

Galatians

1:1. “not from men, neither through man.” This statement shows the doubt and confusion that people had about Paul and his teaching (cp. 1:7). It also points to the truth of the Gospel and its divine authorship. Critics might say, “Anyone can say they are apostles of God, but how do we know?” Paul’s words and works spoke for themselves, and when he wrote, he wrote Galatians, he wrote the words of God. It is easy to be a doubter and a critic. The honest person takes the time to check the evidence and understand the arguments, and then is meek enough to accept the conclusion and its implications.

“through Jesus Christ and God the Father.” True ministers are called, and place in their calling by God and Jesus Christ. Every person has a calling and place in the Body given them by God and Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-26), therefore just because someone is called to a position in the Body he or she is not better than anyone else. Nevertheless, some positions in the Body carry more authority and responsibility than others when it comes to the practical aspects of running the Body here on earth. While we should not boast about the position in the Body we have, occasionally it is the will of God to tell others about the authority one has in order to maintain the order in the Body. This is such as case. Paul’s authority as an apostle needed to be recognized to keep the Body from being confused and scattered. He was the called apostle of God, not the Judaizers who were contradicting him, and it was right and appropriate for him to make that point. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “from among the dead.”

1:3. “Grace to you, and peace.” The Greek text does not say, “Grace and peace to you,” even though many English versions read that way. By separating the phrases the way it does, the Bible shows us that “grace” and “peace” are not equal; instead, God’s grace is preeminent. We have peace with God because we have grace from God, offered through faith in Jesus Christ.

“God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is what we consider to be the most likely reading of the original Greek text (cp. the textual note on the The NET Bible; First Edition).

1:4. “deliver.” The Greek word is *exaireō* (#1807 $\epsilon\chi\alpha\iota\rho\omega$), and it means to take something out of its place; to pluck out, draw out, or remove. Hence it can mean to rescue by virtue of drawing someone out of danger. Although many English versions have “rescue,” that seems to be a secondary meaning here. The word “rescue” means to “free from danger,” and places the emphasis on the fact that the person is out of danger. While that is certainly a part of the meaning of *exaireō* in this context, the force of *exaireō* is not just that we are out of danger, it is how we got out of danger, by being pulled out and put somewhere safe. Yes, Jesus will rescue us from this evil age, but it will be because he will pluck us out of this age and get us safely to the next age. Just like a “delivery truck” that delivers goods from one place to another, Jesus will “deliver” us out of this age and deliver us safely into the Messianic Age in new and everlasting bodies.

1:5. “for ever and ever.” The Greek phrase is *tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn* ($\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \alpha\iota\omega\ \nu\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \alpha\iota\omega\ \nu\omega\nu$), and it occurs 20 times in the New Testament. It can refer to time that does not end, “eternity future,” or it can refer to a time that is very long but does come to an end, depending on the context. See note on Revelation 20:10.

1:6. “the One.” This is God. God calls each person to Himself by way of the grace He offers through Jesus Christ. Sometimes Jesus calls us, but as the agent of God (cp. Rom.

1:6). God has always called people to Himself (cp. Acts 2:39; Rom. 11:29; 2 Cor. 1:9; Phil. 3:14; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:11; 1 Pet. 5:10). Some commentators say it is Christ who calls, but God calls us through His Son. This is especially clear in this verse, which speaks of “the One” who calls us “by the grace of Christ,” i.e., by the grace associated with Jesus Christ. We capitalized “One” in the REV to be helpful in showing that God is being spoken of.

“grace of Christ.” This genitive includes the genitive of relation and the genitive of origin. It refers to the grace related to Jesus Christ because it was he who made it available to us, and it refers to the grace that we have that he has given to us.

1:7. “confusing you.” The Greek word is *tarassō* (#5015 ταρασσω), and it literally refers to shaking something back and forth, agitating it or stiffing it up. Thus, it means to agitate or trouble, or “to cause one inward commotion, take away his calmness of mind, disturb his equanimity; to disquiet, make restless” (BDAG), disturb, throw into confusion (Friebert). There is no way to tell from the context if the people of Galatia were actually “troubled” by the conflict between the Judaizers teaching and Paul’s, but the fact that they were abandoning the grace of Christ to go back to the Law shows that they were indeed confused.

“turn...upside down.” The Greek word is *metastrephō* (#3344 μεταστρωφω), and Thayer’s Greek Lexicon points out that from the time of Homer (c. 850 BC?, but perhaps even earlier), it means “to turn about, turn around.” It means to turn something to its opposite (Friebert). Lightfoot writes: “Properly, ‘to reverse, to change to the opposite,’ and so [*metastrephō* is] stronger than *diastrepsai*, which is simply ‘to distort,’ ‘wrench.’” The Judaizers were trying to bring Christians back under the Law. Salvation would then no longer be just by grace through faith in Christ, but would be works based, and approval before God would be works based, not faith based. This was not merely distorting the Gospel, it was turning it upside down, making it the opposite of what it really is.

Salvation by grace is the simple, freeing, and empowering. Salvation by works is a curse (3:10) and a yoke of bondage (5:1). The need to feel that we have some part in our own salvation, or that it “only makes sense” that we have to earn it some way is so strong in most people that salvation by works has always tried to creep back in to the doctrine of the Church. Only constant vigilance and an understanding of the love and grace of God and the sacrifice of Christ will keep it at bay, and allow the true Gospel of salvation by grace to reign in people’s hearts.

1:8. “accursed.” The Greek word is *anathema* (#331 ανθεμα). In its broad sense, *anathema* was used of something that had been dedicated to God. As such, something that was *anathema* could be either blessed or cursed, depending on what God wanted to do with it--the thing itself was just anathema; dedicated to God. In the Hebrew OT, the concept of *anathema* was represented by the Hebrew word *herem* (#02764 חֵרֵם). Something *herem* (dedicated to God), as in the NT, could be either blessed or cursed, kept or destroyed. A field that was *herem* belonged to the Lord and would be maintained for His benefit (Lev. 27:21). On the other hand, if a person sacrificed to an idol god, he was *herem* and was then executed (Ex. 22:20). Cities that were devoted to God (*herem*) were destroyed (cp. Jericho; Josh. 6:17), and animals were killed and thus destroyed. When the Hebrew OT was translated into Greek about 250 BC in the version we know as the Septuagint, *anathema* was used of *herem* when the things that were dedicated were

destroyed or ruined, but other words, such as *aphorizō* (set apart) were used when the dedication to God resulted in a blessing (cp. Lev. 27:21).

The New Testament harkens back to the wider OT use of *herem*, however, and thus Luke 21:5 uses *anathema* in the good sense of an acceptable offering to God without the implications of a curse. However the other times *anathema* is used in the New Testament (Gal. 1:8, 9; Acts 23:14; Rom. 9:3; 1 Cor. 12:3; 16:22), it refers to something cursed, or handed over to God's judgmental wrath. The word *anathema* has turned up in some ancient Greek sources, and in the Greek secular writings, something that was *anathema* was subject to destruction by the gods. Paul's use of the word *anathema* here in Galatians 1:8, 9, "dedicated to God," in this context means under His curse. The sentence is very hard, harsh statement, and shows how serious a sin it is to pervert the Word of God.

There are some translations that have the consequence of the curse instead of the curse itself in this verse. For example, the NIV has "eternally condemned," while the NET and GWN have "condemned to hell." However, those interpretations are too harsh. We must keep in mind that some people who pervert the Word of God are Christians and have a guarantee of salvation through faith in Christ. We all know that just because a person has faith in Christ does not mean his doctrine is correct. Some very sincere people who have faith in Christ are nevertheless very wrong about their doctrine. These people will be blessed for their faith and have everlasting life, but the consequences of their error will be severe, although exactly how, or when God will deal with such people is not discussed in the verse or context. In the future at the judgment, certainly, but there are no doubt consequences in this life also.

In light of the fact that some people who teach error are Christians, to translate this verse as "condemned to hell" or another similar translation is too harsh. It is better to leave the word "accursed," and understand it as being "delivered up to the judicial wrath of God" (cp. Longenecker; *Word Biblical Commentary: Galatians*). God knows people's heart, and is in a position to deal with people in ways that He sees fit, and the word *anathema* is perfect for that situation, because it means to dedicate to God for Him to do with as He sees fit.

