Law<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Adoption into Yahweh's family is secured not by human action, but through the *pistis Christou*—the faithfulness of the Messiah.

<sup>35</sup> The Greek word *stoicheia* refers to things in a row, the letters of the alphabet, or the basic physical elements of the universe (earth, water, air, fire). In antiquity, it was also used for the elemental spirits that supposedly governed the cosmos.

<sup>36</sup> If the Galatians believed that manipulating their physical flesh through a man-made conversion ritual secures their justification, they are adopting the exact same mechanical, flesh-based religious system they used in paganism.

<sup>37</sup> Living in a state where the Law exposes and condemns your sin but provides no regenerative power to overcome it (Rom 6:14-15; Gal 5:18).

- b. Under the jurisdiction of the **TORAH** (as tutor)<sup>38</sup>
- c. Under the Law as a system of **JUSTIFICATION**<sup>39</sup>

Romans 2:12

For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law.

1 Corinthians 9:20

And to the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews. To those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law.

1 Corinthians 9:21

To those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law.

Galatians 3:23

But before faith came, we were held in custody under the Law, being shut up for the coming faith to be revealed.

Galatians 5:18

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

7. The result: for those who **REPENTED** and **BELIEVED**, Jew or Gentile, they might receive the "adoption as sons" (v. 5).

Redemption & Adoption (v. 5)

Torah Foundation: "Thus says YHWH, Israel is my firstborn son." — Ex 4:22

Prophets/Writings Parallel: "In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' it shall be said to them, 'Children of the living God.'" — Hosea 1:10

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<sup>38</sup> The historical reality of the Jewish people living under the Sinaitic covenant. It describes the temporal period before Yeshua where the Law acted as a guardian, as well as the cultural boundary markers of first-century Judaism.

<sup>39</sup> The erroneous attempt to achieve a righteous standing before God through strict obedience to the Mosaic commandments, rather than through faith in the finished work of Messiah Yeshua.

Conclusion: Yahweh expands the title of "sons" to include the nations, granting them full covenantal standing through Messiah.

### The Spirit of the Son (v. 6)

Torah Foundation: Yahweh promises to circumcise the hearts of His people so they may love Him. — Dt 30:6

Prophets/Writings Parallel: "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." — Ez 36:27

Conclusion: The indwelling Spirit is the ultimate proof of adoption. The Spirit empowers the believer to walk in righteousness (as defined by Yahweh's Torah).

### Galatians 4:8-11

8 However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.

9 But now, having known God, or rather having been known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you want to be enslaved all over again?

10 You observe (*paratereo*)<sup>40</sup> days and months and seasons and years.

11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you for nothing.

### Background and Context for 4:8-11

1. Whatever Paul's referring to in v10 must be situated within the **CONTEXT** of Galatians 4:1-9.

Possibility A: **KEEPING A "RIGHT" CALENDAR.**

Part of first-century *loudaismos* (Judaism) involved strict, sectarian calendrical calculations (ancestral traditions) used as boundary markers to distinguish "true" Israel

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<sup>40</sup> The Greek verb *paratēreisthe* (you are observing) often carries a negative connotation in the New Testament, meaning to watch with malicious intent, to guard scrupulously, or to observe superstitiously.

from outsiders. The Galatians were adopting these calendrical traditions not out of love for God, but as a rigid requirement to earn their justification.<sup>41</sup>

Possibility B: **KEEPING A PAGAN CALENDAR.**

Under the intense social pressure of the Influencers, the Galatians may have been attempting to blend Jewish calendrical observances with their former Roman/pagan astrological days, seeking spiritual security in both.

[Paul's language] "describes the idolatrous calendar of the Romans ("days, months, seasons, years"), not that of the Jews (days, weeks, months, seasons, years). The Jews were the only people of the time to observe a seven-day cycle—weeks, which is conspicuously absent from Paul's description! The Jewish calendar is built around the story of creation, of God's seven-day cycle. The Roman calendar is built around the imperial gods and their representative on earth, Caesar." — Mark Nanos, *Irony of Galatians*, 267-71.

2. What we can know for sure: Paul was **NOT** equating Yahweh's **APPOINTED TIMES** with (negative) enslavement.

Galatians 4:12-20

- 12 I beg of you, brothers, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong.
- 13 But you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I proclaimed the gospel to you the first time;
- 14 and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself.
- 15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.
- 16 So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?
- 17 They zealously seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will zealously seek them.

