

## GALATIANS

### Conversational Version

#### Salutation

**1:1**Paul, apostle—not appointed by human agency or by human authority, but by Jesus Christ<sup>Messiah</sup> and God the Father who resurrected him—**2**and the Christians that are with me, to the churches in Galatia. **3**Grace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **4**He gave himself for our sins to deliver us from this sinful age, as God had willed. **5**Glory to him forevermore. Amen.

**Gal 1:1-5**

#### The Only Gospel

**6**I'm amazed that you're turning away so quickly from the One that called you by the grace that comes from Christ and *turning* to a different kind of gospel that's **7**not really another gospel at all. It's just that some people are confusing you by distorting Christ's gospel. **8**But, even if we or an angel from heaven would present a gospel different from what we presented, consider him under a curse. **9**I repeat, if anybody presents a gospel different from the one you've received, consider him under a curse. **10**Am I trying to please people or God? If I was trying to please people, I wouldn't be serving Christ. **11-12**I'm telling you, the message I presented *to you* didn't come from other people; Jesus Christ revealed it to me.

**Gal 1:6-12**

#### Paul's History

**13**You've heard that when I was in Judaism, I was persecuting God's church to the extreme. I was trying to destroy it. **14**I was moving up *the ranks* in Judaism past many contemporaries in my nation because I was more fanatical about the traditions of my ancestors. **15**But God set me apart at birth and called me by his grace. It pleased him **16**to reveal his Son in me so I could present him among the Gentiles. Right away, I didn't consult other people **17**or go up to Jerusalem to the ones that were apostles before me. I went away to Arabia and then back to Damascus. **18**Three years later I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. **19**I didn't see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. **20**What I'm writing to you is the truth. **21**After that, I went to Syria and Cilicia. **22**Christ's churches in Judaea didn't know me by sight. **23**The only thing they kept hearing was that the one who used to persecute them was now preaching the faith he tried to destroy, **24**and they praised God because of me.

**Gal 1:13-24**

#### Opposition to the Judaizers

**2:**<sup>1</sup>Fourteen years later, I went up to Jerusalem again, that time with Barnabas, and took Titus along. <sup>2</sup>I went up, directed by revelation, to lay out for them the message I was presenting to Gentiles. I met privately with the recognized leaders so I wouldn't be running or had run for nothing. <sup>3</sup>They didn't consider it necessary to circumcise Titus, a Gentile. <sup>4</sup>*That trip came about* because false believers had slipped in to spy out the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to enslave us *to the Law*. <sup>5</sup>To maintain the truth about the good news, we didn't back down for one minute. <sup>6</sup>The recognized leaders *in Jerusalem* didn't contribute anything to me. (Who they were didn't matter. God doesn't pay any attention to that.) <sup>7</sup>Instead, they saw that God had entrusted me with presenting the good news to the uncircumcised like he'd entrusted Peter with presenting it to the circumcised. <sup>8</sup>The One at work in Peter's apostleship was at work in mine for the Gentiles. <sup>9</sup>James, Cephas, and John—recognized pillars—shook hands with me and Barnabas to go to the Gentiles. They'd go to the Circumcision. <sup>10</sup>The only thing was, they wanted us to remember the poor, and I was eager to do that.

Gal 2:1-10

#### Paul Confronts Cephas (Peter)

<sup>11</sup>When Cephas came to Antioch, I confronted him because he'd condemned himself. <sup>12</sup>Before some men came from James, *[the Lord's brother]*, he'd been eating with the Gentiles. But when they got there, he started separating himself because he was afraid of the Circumcision. <sup>13</sup>The rest of the Jews joined him in that hypocrisy—even Barnabas got caught up in it. <sup>14</sup>When I saw they weren't conforming to the true message, I said to Cephas, “*If you're a Jew but live like a Gentile, how is it that you require Gentiles to live like Jews?*” <sup>15</sup>We're naturally Jews, not Gentile sinners. <sup>16</sup>We know that no person's made good by doing the Law, but by trusting in Christ. We've put trust in Christ Jesus so trusting him can justify us. What people do under law doesn't make them good. <sup>17</sup>But if while we're trying to be good in Christ, we turn out to be sinners, does that make Christ a minister of sin? Goodness, no! <sup>18</sup>If I rebuild what I used to tear down, I make myself a sinner. <sup>19</sup>By the Law I died to law so I could live to God. I've been crucified with Christ. <sup>20</sup>It's not me that's living, but Christ that's living in me. What I live now in the flesh, I live by trusting God's Son, who loved me and gave himself for me. <sup>21</sup>I don't cancel out God's grace. If law can make us good, there was no reason for Christ<sup>Messiah</sup> to die. Gal 2:11-21

#### Law vs. Trust

**3:**<sup>1</sup>Foolish Galatians! Who cast a spell on you? Right in front of your eyes I portrayed Jesus Christ crucified. <sup>2</sup>This is what I'd like to know: did you receive the Spirit by working under law or by trusting the Person you listened to? <sup>3</sup>Are you foolish enough to start with spirit and try to finish with flesh? <sup>4</sup>Did you suffer so much for nothing—if it was for nothing? <sup>5</sup>Does the one that provides you the Spirit and works miracles among you *do it* by working under law or

trusting the Person he listened to? <sup>6</sup>In that way, Abraham “trusted God, and God considered him good” [Gen 15:6].