1:9. "contrary." The Greek preposition *para* (#3844 παρ) with the accusative case can mean "against, contrary to," and that is the meaning here. God is the author of the true Gospel, but the Adversary is always generating ideas and theologies that are contrary to the truth of God. That means there are always competing theologies in the world, and makes the promise: "keep seeking and you will find" (Matt. 7:7) very important. If we will diligently seek with a humble heart, God will lead us to the truth.

1:10. "Indeed." Although the Greek word is *gar* (usually translated "for"), Lenski writes, "In this instance γάρ cannot mean 'for' (our versions) as either stating a reason or offering an explanation... γάρ is but the explanatory adverb which is here used in a question in order to point to what the previous statements make decidedly plain and thus make the question more urgent and the desired answer more inevitable."

Paul has just said that anyone who teaches another Good News than what he had taught was accursed. It is obvious that he is not trying to soften his message so it is acceptable to everyone. Rather, he is acting in his capacity as the apostle to whom was

committed the information of the Sacred Secret. Thus he says, “Indeed, am I now seeking the favor of men...,” clearly not.

“seeking the favor.” The Greek is *peithō* (#3982 πειθω), which often means “to persuade,” (and is translated that way in the KJV), does not mean that in this context (how could someone persuade God?), it means “seek the favor of,” “try to please,” “try to gain the approval of.” This sentence has a harsh tone to it, but is necessary in order for Paul to continue his relationship with the Galatians. Other people were accusing Paul of not teaching the truth, and Paul is making his point very clearly. He is a servant (or “slave”) of Jesus Christ, and is trying to please him.

“still.” There has been a lot of theological discussion about the word “still” in this verse. The most obvious reference is to Paul’s earlier life as a Pharisee, when he advanced beyond the rest of his peers by being more zealous for the Law (1:14). Now he does not care about that, but only acts to please the Lord.

1:11. “of human origin.” The Greek text reads, “according to man,” and in this context that phrase means of human origin. That is clearly explained in the next phrase, where he writes: “For I did not receive it from man...it came to me by revelation.”

1:12. “revelation.” The Greek compound word (noun) is *apokalupsis* (#602 αποκάλυψις), from the preposition *apo* (away from), and the verb *kaluptō* (#2572 καλύπτω), which means “to cover,” or “to hide.” *Apokalupsis* means to lay bare, make naked, and hence is used of disclosing something, revealing something, and thus making something visible or known; it is also used of an appearance or manifestation. The fact that in this verse it is a singular noun is the reason that some versions say “a revelation” instead of just “revelation.” However, Paul did not get the Gospel he preached as a single revelation, but rather as a series of revelations over a period of time, and from what we know of the Epistles that were written after Galatians, he would receive more before his life and writing ended. Therefore, the translation “a revelation” makes the verse unclear. The singular “revelation” in this context is a collective singular, such as the word “fruit.” *Apokalupsis* is also the Greek title of the Book of Revelation, which is the unveiling of the future for us to see ahead of time, including the Tribulation, Jesus Christ coming from heaven, the future judgments, and Eternal Kingdom of God.

Genuine biblical “revelation” is not well understood in the Christian world, so it is important to explain a little about it. The English word “revelation” comes from the word “reveal,” which means “to make known.” As it is used in the Bible, the word “revelation” refers to something made known by a spiritual source, which may be God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Devil, or demons. In its secular usage, “revelation” can refer to something that has a profound impact on a person or when someone learns something that helps him understand some aspect of life. For example, someone might say, “It was a revelation to me to learn that my headaches could be cured by getting more sleep.” However, that is not the way “revelation” is used in the Bible.

In order to better understand what “revelation” means in the Bible, it helps to know what it is not. “Revelation” is not what someone learns from reading the Bible. When the Bible was originally given, it was revelation to the prophet who wrote it down. When a person reads it, he learns, but that type of learning is not “revelation,” it is using our faculties of logic, memory, judgment, etc. Revelation is also not what someone feels very strongly about. When a person feels very strongly about something, there is a danger that some of those strong opinions will “leak over” into what he says comes from God.

This is as true in regard to doctrine as it is for personal feelings and opinions. Lastly, revelation is not what someone knows from his five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching). What a person observes through his senses may be accurate, but it is not “revelation.”

As it is used in the Bible, “revelation” is information that is revealed to someone by a spiritual source. The Bible places revelation into two categories, knowledge and wisdom. The manifestations of holy spirit that are revelation are “a message of knowledge” and “a message of wisdom” (1 Cor. 12:8, see commentary on that verse). It is fitting that God categorizes all revelation as either knowledge or wisdom, because all information is either knowledge or wisdom. Knowledge is the “facts concerning the case,” and is information. “Wisdom” has many aspects and in today’s language can have several definitions. However, the first definition of wisdom in the first edition of Webster’s Dictionary (published in 1828) captures its meaning: “the right use or exercise of knowledge.” Knowledge is the facts of the case; wisdom is “what to do.”

The actual source of any revelation a person receives is either God, Jesus Christ, the Devil, or a demon. All revelation comes from one of these four spiritual sources. God and Jesus Christ both originate communication to people, and so does the Devil and his demons. Angels are not a “source” of revelation. They are messengers, bringing information from God or the Lord to people. Both the Hebrew word *mal’ak* and the Greek word *aggelos* mean “messenger,” and angels deliver messages; there is no evidence in Scripture they are the source of any message they bring.

How is revelation communicated to people? When looking at the ways God, Jesus, the Devil or demons can give a revelation message, the first major distinction we must recognize is that it will come internally (from inside the person) or externally (from outside the person). All revelation will either come to a person externally and thus usually be perceivable by others, or it will be internal, given directly to the person’s mind.

Revelation from God or the Lord Jesus that comes to us externally can come in a multiplicity of ways. Examples of how God has communicated a message of knowledge or wisdom externally include His speaking audibly (Deut. 4:12), sending an angel (Judg. 13:3-5; Luke 1:26-37), sending a prophet (2 Sam. 12:1-12), having Balaam’s donkey give the message (Num. 22:28-30), putting dew on a fleece (Judg. 6:36-40), and writing on a wall (Dan. 5:5).

Demons also come into concretion and give revelation to people. The Devil did so to Eve in the Garden of Eden and came to Jesus Christ when he was in the desert (Matt. 4:3). Demons come into concretion many times as ghosts and apparitions of all sorts, and this often happens with mediums and necromancers. Demons are also expert at manipulating physical objects to communicate a message, and thus all forms of divination are an abomination to God (Deut. 18:10-13). Crystal ball divination, tea leaf reading, and similar practices are all ways that demons communicate messages in the senses world.

Both God and the Devil give revelation “internally” also. In certain circumstances demons can enter into people and communicate directly to their minds (this is often known as being “possessed,” but a better translation is “demonized”). If a demon enters a person’s body and communicates with his mind, the individual will see visions, hear voices, or “just know” things. The person who has the demon may or may not know it.

Psychics usually think they have a “gift,” but in actuality there is no such gift. Psychics are demonized, but are tricked into thinking they have a gift because often their intentions are good. Contact with demons is never “good,” because they blend truth with error just as the Devil did with Eve in the Garden, and they do good only to gain the opportunity to do evil.

God and Jesus Christ give much of the revelation to Christians via the gift of holy spirit. When an unsaved person becomes saved, the Lord Jesus gives him the gift of holy spirit (Acts 2:33, 38; Eph. 1:13), which then becomes an integrated part of him, filling him completely, and enabling him to get revelation via the gift of holy spirit inside him. When a person has holy spirit, it is easier for God to communicate with the person, which is why in the Old Testament God put holy spirit on those with whom He wanted to communicate. Examples include: the 70 elders of Israel who helped Moses (Num. 11:17, 25); Othniel (Judg. 3:10); Gideon (Judg. 6:34); Jephthah (Judg. 11:29); Samson (Judg. 14:19); King Saul (1 Sam. 10:6); Amasai, (1 Chron. 12:18); King David (1 Chron. 28:12); Azariah (2 Chron. 15:1, 2); Jahaziel (2 Chron. 20:14); Zechariah (2 Chron. 24:20); John the Baptist (Luke 1:15); Elizabeth (Luke 1:41); and Zachariah (Luke 1:67); (cp. Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 1 Samuel 10:6, 10; 16:13; 2 Kings 2:9; 1 Chronicles 12:18; 2 Chronicles 20:14; Matthew. 3:16; and Luke 2:25).