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<sup>41</sup> Scholars such as David Stern and Daniel Boyarin assert "days and months" likely refer to the specific, sectarian calendrical *halakhah* of the Influencers (the oral regulations/ancestral traditions), not the baseline observance of the Sinai Torah.

18 But it is good always to be zealously sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you.  
19 My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you—  
20 but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, because I am perplexed about you.

### Paul's Personal Appeal

1. Paul wonders if he has now become their **ENEMY** simply by telling them the **TRUTH** regarding their covenant status.
2. The Influencers are using social exclusion as a **WEAPON**.<sup>42</sup>

Because non-Jews who abandoned paganism occupied a socio-legal gray area, they faced intense status anxiety and social marginalization. The false teachers were threatening to "shut them out" (v. 17) of the synagogue and covenant fellowship unless they submitted to formal proselyte conversion (*giyyur*).

"Become as I am" (v. 12)

Torah Foundation: "You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself." — Lev 19:34

Prophets/Writings Parallel: " "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." — Ruth 1:6

Conclusion: Paul demonstrated the heart of the Torah by extending unconditional covenantal love and fellowship to the Gentiles without erecting legalistic fences.

"They want to shut you out" (v. 17)

Torah Foundation: Yahweh "loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore." — Dt 10:17-19

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<sup>42</sup> The agitators offered the Galatians a defined, legal, and socially recognized status in exchange for circumcision.

Prophets/Writings Parallel: "With force and harshness you have ruled them ... pushing all the diseased with your horns till you have scattered them abroad." — Ezek 34:4 & 21

Conclusion: The Influencers are acting as false shepherds, using exclusion and status anxiety as sociological weapons, which violates Yahweh's prophetic vision for the nations.

#### Galatians 4:21-31

21 Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the Law?

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the servant-woman and one by the free woman.

23 But the son by the servant-woman had been born according to the flesh, while the son by the free woman through the promise.

24 This is spoken with allegory, for these women are two covenants: one from Mount Sinai bearing children into slavery; she is Hagar.

25 Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

26 But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.

27 For it is written,

"Rejoice, barren woman who does not give birth,"<sup>43</sup>

Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor;

For more numerous are the children of the desolate one

Than of the one who has a husband."<sup>44</sup>

28 And you brothers, in accordance with Isaac, are children of promise.

29 But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh was persecuting him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

30 But what does the Scripture say?

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<sup>43</sup> Isaiah instructs the exiled Israelites to find hope in Abraham and Sarah's story: "Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him" (51:2). Isaiah establishes Sarah's transition from a desolate, barren woman to the joyful mother of Isaac (Gen 21:1-2) as the prophetic template for Zion's future restoration.

<sup>44</sup> Is 54:1

"Cast out the servant-woman and her son,"<sup>45</sup>

For the son of the servant-woman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman."<sup>46</sup>

31 So then, brothers, we are not children of a servant-woman, but of the free woman.

### Understanding Paul's Allegory

1. Paul sets up a contrast between Abraham's two sons: **ISHMAEL** (born of Hagar, the **SLAVE** woman) and **ISAAC** (born of Sarah, the **FREE** woman).
2. When Yahweh's promise to Abraham seemed delayed, Abraham and Sarah used **HUMAN** engineering and **FLESHLY** manipulation to force the promise to come to pass through Hagar.
3. Isaac was born "through the promise"—a miraculous, Spirit-wrought event that required trusting God to do what **HUMAN FLESH** could not.
4. The Influencers are acting like Abraham with **HAGAR**: they are trying to **MANUFACTURE** "children of Abraham" through physical means.
5. In v. 30, Paul is telling the Galatian assemblies to **EXCOMMUNICATE** the false teachers who are demanding circumcision.

### Galatians 5:1-6

1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free. Therefore, stand firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.

3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are being justified by law; you have fallen from grace!

5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are eagerly waiting for the hope of righteousness.

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<sup>45</sup> "Drive out the scoffer, and strife will go out, even contention and disgrace will cease" (Prov 22:10).

<sup>46</sup> Gen 21:10.