Gal 3:1-6

<sup>7</sup>Rest assured, then, the ones who “trust” are like Abraham. <sup>8</sup>The scripture looked forward to when God would make Gentiles good by trusting. So it “presented the good news” to Abraham, “***In you I will bless all the nations***” [Gen 12:3; 18:18]. <sup>9</sup>So God blesses people that trust like Abraham did. <sup>10</sup>Those who work under law are under a curse: scripture says, “***Everybody’s under a curse that doesn’t do everything all the time that the Law requires***” [Deut 27:26]. <sup>11</sup>Obviously, law can’t make anyone good in front of God: “***A good person will have life by trusting***” [Hab 2:4]. <sup>12</sup>Law doesn’t involve trusting: “***The one that does them is the one that has life by them***” [Lev 18:5]. <sup>13</sup>Christ redeemed us from the curse that law brings us under by becoming a curse on our behalf. Scripture says, “***Everybody’s under a curse that hangs on a tree***” [Deut 21:23]. <sup>14</sup>So the blessing associated with Abraham can come to Gentiles in Christ Jesus; and by trusting, we can receive the Spirit Christ promised *us*.

Gal 3:7-14

#### Law vs. Promise

<sup>15</sup>Take an example from everyday life. Even with a human covenant, once it’s ratified, nobody annuls it or adds to it. <sup>16</sup>God made promises to Abraham and his seed. The text doesn’t say “seeds,” plural, but “seed,” singular, “***to your seed***” [Gen 12:7; 13:15; 17:7; 24:7], *that is*, Christ. <sup>17</sup>Here’s the point: the Law, which came 430 years after the promise, didn’t annul *the promise*; *it didn’t* annul the covenant God had put in place earlier. <sup>18</sup>If inheritance comes by law, it doesn’t come by promise. But God gave it to Abraham by *making a promise*. <sup>19</sup>So, what was the Law for? God added it to deal with sins till the “seed” came that he made *his* promise to. Angels ordained the Law through a mediator. <sup>20</sup>A mediator mediates between two parties, not one; but God is *only* one party.

Gal 3:15-20

#### Law Prepares for Trust

<sup>21</sup>So, does the Law conflict with God’s promise? Goodness, no! If there could’ve been a law that gave life, the Law would make people good. <sup>22</sup>But scripture locks up everything under sin so trusting could *directly* deliver the promise to the ones who trust *the promise*.

<sup>23</sup>Till trust came into play, law held us in custody. <sup>24</sup>It served as an attendant to lead *us* to Christ so trusting in *him* could make us good. <sup>25</sup>Now that trust has come, we aren’t under an attendant anymore. <sup>26</sup>We’re God’s children by trusting in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup>Those of us who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup>Jew-Greek, slave-free, male-female is irrelevant. We’re all alike in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>If we’re Christ’s, we’re Abraham’s seed<sup>sg</sup> and heirs by promise.

Gal 3:21-29

#### Slaves and Children

**4:**<sup>1</sup>Let me point out that as long as heirs are minors, they're like servants *at present* though owners of everything *in prospect*. <sup>2</sup>They're under guardians and trustees till the time their father specifies. <sup>3</sup>That's like us. When we were minors, we were servants to the material-based notions the world operates by. <sup>4</sup>But when the time came, God sent out his Son—born by woman under law—<sup>5</sup>to redeem us who were under law and to adopt us as children. <sup>6</sup>Since we're children, God gave us the sense of being that his Son has; we call out, “*Dad.*” <sup>7</sup>So we're not servants anymore, but children that became heirs by God's *promise*. Gal 4:1-7

#### **The Inadequacy of Law**

**8**Before you knew God, you served what weren't really gods. **9**Now, since you know him—or better, he knows you—why do you want to go back and serve weak, material-based notions again? **10**You're observing days, months, seasons, and years. **11**I'm afraid I've labored over you for nothing. Gal 4:8-11

**12**I plead with you, become like me because I'm like you. You haven't wronged me in anything. **13**You know I presented the good news to you at the first because of a physical handicap. **14**You didn't look down on me because of it. You received me like an angel from God, like Christ Jesus. **15**So where's your sense of being blessed? I point out that, if possible, you would've gouged your eyes out and given them to me. **16**So, do I become your enemy by telling you the truth? **17***The ones that are confusing you* aren't seeking you out for any good reason. They want to lock you out so you'll look to them *to get in*. **18**But it's always good to have someone seek you out in a good way, not just when I'm around. **19**My children, I'm in labor with you again until Christ forms in you. **20**I'd like to be with you now and change my tone. I'm worried about you. Gal 4:12-20

#### **The Hagar-Sarah Allegory**

**21**You that want to be under law, tell me, are you listening to it? **22**Scripture says Abraham had two sons, one by a servant girl and one by a free *woman*. **23**The one the servant girl had was born physically, but the one the free *woman* had was *born* by promise. **24**These points set up an illustration: the women represent two covenants. **25**Hagar, from Mount Sinai in Arabia, bears children into bondage. She's the mountain that corresponds to present-day Jerusalem because she's in bondage along with her children. **26**But the Jerusalem above is free; that's our mother. **27**Scripture says,

**“Celebrate, barren one that doesn't bear;  
cry out and scream, woman that's not in labor.  
The woman that's single has more children  
than the one with a husband”** [Is 54:1].