The way that revelation via the gift of holy spirit works is that a message of knowledge or wisdom originates with God or the Lord Jesus, who communicates to the holy spirit in the Christian, which then communicates with that Christian’s mind or body. The gift of holy spirit can communicate easily with the mind, just as the body can communicate with the mind.

Revelation can come to one’s mind or to one’s body. Revelation that comes to one’s mind comes as a thought, emotion, or senses experience (i.e., a sight, sound, etc.). When revelation comes via holy spirit to one’s body, it comes as a feeling or sensation (pain, pressure, heat, cold, etc.). It is not always easy to tell whether a thought or feeling is from God or from one’s own mind or body. That is why the Bible tells us it takes “constant use” (Heb. 5:14) to be able to accurately discern whether a thought is coming into our mind from God, or whether it is one of our own thoughts. As one matures in the Lord, he learns more ably to discern the revelation of God from his own thoughts, ideas, emotions, and feelings.

How revelation via the gift of holy spirit works can be charted as follows:

- God (or Jesus Christ) ⇒ holy spirit in you ⇒ your mind = a thought or emotion.
- God (or Jesus Christ) ⇒ holy spirit in you ⇒ your body = a feeling or sensation.

Once we understand that revelation usually comes as a thought or feeling we can understand why “constant use,” or “practice,” is essential if we are going to reliably discern revelation from our own thoughts and feelings. Actually, a number of Bible versions actually have the word “practice” in Hebrews 5:14, including the ESV, NASB, RSV, and NRSV. The word “practice” needs to be properly understood. It is good in that it implies continual repetition, and that is what we should be doing, especially with speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy, which are more directly under our control. The weakness of the word “practice” is that every time you operate the

manifestations, you are not just “practicing,” but “in the game,” in touch with God and the Lord, and operating the power of God.

Revelation via holy spirit, a message of knowledge and a message of wisdom, comes in seven distinctive ways. You get information from the Lord the same way you gather information from the world around you. The Lord will give you revelation that you (1) see, (2) hear, (3) smell, (4) taste, or (5) touch, or sometimes you (6) “just know.” Also, the Lord may give you (7) an emotion.

When the Lord gives a person a vision, sound, smell, etc., via holy spirit, it may seem as real as if it were actually happening in the physical world, but it is happening only in the person’s mind. Other people around him are not experiencing what he is. For example, when Stephen saw heaven open and the Lord Jesus standing at God’s right hand (Acts 7:55 and 56), he “saw” it as clearly as if it had physically occurred. It was as real to him as his natural sight. Nevertheless, it was a revelation vision via the gift of holy spirit, and the others who were with Stephen did not see it. Similarly, when the Lord gives revelation smell, the one receiving the revelation will smell something, but others will not.

Once we understand that a message of knowledge and a message of wisdom come to us by (1) seeing, (2) hearing, (3) smelling, (4) tasting, (5) touching, (6) “just knowing” and (7) emotion, we can expand the chart explaining how revelation works.

- For revelation vision: God (or Jesus Christ) ⇒ holy spirit in you ⇒ your mind (the visual center) = you see a vision as if it were real.
- For revelation sound: God (or Jesus Christ) ⇒ holy spirit in you ⇒ your mind (the auditory center) = you hear a sound or voice as if it were real.

Receiving revelation works the same basic way for all seven ways God gives it and getting revelation from demons works in a very similar way. When a demon inhabits a person’s mind and stimulates his visual center, the person will see a vision. If the demon feeds information to the auditory center of the brain, he will hear voices.

Revelation given via holy spirit is usually a very quick experience. It does not usually “hang around” so we can confirm it, study it, etc. God wants us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and if we do, we are focused on Him and what He tells us. Revelation is usually a “still, small voice” (1 Kings 19:12-KJV, or as the NIV states, a “gentle whisper”), coming soft and fast, so we must become practiced in recognizing it.

The Bible has many examples of revelation. **Seeing:** 2 Kings 6:17 (Elisha’s servant saw the angel army). **Hearing:** 1 Samuel 9:15 and 16a (KJV), “Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying....” Many English translations leave out the part about Samuel’s ear, despite it being an important part of the biblical record and clearly stated in the Hebrew text. **Taste:** 2 Kings 4:40: The prophets put some stew in their mouths and knew it was “death.” That is a good example of how revelation by taste works. In this case, God gave him a message of knowledge by taste. The prophets did not need a message of wisdom because once God showed them the stew was “death,” their human wisdom could guide them. **Touch:** Jeremiah 1:9, The LORD touched Jeremiah’s mouth. In Mark 5:30 Jesus felt the power leave when his garment was touched. Sometimes when a person is ministering healing to another, the minister will actually feel the other person’s pain by revelation. **Knowing:** Matthew 9:4, “Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said....” Jesus “knew” their thoughts by revelation. There

are times when the message of knowledge or wisdom we receive comes in the form of “just knowing” what is going on. **Emotion:** 1 Samuel 11:6, “When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger.” Ezekiel 3:14 is another example of a prophet feeling strong emotion due to the spirit of God. Just as sometimes revelation is “just knowing,” sometimes it comes as an emotion. Emotion is very important in the life of a godly Christian, and God can give us an revelation emotions, or augment an emotion we already have.

It takes great maturity to handle revelation it well. There is nothing more exciting and more fulfilling than to know we are in touch with God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and that they are working in us. All of us need to keep in mind the Scriptural admonition that to whom much is given, much shall be required (Luke 12:48 KJV). When a person is given revelation, it is “much” in the eyes of God, and we should all be prepared to do much. Obviously, we are all examples for others, so living a holy and obedient life is fundamental. We should also be prepared to obey whatever God tells us. Revelation is not a game of “if we like it, we’ll do it.” We must be prepared to do whatever He tells us.

Mature Christians do not think “all,” or even most, of our thoughts, feelings, or emotions are from the Lord. As humans, we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14), and God has equipped us to deal with life without His minute-by-minute guidance, especially on small matters (though He can and does help us with small matters). The Bible says we need to practice so we can know which thoughts and emotions are revelation and which are not, and there would be no such directive if all our thoughts and emotions were revelation.

When a Christian does receive revelation, he should be wise in speaking about it. Some people seem to need the approval of others, or think it will elevate them in the Christian community if they constantly say, “The Lord showed me...” or “The Lord told me....” It is rarely the right thing to do, or wise, for a Christian to parade the revelation he has received in front of others. If the Lord really did give him revelation, it will show up in the form of his living a joyful and victorious life, and people will be aware that he is walking by revelation without him constantly telling them. (For more information on the revelation manifestations, see commentary on 1 Cor. 12:8).

1:13. “intensely.” The Greek is *hyperbolē* (#5236 περβολ), from which we get the English word “hyperbole,” or exaggeration. *Hyperbolē* refers to something being done to an extreme degree, or even excess. English versions translate it various ways, trying to catch the essence: “an extreme degree” (HCSB); “violently” (ESV, NRSV); “savagely” (NET), “intensely” (NIV); exceedingly (YLT). We felt the word “intensely” captured the essence of Paul’s attack on the Church (cp. Acts 8:1, which speaks of a great persecution of the Church).

“destroy.” The Greek word is *portheō* (#4199 πορθω), and it means to overthrow something; to destroy it. Even though there are other Greek words for “destroy,” we felt that was the best translation here. Paul was trying to “overthrow” the Church, but typically when we use the English word “overthrow,” it infers that the overthrower will take over the position of what was overthrown. For example, a revolutionary overthrows a government to replace it with something else. That would not be the case here. Paul was not trying to take over what the Church was doing, he already felt the Temple and the Jewish institutions were the proper way to serve God, and the Church was just a lie. He just wanted to destroy it.

1:20. “(In what I am writing to you...). This verse clearly displays Paul’s love for the Galatians and his passionate desire that they believe the truth of what he was saying. This is the figure of speech *Interjectio* (Interjection) a form of parenthesis thrown into the text to express feeling (Cp. Bullinger, *Figures*). In this case, the apostle Paul has deep feelings for the Galatians, many of whom have been turned against him (Cp. 1:6; 3:1; etc.), and so he pleads with a volume that leaps off the page, “before God, I am not lying!” The addition is unnecessary to the context, and so it is parenthetical. If the addition were a necessary part of the context and not parenthetical, the figure is called *Ecphonesis* or “Exclamation” (See Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*).

