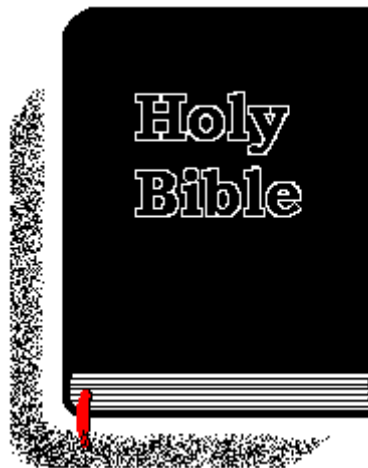


*OUTLINE THEMES IN THE STUDY OF THE BOOK OF
GALATIANS.*



*“THY WORD IS A LAMP UNTO MY FEET, AND A LIGHT UNTO MY
PATH.” – PSALM 119:105.*

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COMPILED BY RICK HENWOOD.

1.) PREFACE: -

Paul's pastoral letter to the Galatians was written to deal with an urgent spiritual crisis facing these Gentile churches, which were being led astray by false teachers. Paul deals with sin, the law, grace, faith, bondage and freedom amongst other subjects in this epistle, and yet throughout all of his discussion of these vital subjects, his underlying theme in this letter, is to point the Galatians back to the gospel message of justification by faith in Christ.

It is also the book above all of the other epistles of Paul, which Evangelical Christians turn to first as "proof" that the apostle Paul taught that the Moral Law of Ten Commandments has been abolished by Christ's death, and that continued obedience to this law since the cross of Christ, is a grave departure from the gospel of Christ.

But are these two popularly held beliefs concerning Paul's teachings in this epistle correct? Do these beliefs harmonize with the rest of the Bible writers, with the teachings of Christ, with the teachings of the other apostles of Christ, and with other plain teachings found in Paul's other epistles? We believe the answer to these two vital questions is NO! Rightly understood, the epistle to the Galatians gives abundant evidence to the continuing binding obligation of the Moral Law of Ten Commandments, this side of the cross for both Jews and Gentiles.

The apostle Peter specifically warned his readers concerning Paul's writings that there, "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as [they do] also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." – 2 Peter 3:16. With this warning from the inspired apostle Peter, it behoves us to approach certain of Paul's writings with caution and a need of careful comparison with other scriptures dealing with the same subject, if we wish to avoid wresting his writings to our own destruction.

This study document is **not** intending to be a verse-by-verse commentary on this epistle. But rather as its title suggests, it is our aim to give an outline on some of the major themes of this epistle, particularly focusing on those areas that are commonly misunderstood by Evangelical Christians.

The Galatians had been turned away from idolatry to the saving message of the gospel of Christ, through Paul's personal ministerial labours. He had personally instructed them in the gospel of Christ, at the very start of their turning to the Living God. Paul had instructed them correctly concerning Christ's mission of salvation to the

world. But after he had established them in these Biblical truths, and his personal ministerial labours were no longer available to them, they were being led astray from these truths, into a false “gospel”. Therefore in his epistle to the Galatians, Paul drew the Galatians minds back to these foundational truths that he had personally taught them. No doubt when his epistle was received and read by the churches, their memories would recall these truths that the apostle had personally taught them. The epistle was Paul's **second** instruction to the Galatians after his personal labours for their conversion had taught them these truths. This needs to be kept in mind by the modern reader of this epistle, who often does not have the same foundational teachings concerning Christ and his saving mission that the Galatians had received through Paul's teaching. Therefore our first Section of this study document shall give a simple Scriptural overview for the reader, of these foundational truths concerning Christ's saving mission.

We are hoping to present our findings in a simple to understand way, using the clearest passages to support our findings, and we are also aiming to be concise in our presentation.

All Bible texts are taken from the King James Version, and the compilers have supplied all emphasis throughout this document.

May the same Holy Spirit who inspired Paul to write his epistle almost 2, 000 years ago, guide the reader today to rightly divide the truth of this epistle. This is our earnest hope and prayer.

COMPILED BY RICK HENWOOD.

2.) THE TRUE CHRIST AND HIS MISSION: -

Paul wrote with urgency to the Galatians. His purpose in writing was so important that he was impelled to write this entire epistle “with mine own hand” – Galatians 6:11, instead of his usual method of dictating his epistle to his faithful scribe, and then signing the closing salutation himself (2 Thessalonians 3:17). Paul had laboured twice among the Galatians on two of his missionary journeys (Acts 16:6 & 18:23); and the purpose of his second visit was “in order,” to strengthen “all the disciples” – Acts 18:23. He wanted to securely establish them in the foundational truths of the gospel of Christ, so that they would “continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of the gospel” – Colossians 1:23.

Yet after all this ministerial labour that Paul had expended upon them, he found that they had been “removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel” – Galatians 1:6. But this other “gospel” (so called) which the Galatians were being led astray with, “is **not** another; but there be some that trouble you, and would **pervert the gospel of Christ**” – Galatians 1:7. It was contrary to what Paul had taught them. He warns **twice** in this opening chapter, of how serious a matter this is, for anyone to proclaim another so called “gospel” other than what Paul had taught the Galatians; he was to “be accursed” – Galatians 1:8 & 9.

Why is this curse attached to any other message claiming to bring salvation? Because it would contradict the very gospel message which Paul had personally received “by the revelation of Jesus Christ” – Galatians 1:12. Christ **personally taught** Paul the gospel that he proclaimed to the Gentiles. This is why Paul could preach and write with such boldness and surety concerning his message. He knew that he had received it by direct revelation from the Son of God. So any other message claiming to lead men and women into salvation was a direct denial of the gospel and teachings of Christ.