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

#### Paul's Application<sup>47</sup>

1. The written Torah can't be yoke of **SLAVERY** and a **DELIGHT** at the same time.

“Cause me to walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it” (Ps 119:35).<sup>48</sup>

2. The focus of v. 2 is **LEGALISTIC** conversion into the Party of the Circumcision (Judaism).<sup>49</sup>
3. In v.3 Paul points out the **ABSURDITY** of justification by the Law because it removes the person or household from the grace of the New Covenant.<sup>50</sup>

#### Obligated to the Whole Law (v. 3)

Torah Foundation: “Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.” — Dt 27:26

Prophets/Writings Parallel: “The soul who sins shall die.” — Ezek 18:20

Conclusion: Seeking justification outside of Messiah's atonement places a person under the judicial penalty of the Law, demanding perfection for survival.

4. For Paul, “falling from grace” is the attempt to secure God's favor through rigid obedience to a man-made **CONVERSION** ritual, while implicitly **REJECTING** the provision of Yahweh's grace found only in the Son (Yeshua).
5. It was always about **LOVE**.

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<sup>47</sup> Paul is not attacking the commandment of circumcision (Lev 12:3), nor is he attacking the Torah (Rom 3:31). He is attacking a false soteriology: the legalistic weaponization of circumcision as the mandatory ritual for Gentile justification.

<sup>48</sup> The entirety of Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible, is about the goodness of Yahweh's Law.

<sup>49</sup> If Paul believed the physical act of circumcision was inherently evil or abolished, he never would have circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3).

<sup>50</sup> Paul's audience would have understood the absurdity. Like us, they knew they were sinners (i.e., though the written Torah was an “easy yoke,” they understood their inability to perfectly keep it).

## Faith Working Through Love (v. 6)

Torah Foundation: The commands to love Yahweh with all one's heart and love one's neighbor as oneself. — Dt 6:5; Lev 19:18

Prophets/Writings Parallel: "What does YHWH require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"— Mic 6:8<sup>51</sup>

Conclusion: The Torah's ultimate design was always inward transformation. *Emunah* (faithfulness) naturally produces covenantal love, rendering ethnic boundary markers spiritually irrelevant for justification.

### Galatians 5:7-12

7 You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?

8 This persuasion is not from Him who calls you.

9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

10 I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view. But the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is.

11 But I, brothers, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross would have been abolished.

12 I wish that those who are upsetting you would even mutilate themselves.

### Paul Goes on the Offensive

1. Paul had already been with the Galatians. When he was there, it was evident they heard and responded to Paul's **GOSPEL**.
2. Paul warns that **SMALL COMPROMISES** on this first-tier issue would lead to total corruption.
3. In v. 11 the Influencers were likely **TWISTING** Paul's view of circumcision.

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<sup>51</sup> See also Dt 10:12-13. "So now, Israel, what does Yahweh your God ask from you, but to fear Yahweh your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, *and* to keep the commandments of Yahweh and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?"

In plain language, the Influencers argument might have gone something like this. *Paul himself endorses and practices circumcision for Jews like Timothy! He is giving you Gentiles an incomplete, watered-down gospel to make it easy for you, but when he is among the leadership in Judea or working with Jews, he preaches circumcision as the true standard.*<sup>52</sup>

4. Paul would have endorsed circumcision for the following reasons:
  - a. Parents circumcising their son on the **EIGHTH DAY** (Lev 12:8).
  - b. To remove an unnecessary **CULTURAL** barrier (Acts 16:3).
  - c. A **HEART-FELT** response to the inner working of the *Ruach* (Rom 2:28-29; Gal 5:6; Col 2:11-12).<sup>53</sup>
5. The cross demonstrates that both Jew and Gentile are universally under the **PENALTY OF SIN** and can only be justified through the substitutionary, atoning faithfulness of Yeshua (*pistis Christou*)
6. In v. 12 Paul sarcastically implies that by requiring fleshly mutilation, the Influencers are acting in the **SAME MANNER** as pagan cult priests.<sup>54</sup>

Galatians 5:13-15

13 For you were called to freedom, brothers; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware that you are not consumed by one another.

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<sup>52</sup> Paul personally circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3) because Timothy's mother was Jewish, making him halakhically Jewish, and Paul wanted to avoid causing offense in the synagogues.