“Look!” The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἴδο), and it is used to get our attention. It is the figure of speech *asterismos* (cp. Bullinger; *Figures*), and it adds special emphasis here for two reasons. The first is that this is the only place in Galatians that it occurs, and the second is that the verse itself is already the figure *interjectio*, and so to place an *asterismos* inside the *interjectio* adds special emphasis. For more on “Look,” see commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

1:21. “Syria and Cilicia.” After Paul had spent time with the apostles in Jerusalem, the Grecian Jews tried to kill him (Acts 9:26-29). Paul was stubborn enough to stay in the fight at Jerusalem at the risk of his life, but the Lord was gracious to him and appeared to him in a vision and told him to leave (Acts 22:17-21), so the believers took him to Caesarea (the port of Israel) and sent him back home to Tarsus (Acts 9:30). On his trip to Tarsus the boat would have almost certainly followed the coastline, most did, and thus he would have stopped in Syria, and then gotten off in Cilicia, the province where Tarsus was located.

2:2. “revelation.” For what “revelation” is, see commentary on Galatians 1:12 and 1 Corinthians 12:8.

2:14. We stop Paul’s quotation here at the end of verse 14. The NIV takes the quote all the way down through verse 21, however, it seems unlikely that Paul meant to record this much of the conversation to Peter.

2:15. “Gentile sinners.” The national attitude of the Jews was such that they considered all Gentiles sinners, just as the Greeks considered all non-Greeks “barbarians.” The Galatian Christians would recognize that Paul was speaking of the natural prejudice in the Jewish culture, and not saying that all Gentiles were actually sinners.

2:16. “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.” The Greek text here is stronger than the English. The words translated “but” are *ean me*, and properly mean “except.” Thus the Greek carries the strong sense: “...a man is not justified by the works of the law; a man is not justified except through faith in Jesus Christ...”

“faith in Jesus Christ.” This is the objective genitive. See commentary on Rom. 3:22.

2:18. If the Christian rebuilds the Law in his life, then by doing so he proves that he was a transgressor by tearing it down (i.e., not living by it) in the first place. We are either justified by works or by faith, not by both.

2:19. “For through law I died to law, that I might live to God.” This is a very difficult verse. Lightfoot (*St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*) seems to understand it well. First, in the Greek text there is no definite article with “law.” It is not “the Law,” but just “law.” Thus “law” in this verse does not refer specifically to the Mosaic Law, but to law in

general, including rules, regulations, and even what we refer to as moral law. To understand why “through law I died to law,” we must understand the progression one is in once there is a law. First, law creates sin (sin is not reckoned where there is no law” Rom. 5:13). Second, law creates in me a knowledge or awareness of sin (“I would not have known was sin was except through the law” Rom. 7:7). Third, I sin. We all have sin nature, and perfect obedience is impossible, so we sin (Rom. 3:23; 8:3). Fourth, law punishes sin. In fact, the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Law creates and reveals sin, but then provides no remedy for it. Man is hopelessly lost with no way to keep the law. How can we escape? The only way is to throw off the law altogether (die to law) and be justified through Christ. We are not justified in God’s sight by law, we are justified by faith apart from law. That is what the context says happens.

3:1. “Unthinking.” See study of “Fool” and related words in Appendix A.

3:2. This question is the figure of speech *eironia* (irony; sarcasm), because the Galatians obviously knew the answer. The question was not asked to gain information but rather to make his point. (Cp. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*).

“hearing with faith.” This is a difficult genitive, and the scholars are in considerable disagreement about it, calling it an objective genitive, a subjective genitive, a genitive of possession, etc. For one thing, the Greek word *akoē* (#189 ἀκοή) can mean “hearing or listening to” or that which is heard or listened to, i.e. the message or the news. Thus “listening with faith” and “the news about faith” (and more) are possible. Lenski refers to it as a genitive of possession: being made to hear what belongs to the faith. Wuest says it is the message announcing faith, which is close to Meyer, who says it is the news concerning the faith. Expositor’s says listening in faith. Some say it is faith in the news announced. The context seems to be very helpful, because it refers to God working in the life of a believer, and how does that happen? By faith. In fact, one can hear and not have faith, and thus not receive and be rejected (Heb. 4:2). One must hear with faith.

3:5. “hearing with faith.” See note on 3:2.

3:6. Quoted from Gen. 15:6.

3:8. Quoted from Gen 12:3.

3:10. Quoted from Deut. 27:26.

3:11. Quoted from Hab. 2:4.

3:12. Quoted from Lev. 18:5.

3:13. Quoted from Deut. 21:23.

3:16. Quoted from Gen. 13:15.

3:19. “because of transgressions.” The Law was not added in order that transgressions would come. See commentary on Rom. 5:20. Hence, the word *charin* (#5484 χάριν), should be translated as “because,” as most versions do. The word can also be used to show purpose, “indicating the goal” (BDAG, def. a) and could be translated “for the sake of.” But we feel, along with most translators, *charin* here is “indicating the reason” (BDAG, def. b), that the Law was added “on account of” transgressions.

3:22. “The promise” is metonymy for what was promised.

3:23. “the coming of the faith.” See Robertson, *Word Pictures*.

4:3. In the context, the basic principles of the world is the Law. Note Robertson, who notes Lightfoot.

4:4. “the fullness of the time.” The phrase means, the full or complete time, i.e., the proper time. God had been at work in history for many centuries preparing for His Son and the spread of the Good News. The almost universal knowledge of the Greek language made it easy to spread the Gospel even via letters, and preserve it in scrolls and shortly thereafter, books. The world was prepared for the Gospel in written form. Roman roads and Roman law helped the spread of the Gospel in spite of its intolerance of it. What happened to Paul was a good example: his Roman citizenship and Roman justice helped him in most of his travels, including Philippi (Acts 16:37-40), Corinth (Acts 18:15), in Jerusalem (Acts 22:25), in Caesarea (Acts 25:12), and in Rome, where he was released after two years (Acts 28:30). The world was prepared for people to travel with the Gospel and teach it everywhere. Throughout the Roman empire there were miserable conditions, tyranny, oppression, slavery, and profligate behavior. Centuries of war, destruction, and enslavement of the losers, had devastated the empire. Entertainment had become murder. The world was ready for a Savior. Greek and Roman philosophy had proven itself powerless to stop the downward spiral of the human mind, soul, and spirit, and Greco-Roman religion was “powerless, and worse than powerless, in checking their bad propensities” (*Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 10). The world was ready for enlightenment and true purpose. There are other things, of course, and we cannot hope to understand all the things God had in mind when He said that it was the proper time for His Son to come into the world.

4:5. The two “in order that” clauses show that the prior condition to being adopted was that Christ redeemed those who were under the law. Without Christ paying the redemption price, no adoption would be possible.

“the adoption.” See note Ephesians 1:5.

4:6. The spirit does not cry “Abba Father” mixing Hebrew and English. It cries out “Abba,” which means “Father.”

4:7. “Since.” The Greek word “if” can be translated “since” if there is no doubt about the subject. Note NIV on Eph. 3:2. Although the KJV reads “heir through God through Christ,” the best texts omit Christ and the reason for its addition is clear. Saying we are heirs “through God” leaves much for the reader to ponder. We are heirs through “*the work of*” God, “*the son of God*,” etc.

4:8. “not gods by nature” (Cp. Wuest).

4:9. “Are turning.” Robertson.

4:11. Paul was not saying that the Galatians were not saved (there is nothing about salvation in the context), but rather that he had spent all that time turning them from the Law, all to no purpose, because they went right back to it.

4:13. “infirmity.” The Greek is *astheneia*, (#769 ἰσθνεῖα), “weakness, illness.” Paul preached where he did for the first time because of an infirmity. Many guesses have been made as to what this was, but the simple fact is that we do not know. It could have been a sickness, or could have been some other incapacity or weakness of the flesh, such as a twisted ankle, that kept him from traveling (BDAG).

4:14. Paul’s sickness in Galatia is mentioned nowhere but here. It was a temptation to the Galatians, because no one wants to attend to a sick stranger, and less so if the stranger heals others but himself is not healed. They were tempted to avoid him.

“**treat...with contempt.**” From *exoutheneo* (#1848 ἐξουθενέω), See commentary on 1 Thessalonians 5:20.

4:17. “Shut you out.” The Greek is general. The Judaizers wanted to isolate the Galatians from Paul and his companions, and thus from Christ (Gal. 5:4).