<sup>28</sup>You're children like Isaac. <sup>29</sup>The one born physically was persecuting the one *born* spiritually; it's the same way now. <sup>30</sup>But what does the scripture say?

***"Send away the servant girl and her son;  
her son will not inherit with the son"*** of the free woman [Gen 21:10].

<sup>31</sup>So we're not children of a servant girl, but of a free woman. <sup>5:1</sup>Christ really has set us free; so stand firm; don't put yourselves back under a yoke of bondage. Gal 4:21-5:1

#### Law and Trust, Mutually Exclusive Systems

<sup>2</sup>I tell you, if you accept circumcision, Christ doesn't do you any good. <sup>3</sup>You're obligated to keep the Law completely. <sup>4</sup>You that are trying to gain righteousness by law have cut yourselves off from Christ. You've fallen away from grace *into law*. <sup>5</sup>In spirit we wait by trust for the goodness we hope for. <sup>6</sup>In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is relevant. What matters is trust expressing itself in love. Gal 5:2-6

<sup>7</sup>You were running well. Who stopped you from obeying the truth? <sup>8</sup>The persuasion didn't come from the One that's calling you. <sup>9</sup>A little yeast spreads through the whole lump. <sup>10</sup>I have confidence in you in the Lord that you won't adopt something else. The one that's confusing you will face condemnation, whoever he is. <sup>11</sup>If I still preach circumcision, why do *the Jews* still persecute me? <sup>12</sup>I wish the ones that are troubling you would mutilate themselves.

Gal 5:2-12

#### Christian Freedom

<sup>13</sup>You were called to freedom. Just don't use it as an excuse for the flesh; serve one another with love. <sup>14</sup>One statement fulfills the whole Law, "**Love your neighbor as yourself**" [Lev 19:18]. <sup>15</sup>If you nip at and chew on each other, you'll end up eating each other up.

#### Physical versus spiritual

<sup>16</sup>I tell you, live by what's spiritual and you won't be fulfilling what's fleshly. <sup>17</sup>Flesh pulls against spirit and *vice versa*. They work against each other, and you end up doing what you don't want to do. <sup>18</sup>If spirit is leading you, you're not under law. <sup>19</sup>It's clear what fleshly deeds are: sexual immorality, uncleanness, sensuality, <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, hostility, rivalry, jealousy, rage, disputes, divisions, factions, <sup>21</sup>envy, drunkenness, carousing, and so on. I tell you ahead of time, like I told you before, people that do such things won't inherit God's kingdom.

<sup>22</sup>But spirit produces fruit like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustworthiness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control. There's no law against such things. <sup>24</sup>Christ's people have crucified the physical along with its drives and desires. <sup>25</sup>If we have life by spirit, let's conduct life by spirit. <sup>26</sup>Let's not be proud or jealous or irritate each other. Gal 5:13-26

#### Patience with the Sinful

**6:**<sup>1</sup>If someone gets caught up in some sin, you that are spiritual should humbly restore that person. Keep an eye on yourselves so you don't get caught up in temptation. <sup>2</sup>Share each other's burdens and fulfill Christ's 'law' that way. <sup>3</sup>If we think we're special when we're not, we're kidding ourselves. <sup>4</sup>We each one must examine our own behavior and take pride in it only in respect to ourselves, not *in comparison* to somebody else. <sup>5</sup>Each one of us has to carry our own load. <sup>6</sup>The one that's being taught the message needs to share everything good with the one that's teaching it. <sup>7</sup>Make no mistake, we can't mock God. We reap what we sow. <sup>8</sup>If we sow in the flesh, we'll reap decay. If we sow in the spirit, we'll reap eternal life. <sup>9</sup>Let's not get discouraged with doing what's right. In due time we'll reap if we don't give up. <sup>10</sup>So while we've got a chance, let's work at doing good to everybody, especially to members of the family of faith.

Gal 6:1-10

#### Closing Encouragements

<sup>11</sup>See what big letters I've written with my own hand. <sup>12</sup>Those who want to make a good impression in the flesh are trying to get you circumcised so they won't suffer persecution for the cross of Christ<sup>Messiah</sup>. <sup>13</sup>They don't keep the Law themselves; they just want to get you circumcised so they can take pride in you physically. <sup>14</sup>But I'm not going to take pride in anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him the world's crucified to me and me to it. <sup>15</sup>Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has anything to do with it; *what matters is* a new system *God has* created *in Christ*. <sup>16</sup>Peace and mercy to as many as live by that principle—to God's 'Israel.'

<sup>17</sup>From now on, don't create problems for me. I *already* have on my body the branding marks of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>18</sup>The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

Gal 6:11-18

Translator: Virgil Warren

christir.org