<sup>53</sup> Paul teaches that all believers have received the true, spiritual circumcision — the "circumcision made without hands" — through Messiah. Because the spiritual reality has already been accomplished by God in the heart, an outward physical act adds nothing to a believer's standing before God, but neither is an outward act prohibited if undertaken in personal freedom and gratitude.

<sup>54</sup> In Galatia, the pagan cult of Cybele was prominent, whose priests (the *Galli*) ritually castrated themselves.

## Paul's Instruction

1. For Paul, **FREEDOM** (*eleutheria*) is liberation from **SIN**, condemnation, the **CURSE** of the broken law, and the enslavement of human traditions that demand physical conversion [*giyyur*] for Yahweh's acceptance (i.e., the flesh).
2. When Paul states that the law is in **LOVING ONE'S NEIGHBOR**, he is affirming that love is the overarching hermeneutical (interpretive) key – the true execution of the Torah.<sup>55</sup>
3. The Influencers insisted on strict ritual compliance [circumcision] as **PROOF** of loyalty to Yahweh. Yet, their methods generated division, hostility, and spiritual pride, violating the moral command of the Torah (Lev 19:18).

## Galatians 5:16-26

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.<sup>56</sup>  
17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you do not do the things that you want.  
18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.  
19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,  
20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions,  
21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.  
22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
23 gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Paul's summary of the Torah via Leviticus 19:18 directly parallels Second Temple rabbinic rulings. When asked by a Gentile to teach the whole Torah while standing on one foot, Rabbi Hillel famously replied: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor; that is the whole Torah, the rest is commentary; go and learn" (b. Shabbat 31a). Similarly, Rabbi Akiva declared: "'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' – this is the great comprehensive principle (*klal gadol*) of the Torah" (*Sifra Kedoshim* 4:12).

<sup>56</sup> The New Covenant promise is explicitly the writing of the *Torah upon the heart* via the Spirit (Ezek 36:26-27; Jer 31:31-34). Therefore, "walking by the Spirit" is the realization of prophetic New Covenant Torah-keeping, not the abrogation of Yahweh's instructions.

<sup>57</sup> The phrase "against such things there is no law" is a rhetorical *litotes* (ironic understatement). Paul is demonstrating that the Spirit produces a standard of righteousness that the written law could never condemn, rendering the Influencers' fears and demands groundless.

- 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.  
 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk in step with the Spirit.  
 26 Let us not become those with vain glory, challenging one another, envying one another.

### Paul's Charge to Walk by the Spirit

1. In this pericope, Paul is not contrasting the Holy Spirit (Ruach) with **THE TORAH**; rather, he's contrasting the Holy Spirit with **THE FLESH**.<sup>58</sup>
2. In v. 18 Paul is contrasting those who walk in the Spirit with those who under the Law's **CONDEMNATION AND PENALTY** due to sin, or being under the law as a mechanical, legalistic system of **JUSTIFICATION**.<sup>59</sup>

### Led by the Spirit, Not Under the Law

Torah Foundation: "Moreover Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, to love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live." — Dt 30:6

Prophets/Writings Parallel: "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." — Ezek 36:26

Conclusion: The Spirit does not replace the Torah; the Spirit internalizes the Torah, moving the believer from external condemnation to internal empowerment.

Reminder: "What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! Rather, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law. For I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'" — Rom 7:7

3. The **FLESH** is not the Torah; the flesh is that which **BREAKS** the Torah. Those who practice such things "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (v. 21).

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<sup>58</sup> The Greek word for flesh is *sarx*: the unredeemed human nature and reliance on human effort.

<sup>59</sup> Throughout Galatians (e.g., 3:23, 4:4, 4:21, 5:18), Paul uses the precise prepositional phrase *hypo nomon*. It never functions as a synonym for "doing the commandments." Instead, it denotes a legal status—being under the custodian's reign, under the penalty of curse/death for covenant failure, or under the jurisdiction of a legal system apart from Messiah. Being led by the Spirit frees one from this judicial liability.

## Works of the Flesh (v. 19-21)

Torah Foundation: The Sinai prohibitions against idolatry, sorcery, adultery, and neighborly hatred. — Ex 20:3-17; Lev 18:6-23

Prophets/Writings Parallel: "Who may dwell on Your holy mountain? He who walks blamelessly, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart. He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor." — Ps 15:2-3

Conclusion: The "works of the flesh" are the explicit sins defined and condemned by the Torah. Walking in the flesh is walking in Torah-transgression.