4:23. “according to the flesh.” Abraham had a promise from God that he would be the father of many nations. When Sarah got too old to have children, Abraham relied on an old Mesopotamian custom that allowed the husband to have sexual intercourse with a slave or servant, and the child would be considered the child of the barren couple. Thus Abraham had Ishmael through Hagar (Gen. 16). Nevertheless, God clarified His promise, making it clear that Sarah would have a son (Gen. 17:16). This took faith in God and His promise, because Sarah was now beyond the age of childbearing (Gen. 17:17; 18:11).

4:27. Quoted from Isaiah 54:1.

4:30. Quoted from Gen. 21:10.

5:4. “trying to be made righteous.” For an understanding of the translation “righteous,” see note on Romans 3:22. (Cp. Robertson, *Word Pictures*).

5:5. “the righteousness for which we hope.” The righteousness of hope (literal) is a genitive of apposition. The hope, that is to say, righteousness. The unusual use of the genitive of apposition in English makes a clearer translation important.

5:6. “in union with.” See commentary on Romans 6:3.

“faith working through love.” Cp. NIV; BDAG’s translation. Literally, the phrase reads, “faith working itself through love.” The translation “expressing itself” comes from *energeo* (#1754 ἐνεργέω) in the middle voice. The middle voice means the action is brought on itself, hence, *faith works on itself*. This is important because for faith to count, it need not perform works external to itself—faith works itself out. Hence the translation “faith expressing itself.” Properly translated, this verse says that true faith inside a Christian will express itself in love.

Roman Catholic doctrine takes the verb “works” to be in the passive voice (See discussion in Lenski). In which case it would mean the only thing that counts is faith “having been worked” by love. If this were true, faith would not be complete in itself, it would need love and good works to give it its form. The Roman Catholics teach that it is love that makes faith work. However, this interpretation does not fit with the context. First of all, the verse itself is stating that outward works (circumcision) do not count for anything. And secondly, the thesis of the entire book of Galatians is that works will not gain salvation, but faith alone is necessary (e.g., 2:16; 3:2-11, 22-26).

5:12. “I wish” The Greek word *ophelon* (#3785 ὄφελον) is used to express a fruitless wish. This is the figure of speech *hyperbole*, exaggeration.

5:14. Quoted from Lev. 19:18.

5:16. “walk by *the* spirit.” The word “walk” is a Semitic idiom, meaning “live by” (cp. Thayer’s Lexicon). There is no definite article “the,” but we supply it because the verse makes more sense in English that way. The word “spirit” refers to the new divine nature that is born inside each Christian at the time he is saved. This is clear because it is contrasted with “flesh,” which in this case mainly refers to the old nature and the impulses produced by it, although the actual flesh has influences also, such as hunger or sleep, which may need to be interrupted in order to fully do the will of God. God created people in such a way that their will can controls their behavior, and the good Christian learns to live by the new, godly nature created inside him.

5:17. “the flesh.” The Greek is *sarx* (#4561 σὰρξ) and translated literally to “flesh,” however, in the NT the word “flesh” has a number of different meanings. It can simply

refer to the flesh, the physical skin and muscle of both man and animals (Luke 24:39); the physical body as a whole (Acts 2:26), a living creature (Matt. 24:22). It can also refer to our animal nature and weakness as humans without any suggestion of depravity (Mark 14:38). This can manifest itself when we are tired, hungry, etc. It is not sin to sleep or eat, but we can give in to what our “flesh” desires when we should not, and that can become sin. The word “flesh” can also refer to our sin nature, or our bodies driven by our natural desires of the flesh and our sin nature as well. That is the case in this verse. The word “flesh” mostly points to our sin nature (note the context), but can also involve just our fleshly desires. (For more on our inherent sin nature, see commentary on Rom. 7:17).

“with the result that.” The spirit and the flesh oppose each other, battling within us, with the result that we do not do what we want. The last clause in this verse is *hina* (#2443 ἵνα), “so that,” with the verb *thelō* (#2309 θέλω), “to want” in the subjunctive mood; this construction is forming a result clause, which expresses the unintentional consequences of an action (see commentary on Matt. 2:15; “resulting in... what was spoken being fulfilled”). It is the result of our internal struggle between our flesh and our spirit that we do not do what we want. E. W. Bullinger noted that the new, holy, nature of the Christian “necessitates conflict with the Old Nature: and this conflict is therefore the best assurance that we are ‘in Christ’” (Bullinger, *The Giver and His Gifts*, p. 18). Bullinger felt that the best assurance a person had of being a Christian was the constant struggle between the desire to do evil and the desire to do good that raged within him, and testified that non-Christians who do not have a new holy nature have no such struggle. Although it is certainly true that some Christians have a huge internal struggle between doing good and evil, many non-Christians who are raised in moral environments struggle with good and evil, and many Christians have given in to their evil impulses for so long they no longer acutely feel any internal battle between good and evil.

There are three “desires” or “wills” involved here. The flesh, the spirit, and “you.” We may desire something, but if it is worldly, we will not be able to participate without becoming slaves to the flesh (if we want worldly pleasure without consequences—it won’t happen). We may want the fruit of the spirit (joy, peace, etc.) without disciplining ourselves to walk by the spirit. That will not happen either. We have to realize we need to get to the point we want what the spirit wants if we are to be truly successful and blessed in this life and the next.

5:19. “Obvious” as many versions. Open to all. Lenski even says “public.” Not that someone involved in the works of the flesh works them “obviously, in the open, but that the works themselves openly declare the flesh and its desires.

“Adultery.” Although in the KJV, it was a late textual addition and is not included in most modern versions or the REV.

“Unrestrained behavior.” The Greek *aselgeia* (#766 ἀσέλγεια) means without social or moral restraint: giving oneself a license to do whatever one wants at the time. Lenski says “unbridled conduct.”

5:20. “selfish ambition.” The Greek is *eritheia* (#2052 ἐριθεία). In Aristotle it “denotes a self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means” (BDAG). It contains tones of selfish ambition, strife, rivalry, etc. Those who attempt to get ahead unfairly, and build rivalries show this. For a more complete understanding, see the note on “selfish ambition,” Romans 2:8.

“dissentions.” The state of being in factious opposition.

5:21. Omit “murder.” If it was added, it was added quite early, but very early and excellent texts and witnesses omit it. It may have been added by a scribe remembering Romans 1:29. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*.

5:22. “fruit of the spirit.” This list refers to the “fruit,” the things that are produced in us as we live according to the new nature that has been created inside us (see note on 5:16 above). Producing the fruit of the spirit requires active cooperation between the human will and the new, divine nature. The divine nature cannot grow the fruit of the spirit on its own, the will is simply too powerful. A person who wills to be unloving, or impatient, or without self control, will not be forced to have those qualities by the spirit of God that is born within him. On the other hand, the new nature of holy spirit is constantly at work to produce fruit in the person (Phil. 2:13), and so if a Christian truly desires to develop the fruit of the spirit, even though it may be difficult depending on his or her basic disposition and the way he or she was raised, it can be done.

The list of the fruit is an asyndeton, a list without a final “and” (see Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*). In contrast to the figure polysyndeton, which places an “and” between each item in the list and by that literary device emphasizes each thing in the list, the figure asyndeton does not even have the standard “and” between the last two items of the list. This means that the reader goes through the list as if he were on a playground slide, sliding past the things on the list and getting to the conclusion, which is emphasized by the asyndeton (“There is no law against such things”). Among other things, the fact that the list is an asyndeton lets us know there are other “fruit” of the spirit that are not on the list. For example, although “longsuffering” is on the list, “patience” (*hupomonē*), is not. Neither is “humility,” certainly a fruit of the spirit, and the list of godly fruit that are produced in the life of a committed Christian could be multiplied. The point of this list was not to give every fruit of the spirit, but rather to give the reader an idea of some of them, especially in contrast to the works of the flesh, the list in the previous verses.

“Love.” The Greek word is *agape* (#26 ἀγάπη). Love is difficult to specifically define. It is the very nature of God, for God is love (1 John 4:7-12, 16). Love is known from the action it prompts (John 3:16; 1 Cor. 13:1-8). Christian love is not an impulse from the feelings, nor does it always run with natural inclinations, nor is it lavished only upon those things that are naturally liked or naturally found lovely or beautiful.