4. In contrast, the "fruit of the Spirit" (vv. 22-23) represents the **CHARACTER** of Yahweh produced in the believer. The Torah does not condemn these virtues because these virtues are the **GOAL** and **EXPRESSION** of the Torah itself.

## Fruit of the Spirit (v. 22-23)

Torah Foundation: The command to love Yahweh above all and love one's neighbor as oneself. — Lev 19:18; Dt 6:5

Prophets/Writings Parallel: The righteous man delights in the Torah of Yahweh, yielding fruit in its season. — Ps 1:1-3

Conclusion: The Spirit yields the exact moral fruit that the Torah commands. No law condemns a life aligned with the righteous character of Yahweh.

## Galatians 6:1-5

1 Brothers, even if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, each of you looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Messiah Yeshua is the ultimate pattern of Gal 6:2; He "bore our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isa 53:4). Walking in *Torat HaMashiach* means imitating His servant leadership.

3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing,<sup>61</sup> he deceives himself.

4 But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.

5 For each one will bear his own load.<sup>62</sup>

### Paul's Counsel

1. When a brother is overtaken in a *paraptōma* (trespass/violation of Torah), those who are "spiritual" are not to **CAST HIM OFF**, nor are they to treat the commandment **LIGHTLY**.

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, and so not bear sin because of him."<sup>18</sup> "You shall not take vengeance, and you shall not keep *your anger* against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am Yahweh." — Lev 19:17-18

2. The "Law of Messiah" (*Torat HaMashiach*) is not an abrogated or competing Law, but the Torah rightly **INTERPRETED**, fully **CLARIFIED**, and lived out **PERFECTLY** by the Messiah (Isaiah 2:3; Isaiah 42:4).
3. Paul uses *nomos* here in direct **ALIGNMENT** with Messiah Yeshua's teaching in Matthew 22:37-40 and Mark 12:28-31: loving one's neighbor is the core functional expression upon which all the Torah and Prophets **HANG**.
4. To "fulfill" the Law of Messiah by bearing burdens does not mean **TERMINATE** the Torah. Rather, it means to fill it to its **FULLEST EXPRESSION** (cf. *Plerōō* in Matt 5:17).

### Galatians 6-10

6 And the one who is instructed in the word is to share in all good things with the one who instructs him.

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

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<sup>61</sup> Verse 3 targets those who consider themselves "too spiritual" or elevated to do the dirty work of restoring a fallen brother or bearing a physical burden. This directly critiques the arrogant Influencers in Galatia who enforced ritual boundary markers while neglecting weightier moral care.

<sup>62</sup> We cannot outsource our individual covenantal accountability before Yahweh's judgment seat (Ez 18:4; 2 Cor 5:10). While the community must exercise grace and mercy to lift crushing burdens (v. 2 *barē*), every believer remains personally responsible for carrying their own pack (v. 5 *phortion*) of Torah obedience, self-examination, and stewardly duty.

8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.<sup>63</sup>  
 9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.  
 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people,<sup>64</sup> and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

### Paul's Counsel

1. In v. 6 Paul is reinforcing a foundational Torah principle: those who devote themselves to **TEACHING** and transmitting the Word of God must be **SUSTAINED** by the covenant community.<sup>65</sup>
2. The phrase “God is not mocked” is an explicit **BARRIER** against using grace as a license for lawlessness. Actions carry real eschatological consequences [Mt 7:21-23].
3. In Galatians, Paul's use of *sarx* (flesh) means self-reliance, carnal motives, and seeking **COVENANT INCLUSION** through external, fleshly means apart from faith and the Spirit.
4. Conversely, sowing to the **SPIRIT** means yielding to the Holy Spirit's internal direction, allowing the *Ruach* to write the **TORAH** upon one's heart.
5. In v. 9 “doing good” corresponds to the Rabbinic concept of *Ma'asim Tovim* (good deeds) – concrete acts of righteousness **DEFINED** by Yahweh's commandments.
6. Torah ethics structures **DUTY** in concentric circles (v. 10).
  - a. Nuclear family [1 Tim 5:8]
  - b. Poor within the local covenant community [Dt 15:7-8]
  - c. Covenant community [Acts 2:45; 4:32]
  - d. Outsiders – The Good Samaritan [Lk 10:25-37]

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<sup>63</sup> Sowing to the flesh vs. sowing to the Spirit directly mirrors the “works of the flesh” versus the “fruit of the Spirit” in Gal 5:19-23.