Agape love is an exercise of the will in deliberate choice, and is why God can command us to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44; Exodus 23:1-5). *Agape* love is commanded, showing that it is related to obedience, commitment and action and not necessarily feeling and emotion. “Loving” someone is to obey God on another’s behalf, seeking his or her long-term blessing and profit. Love energizes faith (Gal. 5:6), and empowers us to give and keep on giving. There can be a cost to genuine love. Love is the distinctive character of the Christian life in relation to the brethren and to all humanity. The “loving” thing to do may not always be easy, and true love is not “mushy.” For example, punishing criminals to keep society safe is loving, and asking someone to leave your Christian fellowship because they persist in flagrant sin is loving, but never easy. (1 Cor. 5:1-5). Christians are to be known for their love to one another (John 13:35).

“joy.” The Greek word is *chara* (#5479 χαρά). Biblically, “joy” has two meanings. As it is defined in the Bible and most English dictionaries, it can refer to a feeling, an emotion that wells up within us when something wonderful happens to us. The

Bible has many examples of that “feeling of joy,” the emotion that can accompany something good happening to us (Matt. 2:10; 13:44; Luke 15:7; 24:52; John 16:21; Acts 12:14; 2 Cor. 7:13; 2 Tim. 1:4; Philemon 1:7; 3 John 1:4). However, the problem with that emotional kind of joy is we cannot feel it whenever we want to. It has to happen to us, and it does not happen very often.

The second meaning of “joy,” refers to it an inner light and lightness, an inner effervescence or bubbling. This kind of joy is a quality of life, not simply an emotion. It is grounded in our relationship with God and comes from knowing and believing Him, and what He has given us and what He promises us in the future. It is excited by the acquisition of good or the expectation of good. The “goods” we possess now are the gift of holy spirit, the wonderful Word of God, and many other blessings from God. The goods we will possess include forever being with Christ in Paradise. These things cannot be taken from us by trials of this life, and for that reason true joy is not extinguished by the cares of this world. Joy should be visible so that others can be won by it. Joy was evidenced in Christ’s life and walk (John 15:11). Joy gives us a sound basis for optimism; it helps us look at the future that is desirable and possible (Hebrews 12:2). It strengthens us for the work we are called to do (Nehemiah 8:10). God commands us to have joy, which He can do because it comes from believing His Word and focusing on Him and His promises (1 Thess. 5:16; Phil. 3:1). Joy comes from a choice of our will, based upon how we think about our circumstances. Joy can result from the way we choose to interpret the things that happen to us, especially painful things. The apostles rejoiced after being beaten that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus (Acts 5:41). Joy is related to an attitude of thanksgiving.

God expects us to learn life lessons from the world around us, and we can learn a great “joy lesson” from the moon. When the moon looks fully at the sun (a full moon), it is lit up with light, and shines brilliant white in the night sky. However, when the moon looks at the earth (a lunar eclipse), it is dark, depressing, and usually has a red tint to it as if it were angry. We are like the moon. When we look at the earth and focus our attention on the things of this life, we become dark-minded, depressed and/or angry. However, when we look at the Son, and focus our attention on the things of God, we become full of light (joy) and shine into the lives of those around us. Let us learn from the moon to focus our attention on the Son. We will have an inner joy that will give us strength for life in this difficult world, and we will shine blessings into the people around us.

“peace.” The Greek word is *eirēnē* (#1515 εἰρήνη). Peace is peace, quietness, rest, tranquility. It is an inner quietness born of strength, exemption from the rage and havoc of conflict or war, internal or external. It is associated with the elimination of one’s enemies. As influence by the Hebrew word *shalom*, which was the ancient Jewish salutation and formula of well-wishing, it includes the concept of total well-being including security, safety, harmony, prosperity, and happiness. True peace includes the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ and so fearing nothing from God. Peace is not the state of being undisturbed simply because you do not care what happens. Rather, it is the state of quietness that comes from knowing that there will be a righteous end to life and the world. God is a God of peace (2 Cor. 13:11). Christians have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). Jesus is the prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). The peace of God will guard your heart (Phil. 4:7).

“longsuffering.” The Greek word is *makrothumia* (#3115 μακροθυμία). “Longsuffering” is from the Greek *makrothumia*: *makro* (“long”), and *thumia* (“passion, anger”). Longsuffering is the ability to hold back anger for a long time. It is to persevere patiently and bravely; to be patient in bearing the offences and injuries of others; to be mild and slow in avenging; slow to anger, slow to punish. It is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish. It is to be what happens in difficult circumstances with people instead of getting angry too quickly. It is associated with mercy, and is used of God. However, it is not being a “door mat,” and simply allowing yourself to be used or abused. Similarly, true longsuffering is not being “too spiritual” or “too holy” to get angry at people, nor is it tolerating sin indefinitely.

In contrast to longsuffering, “patience” (*hupomonē*) is the quality that does not surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial; it is the opposite of despondency and is associated with hope (1 Thess. 1:3). Interestingly, while *makrothumia* (longsuffering with people) is used of God, *hupomonē*, (patience with things) is not. This may be due to the fact that God has to put up with people, who have free-will, but He never has to put up with the same trials from things and life in general that people do. Trench writes: “We may now distinguish *makrothumia* and *hupomonē* in a way that will be valid whenever they occur. *Makrothumia* refers to patience with respect to persons, *hupomonē* with respect to things. A man is *makrothumei* if he has to relate to injurious persons and does not allow himself to be provoked by them or burst into anger (2 Tim. 4:2). A man is *hupomonē* if he is under a great siege of trials and he bears up and does not lose heart of courage” (Trench, Synonyms; p. 209). Longsuffering (*makrothumia*) and patience (*hupomonē*) occur together in Colossians 1:11, 2 Corinthians 6:4,6; 2 Timothy 3:10; James 5:10,11. Longsuffering is an important quality of Christian leaders: 2 Tim. 4:2

“kindness.” The Greek word is *chrestotes* (#5544 χρηστότης). A generous, warm-hearted, friendly, nature. It is sweet, mild, and full of graciousness. It is a virtue that pervades and penetrates the whole nature, that mellows anything harsh or austere. Christ’s yoke is “kind” (*chrestotes*, not “easy” as many translations have), because there is nothing harsh, sharp, or galling about it (Matt. 11:30). You can put on Christ’s yoke without worrying about getting painful blisters, splinters, etc.

“Kindness” is willingly ready to do good, and it expresses itself in deeds towards another. It springs from an inner disposition to benefit others, but is engaged and aroused by their need. True kindness must be distinguished from sentimentality: It can be easy to feel sorry for someone who has gotten themselves into a mess, and begin to “caretake” them, which actually weakens them. In many situations, what a person really needs to become strong is to repent and get busy restoring their own life with the help of the Lord. Those who offer kindness always need to be aware of the line that differentiates kindness from caretaking. God is kind, even to the unthankful (Luke 6:35), and God’s kindness leads people to repentance (Romans 2:4; 2x). It is the responsibility of every believer to be kind to others (Eph. 4:32). Love is kind (1 Cor 13:4).

“goodness.” The Greek word is *agathosune* (#19 ἀγαθωσύνη). “Goodness” is uprightness in heart and life, a moral excellence. The person who exhibits the fruit “goodness” is upright and honorable, and is acceptable to God. “Goodness” can be called the “fruit with teeth,” because goodness, while it has a lot in common with “kindness,” very clearly also contains the idea that it is a *good* thing to uphold standards, enforce the

law, and punish wrongdoers. The grammarian Richard Trench writes: “A man may display his *agathosune*, his zeal for goodness and truth, in rebuking, correcting, and chastising.” If there is no “goodness” in the Christian’s life, evil continues without fear of consequences. “Goodness” is usually associated with activity rather than inner nature, although the good actions spring from the good heart: “The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart” (Luke 6:45).

Goodness is not self-absorbed or comfort-oriented. Many “good” tasks are uncomfortable to perform. “Goodness” is anchored in God and in His revelation to man. In the Scripture, “good” is often contrasted with “evil” and it is the Word of God that must define that which is good and that which is evil. Moral relativism leaves both “good” and “evil” up to the feelings and inclinations of the individual. In a system without Godly standards all kinds of “good” things become “evil.” In this kind of system, holding people accountable becomes evil (you may hurt their “self-esteem”), punishment of any kind becomes evil (they were not really at fault, but were victims of society), saying that someone is wrong becomes evil (why be so narrow minded), etc. Also, without godly standards, many “evil” things become “good” (taking advantage of another’s mistake, such as getting too much change back on a purchase but not telling the cashier; living together without being married; not returning something you find even if you could locate the owner if you tried; etc.)