<sup>64</sup> The requirement to do good to “everyone” reflects the Torah's mandate regarding the resident alien (*ger*) and enemy (Ex 23:4-5; Lev 19:34).

<sup>65</sup> Torah Precedent: Under the Mosaic administration, the Levites were given no territorial inheritance; instead, the tithes and offerings of Israel sustained them so they could teach the Law to the nation [Lev 10:11; Dt 18:1-5; see also 2 Chron 17:7-9]. Paul uses a similar analogy in 1 Cor 9:9-14, citing Dt 25:4. Note: Paul did not use his right [1 Cor 9:11-18].

## Galatians 6:11-18

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand!

12 As many as are wanting to make a good showing in the flesh, these are trying to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they want to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh.

14 But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

16 And those who will walk in step with this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

## Paul's Conclusions

1. The influencers were compelling newly converted Gentiles to undergo ritual circumcision not out of **DEVOTION** to Yahweh, but to **APPEASE** the civic/religious authorities to escape persecution.<sup>66</sup>
2. In v. 13 Paul is not saying that Torah keeping is **IMPOSSIBLE**; rather, he is condemning the ulterior motives of the Influencers.<sup>67</sup>
3. In v. 14 Paul draws from Jer 9:23-26.

Thus says Yahweh, "Let not a wise man boast in his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast in his might; let not a rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am Yahweh who shows lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares Yahweh. "Behold, the days are coming," declares Yahweh, "that I will punish all who are

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<sup>66</sup> Reminder: the Roman government recognized Judaism as a *religio licita*, a permitted religion, but viewed new Messiah sects with suspicion.

<sup>67</sup> The Influencers were weaponizing circumcision as an external trophy of fleshly proselytization while neglecting the weightier spiritual requirements of the Torah — justice, mercy, love, and heart-circumcision (Dt 10:16; Jer 4:4).

circumcised and yet uncircumcised — Egypt and Judah, and Edom and the sons of Ammon, and Moab and all those inhabiting the desert who clip the hair on their temples; for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart.”

4. If circumcision were inherently sin, uncircumcision would be **MANDATED**. If uncircumcision were inherently holy, circumcision would be **CONDEMNED**. Instead, being a “new creation” and “keeping the commandments of God” are **TWO SIDES** of the same prophetic **COIN**.

Compare

- a. “For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.” — Gal 6:15
- b. “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.” — 1 Cor 7:19

“For behold, I am creating a new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come upon the heart. — Isa 65:17

“But this is the covenant which I will cut with the house of Israel after those days,” declares Yahweh: “I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” — Jer 31:33

“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to do My judgments.” — Ezek 36:26-27

5. In v. 16 Paul is pronouncing *shalom* upon two groups walking in Messiah:

- a. Gentile believers walking according to the rule of “new creation” without needing ritual status conversion<sup>68</sup>
- b. “The Israel of God” — the faithful, Messianic Jewish remnant (*She’ar Yisrael*) within national Israel (see Rom 9:6; 11:5).<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> It is my opinion that grafted-in Gentile believers are better identified as Spiritual Israel.

<sup>69</sup> Paul uses the term “Israel” sixty-eight times across his epistles. In every other instance, *Israel* refers to the ethnic descendants of Jacob/Israel (whether faithful or unfaithful). The phrase “Israel of God” (*ton Israel tou Theou*) retains ethnic and covenantal continuity with the remnant of Israel (*She’ar*

6. Paul ends the letter with a **REBUKE** and a **PASTORAL** benediction. While the Influencers demanded a **SURGICAL** mark in the flesh as a badge of covenantal inclusion, Paul displays the *stigmata* – the physical scars from beatings, stonings, and floggings for the sake of Yeshua and His Gospel (2 Cor 11:23-27). Paul's scars are the **AUTHENTIC** covenant marks of a faithful servant bound to his Master.

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*Yisrael*), standing against the historical error of viewing the Church as an entity that renders God's promises to Israel null and void (Rom 11:1-2).

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