“faithfulness.” The Greek word is *pistis* (#4102 πίστις). The word *pistis* can mean “faith” or “faithfulness,” and here “faithfulness” is the better translation. Faith is trust, and we are to trust God, and thus believe His promises. Faithfulness means continued faith or perseverance. It is a steadfast adherence to God and His will. We trust God because God is *trustworthy*, but more than that, we are to continue in that faith day after day, thus being “faithful” toward Him. Many people have “faith” for a short time. The true fruit of the new nature is being full of faith day after day after day. Those given a trust must be faithful (1 Cor. 4:2).

5:23. “meekness.” The Greek word is *praotes* (#4236 πραότης). The quality of humility that recognizes one’s own frailty and neediness, causing a willingness to listen to reproof and correction, as well as to help others without unduly asserting one’s authority or overpowering others. Meekness is a submissive attitude toward the will of God. It is coachability, the ability to take coaching, teaching, and even reproof from others without any resistance or temptation to seek revenge and retaliation. Meekness is first and foremost toward God. It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting. It must be clearly understood that godly meekness is a mental posture of power, not weakness. The common assumption is that meekness is synonymous with “mousy” or “cowardly,” but the Lord was “meek” because he had the infinite resources of God at His command (Matt. 11:29). Someone who is meek can afford to be so because his strength and confidence allows him to listen to others. Moses was the meekest man on earth at his time, but his walk was a walk of powerful signs and wonders (Num. 12:3). Meekness is a way of being, opposed to boldness of manner, and is to be the default manner for leaders in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 10:1).

“self-control.” The Greek word is *egkrateia* (#1466 ἐγκράτεια). Self control is mastery over oneself. The root word is *kratos*, which means power in action; strength

exerted, and the derivation of *egkrateia* may be *en kratos*, or power within, thus the power over oneself and one's desires (Kittel; Theological Dictionary). As used by the Greeks, *egkrateia*, self control, is the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites. God designed the human will to control the human mind and body. The concept of "self-control" implies that there is a standard to conform to, and the Word of God provides that standard. Godly self control is not trying to reform the flesh by self-discipline (although self-discipline is important), or overcoming sinful tendencies by outward religious practices. True self-control comes from a combination of free-will decisions and the new nature inside that is trying to reproduce itself in outward man. It is, after all, a "fruit of the spirit," not a "fruit of the will." A commitment to self-control without being motivated by love for others feeds prideful ambition and self-glorification. Christians are not to live like unbelievers who indulge the flesh (Eph 2:3). Christians are to control themselves (1 Cor 9:24-27).

5:25. "Since." Even as the NIV, NJB. The word "if" can be understood as "since" if the condition is not in doubt.

"keep in step with." Although many versions say "walk," this is not the standard word for walk, which has the cultural connotation of "live by," but rather it means "to march in a line" (as in the military), to march in rank and file, "to be in line with a person or thing considered as standard for one's conduct, hold to, agree with, follow, conform" (BDAG). In other words, the spirit is setting the pace and moving forward, and now it is up to us to match its pace and keep in line.

5:26. "conceited." Greek is from *kenos* (empty) and *doxa* (glory). It is vain or empty glory. Thinking something has merit when it does not. "glorying [bragging, boasting] without reason, conceited, vain-glorious, eager for empty glory" (Thayer).

6:1. "gets." Punctiliar aorist, "gets to be" (Lenski).

"trespass." The Greek is *paraptoma* (#3900 παράπτωμα) which is to "misstep," "to fall by the wayside." This "misstep" is not necessarily intentional, although it can be. Thus, in life, "trespasses," are much more common than "sins." Meanings of *paraptoma* include: "faults," "deviations from truth," "lapse," "error," "mistake," "wrongdoing."

6:2. "hardships." The Greek word translated "hardships" is *baros* (#922 βάρος), which refers to a load, but also can refer to a hardship produced by the load. It refers to a hardship that is regarded as particularly burdensome and exhausting. In Matthew 20:12 *baros* refers not to difficulties in general but to the specific hardship of working for the entire day. In a number of languages hardship resulting from work may be expressed in terms of the effect upon the workers, for example, "to get tired from working" or "to become weak as the result of working" (Louw Nida). Because of verse 5, which sets the context, the translation "hardship" makes more sense here than the load itself.

People carry their own loads, but other Christians are to help with those loads and with the hardships produced by them. It is often unclear how much of a person's burden a Christian should carry. Each situation stands on its own, but some general principles apply. Just as in medicine a person who breaks a leg has to use crutches, but if the crutches are used beyond when they are needed, the leg atrophies and becomes weak. We bear one another's hardships, but not to the point the person becomes weak. Help that we offer to others keeps them from breaking under their load, but does not weaken them. Many people are lazy and would love for others to carry their burden, but doing that only produces more weakness and laziness, it does not help the person.

6:5. Each person will (future) have to bear his own load. There are loads that each of us have that cannot be shared and must be carried alone. Cp. RSV.

6:6. This verse has been hotly debated by commentators. Many of them think that the verse is telling those instructed to “share with,” i.e., give to, those who instruct them. This is clearly expressed in the New Living Translation, which is a very free translation: “Those who are taught the Word of God should help their teachers by paying them.” However, there are some serious problems with this interpretation.

First, if Paul was asking for the believers to pay their teachers, the verse is worded in a very unclear and unusual manner. The word *koinōneō* (#2841 **κοινωνῶ**) would not be the natural way to say that the people should give to ministers. It seems totally unlikely that Paul, having reproved the Galatians for their return to the flesh, would, at the close of the epistle, ask for money. Nevertheless, money is such a “sacred cow,” to so many people, and there are so many commentaries that say that the verse means that people should pay their ministers, that we feel it is appropriate to quote extensively from commentaries that make the point that this verse is not about money.

“The word *koinwnein* contains the key to the true meaning of the verse. Our versions [i.e., the KJV, RV, ASV, etc.] understand it here, and in Romans 12:13, Phil. 4:15, in the sense of *communicating* [giving] to others; but I find no warrant for this in Greek usage. In Romans 15:27 it signifies distinctly to *receive* a share, and elsewhere to become a partner and share in common with others (1 Tim. 5:22; 1 Pet. 4:13; 2 John 11; Heb. 2:14). Here in like manner it enjoins upon the leaders of the Churches the duty of admitting all the members to participation in any spiritual blessing they enjoy. It continues, in fact, the protest against the arrogant pretensions and selfish exclusiveness of the Judaising leaders.” (*Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Vol. 3, p. 189).

R. C. H. Lenski writes:

The verb *koinonew* is seemingly not properly understood [by most commentators]. When this is regarded as meaning “communicate,” “all good things” become material, and somehow or other it is thought that Paul says that pupils should reward or pay their teachers... This idea is also put into *koinonia*, the noun which is thought to mean “contribution” in Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:3; Heb. 13:16; and this view has gotten into some of the dictionaries [lexicons]. The noun always = fellowship, and in the case of alms a fellowship that is exercised by means of alms. ... The verb means... to be or to make participant, the latter, however, in the sense “to share something with somebody, thereby not making him a fellow with *oneself*, but making oneself a fellow with *him*.... The one who instructs has the “all good things; the one being instructed is to proceed to participate in them, in “all” of them. The riches are with the teacher of the Word, the poverty is with the pupil, and the pupil is to institute “fellowship” with the teacher so that he, the pupil, may be enriched. ... With those [teachers] who have the burdens and with those who have these good things we should keep fellowship, making *ourselves* fellow with *them*.

This is just about the opposite of the common view. ... Could Paul tell the Galatians in this letter that they owed material contributions to him and his helpers? Could he do such a thing with no further word of explanation? Paul never took money for his work. When he speaks of this subject in 1 Cor. 9 he

does so with the fullest and clearest explanation. See the same thought in 2 Cor. 11:7-12....

We ought also not to forget the Judaizers who also came as teachers, on whose greediness 2 Cor. 11:20 enlightens us. When such greedy fellows were working in Galatia, Paul could scarcely write the Galatians to share “in all good things” (material) with their teachers. ... We need not discuss “the one instructing.” Paul had not left the Galatian churches in an unorganized state; he had them elect elders and pastors who were qualified to teach. ... “In all good things” that were possessed by their instructors, Paul and his assistants among them, the Galatians should ever cultivate fellowship for their own enrichment. Then all would, indeed, be well with them. Pay for these teachers? There is no reason to mention it in this epistle. Sowing for the flesh and sowing for the spirit deal with a subject that is far greater, namely with the desire for all good spiritual things in which the Galatians should seek to share” (Galatians, pp. 302-304).

Lenski translates the verse: “Moreover, let him who is being instructed in the Word be partaker with the one instructing him in all good things.”

Kenneth W. Wuest translates the verse: “Moreover, let the one who is being taught the Word, constantly be holding fellowship with the one who is teaching in all good things.”

Wuest writes: :

The word *communicate* [in the KJV] means “to share, to be a partner in a thing with a person,” here “to hold fellowship with another person.” ... The one who is taught should hold fellowship with his teachers in all good things. What the good things are is defined by the context. ... the good things of verse 6 refer to spiritual things, since they are contrasted to the evil things just spoken of.

Now, the Judaizers had precipitated a situation in the Galatian churches in which those who followed their teaching broke fellowship with the true teachers of the Word. Paul is exhorting these to resume their fellowship with their former teachers and share with them in the blessing of grace which their teachers were enjoying.

... The interpretation that makes the one taught assume the responsibility for the financial welfare of his teacher is not possible in this instance of the use of the word *koinoneo*. This is the word Paul uses in Phil. 4:15, where he speaks of the obligation of the one taught to make the financial needs of his teacher his own, thus sharing his earthly goods inasmuch as the teacher has shared with him is heavenly blessing. But Paul does not use it so here, and for the following reasons: *First*, the context which speaks both of the evil (6:1-5) and the morally good (6:9,10) is against the interpretation that financial support is in the apostle’s mind here. *Second*, the context defines the good things as being of a spiritual, not a material nature. Third, it would be the height of folly for Paul to inject such a delicate subject as the pocket book of the saints... into the already discordant atmosphere of the Galatian churches. ... Fourth, if Paul were exhorting the saints to contribute financially to the support of their former teachers, the Judaizers would be quick to say that the apostle was attempting to win the Galatian saints back to grace for financial reasons.... He [Paul] would not lay himself open to this charge by such an unwise act” (*Wuest’s Word Studies*, Vol. 1, pp. 169-171).

The one comment we would make about Wuest is that when Paul used the term *koinoneo* in Phil. 4:15, he did not expect that it would communicate the meaning of money, but rather he said, “no church fellowshiped with me in regard to giving and receiving.” Thus, even in Phil. 4:15, “fellowship” was defined in the context as fellowship in the financial arena. Vincent agrees with the commentators above, stating that *koinoneo* means “hold fellowship with...not impart to” (*Vincent’s Word Studies*; Vol. 4).

The point of Galatians 6:6 is that the true teachers have the “all good things” and the pupils are to fellowship with them, participating in all the good things that the teachers have. The context then follows suit. God is not mocked, if we sow sparingly (by not having fellowship with those who have all good things) then we will reap sparingly (we will not partake of those good things). If we sow to the flesh (circumcision) we will reap corruption, if we sow to the spirit (freedom in Christ), we reap everlasting life (“life” in the more powerful sense of “life indeed,” not just being alive).

6:7. “mocked.” The verb *muktērizō* (3456 **μυκτηρίζω**), “mocked,” is literally, to turn up the nose at, treat with contempt; thus, it is to mock.

6:8. “Corruption.” Robertson points out that the meaning of the Greek word depends on the context, which is certainly the case here. It can mean (cp. BDAG):

- breakdown of organic matter: dissolution, deterioration, corruption,
- destruction of a fetus: abortion.
- ruination of a person through an immoral act (i.e., the *seduction* of a young woman)
- inward depravity
- total destruction of an entity: hence, destruction in the last days.

If a person sows to the flesh, it can result in many types of corruption. His deterioration, corruption, ruination, depravity, and if he is unsaved eventually his total destruction in Gehenna. Given the wide range of meaning, “corruption” is a good translation.

6:10. There is some debate about whether the verse should read, “while” we have opportunity, or “as” (i.e., “when”) we have opportunity. The Greek can go either way. We believe that God is pointing out that we always have opportunity to do good (you can always pray for someone) so let us be doing good. The verse does not seem to be saying that we should be waiting for an “opportunity” to arise and then do good. However, when a special opportunity for good arises, and those occasions do occur, then we can and should take advantage of those times also.

“work that which is good.” It is easy to say, “do good,” like so many translations, but the Greek uses the word “work,” and we believe that is because doing good so often involves work. We must be willing to “work” to help others, not just “do” good when it is convenient for us.

6:11. It was common for Paul and other Romans to use an “amanuensis,” a professional scribe, to write down dictation, but then at the end of the letter write something in personal handwriting, which, not being written by a professional, often had larger letters not as clean and neat. We do the same kind of thing when we type a business letter but sign our name. Paul’s own handwriting at the end of Galatians had big letters. It is also possible that Paul wrote the entire epistle by himself, and the entire autograph had large letters.

Skeptics say Paul did not write the epistles that bear his name, but that is just unsubstantiated speculation. There is no “proof” Paul did not write the Pauline epistles. Paul signed his epistles personally. It was his handwriting. Furthermore, the people who carried Paul’s epistles to the local churches could testify that Paul wrote the epistle, and people in those churches were able to authenticate that these epistles had come from his hands. Other evidence also supports that Paul wrote his epistles.

Saint Clement of Rome was a leading figure in the church at Rome and the first Apostolic Father of the Church. Little is known of his life, but he according to the Church Father, Tertullian (160-220 AD), he was consecrated by Peter (it cannot be determined if he is the Clement of Phil. 4:3). Clement wrote to the Corinthian Church in 97 AD, and urged them to pay attention to the epistle that Paul had sent them. This is early and solid evidence that Paul did indeed write the epistles that bear his name.

6:12. Make a good showing. Not, as the NIV, a good impression, but rather to show off, an ostentatious display of their religion in a way people could see it.

“are trying to compel” present active.

6:14. The opening is an idiom, thus the versions all differ as to exactly how to translate it. Most of them get the sense. We more closely agree with Lenski.

6:15. Great example of the power of an ellipsis. The “is everything” is demanded by the context, but in ellipsis, the words that are present receive the emphasis. Thus, the phrase would read like, “For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a NEW CREATION is everything.”

6:16. The word “standard” is the Greek word *kanon* (#2583 κανών) from which we get the “Canon” of Scripture. Originally, a *kanon* was a rod for measuring, then other meanings developed. Cp. BDAG:

1. **a means to determine the quality of someth., rule, standard**
2. **set of directions or formulation for an activity, assignment, formulation** for public service. Others (incl. NRSV, REB) emphasize the geographical component and render *sphere (of action), province, limit*.
3. In the second century in the Christian church *κ.* came to stand for revealed truth, **rule of faith**.

We felt that “rule” did not communicate properly, because knowing that it was not circumcision or uncircumcision that was important but rather the new creation is not a “rule,” but rather a standard.

“even upon the Israel of God.” This verse defines “the Israel of God” as those who will keep in line with the standard that neither being a Jew or being a Gentile means anything, but the new creation means everything.

6:17. “From now on, let no one cause trouble for me.” Paul was not saying that from now on he did not want to be troubled by people, but rather that his fighting with the Galatians about law and grace was done. The issue was settled.

“the marks.” The Greek word “stigmata” can refer to marks, tattoos, or brands. Slaves were sometimes branded, but usually only when they were runaways or rebellious. Also, sometimes devotees of a pagan Temple branded themselves, but does this fit Paul? Probably not. Sometimes men in the army tattooed the name of their commander on their flesh, but that was self-inflicted and probably not what is being referred to here. The best way to translate seems to understand that the “marks” were real, scars of past floggings, and there were some parallels in the Greco-Roman world people would identify with. The

idea that the “stigmata” were the same as the scars of Christ is a modern idea with no biblical foundation.

6:18. “your spirit.” This is a synecdoche for “you,” with the emphasis on the spiritual side of life. Paul could have said “your body,” and meant “you,” or “your soul” and meant you, but the fact that he said “spirit” emphasizes the spiritual side of life, and the things which “spirit” can mean such as attitude. It is not our “spirit” that needs grace, we need grace.