This brings us to consider a simple foundational theme, which in reality is the foundation of the **entire** message of the Christian Bible. What was Christ’s **purpose** for his being “made flesh” when he “dwelt among us” – John 1:14, as revealed in the Scriptures? This would have been the foundational truth that Paul had taught the Galatians concerning Christ and his manifestation into this world as a man. Once we understand this subject clearly, we will understand correctly Paul’s gospel as revealed in his epistle to the Galatians.

The apostle John teaches us a solemn truth concerning Christ’s manifestation into this world. “**For this purpose the Son of God was manifested**, that he might **destroy the works of the devil**” – 1 John 3:8. In the first thought of this verse John states that “**He that committeth sin is of the devil**; for the devil **sinneth from the**

beginning.” Jesus himself stated concerning the Devil’s beginning to commit sin, that “he was **a murderer** from the beginning”; and that “when **he speaketh a lie**, he speaketh of his own: **for he is a liar, and the father of it**” – John 8:44. According to Jesus’ words, the Devil was the **first sinner** in the universe – he was the first being to **transgress** God’s Moral Law of Ten Commandments, because he violated the 6th and 9th Commandments (Exodus 20:13 & 16). This verse from 1 John 3:8 is so powerful and so clear. If you commit sin **you are of the Devil!** But more than that, John has taught us that the Son of God was **manifested** so that he might **destroy** the works or deeds of the Devil! And in the context of this verse, what are the works or deeds of the Devil? **SIN, because sin** was the work or deed that the Devil committed from the very beginning!

The apostle John stated a little earlier in this chapter of 1 John 3, that Christ “was manifested **to take away our sins**” – 1 John 3:5. John the Baptist identified Jesus as “the Lamb of God, which **taketh away the sin of the world**” – John 1:29. These passages are all clear and unambiguous, and harmonize perfectly with John’s statement in 1 John 3:8. Christ was manifested **to destroy and take away SIN**, which is the work or deed of the Devil and his followers.

The apostle John does not leave us in any doubt though as to what **sin** is, which Christ was manifested to destroy and to take away. He has plainly and simply defined for us **twice** within the chapter of 1 John 3, and which relates directly to the immediate context of 1 John 3:5 & 8, as to **why** Christ was manifested in this world. Let the inspired apostle John, the “disciple, whom Jesus loved” (John 20:2), the disciple who was so close to Christ, define for us unambiguously what **sin** is; “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: **for sin is the transgression of the law.**” – 1 John 3:4. Christ was manifested to destroy and to take away **sin – the transgression of the law!**

This harmonizes so clearly with the heavenly angel’s message to Joseph, as to the reason why Mary’s first-born son was to be called JESUS, “for he shall **save his people from their sins**” – Matthew 1:21.

Abraham had **the gospel** preached to him by God himself, in the promise “In thee shall all nations be blessed” – Galatians 3:8. The reason why this promise concerning Abraham’s seed **is** the gospel, is because it is a promise of Christ who is Abraham’s seed – “Now **to Abraham and his seed** were the promises made. ... And **to thy seed, which is Christ**” – Galatians 3:16. The apostle Peter repeated this gospel promise concerning Christ, “saying unto Abraham, **And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed**” – Acts 3:25. What is the blessing Peter proclaims God bestows upon people through sending his Son Jesus Christ? God “sent him **to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities**” – Acts 3:26.

The apostle Peter testifies concerning Christ bearing “our sins in his own body on the tree, **that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness**” – 1 Peter 2:24.

As Paul wrote the epistle to the Galatians, we will now consider a number of plain and unambiguous passages from his pen, that teach this same fundamental truth which we have just examined from the previous New Testament passages, concerning Christ’s saving purpose in being manifested to this world. And once we understand that Paul did indeed teach this same truth, his teachings in his epistle to the Galatians need to be read in harmony with this underlining theme concerning Christ’s saving purpose.

Paul in his opening salutation to the Galatians states the reason **why** Christ “gave himself for our sins”, so “that he might deliver us **from this present evil world**” – Galatians 1:4. This “present evil world” consists of “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” – 1 John 2:16. Christ gave himself for our sins, to deliver us **from** all these lusts and sins of the flesh. Paul had faith that “the Lord shall **deliver me from every evil work**” – 2 Timothy 4:18.

Paul exhorted Titus to look “for that blessed hope” of Christ’s second coming – Titus 2:13. He then goes and states concerning Christ our Saviour that he, “gave himself for us, **that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works**” – Titus 2:14. Christ gave himself for us to redeem us **from all** *# iniquity or lawlessness.

Paul wrote that God sent “his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh**”, for the purpose “that **the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**” - Romans 8:3 & 4. (In 1 John 3:8 we know that Christ “**was manifested**, that he might **destroy the works of the devil**.” Paul stated that God sent his Son into our human flesh – “for sin”, so that he might condemn “sin in the flesh”. Christ was manifested to **destroy** the works of the Devil – to **destroy** sin.)

Paul taught that Christ “**appeared to put away sin** by the sacrifice of himself” – Hebrews 9:26. The fate of those who continue to commit **wilful sin** after they have “received the knowledge of the truth”, is stated to be

*# The Greek word that is translated in the KJV as “iniquity” in Titus 2:14 is the word ἀνομία - anomia – Strong’s Concordance; Greek No. 458. It is defined as “lawlessness” - “A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature”, by Walter Bauer’s , page 71. This same Greek word is used by John in 1 John 3:4 and is translated as “transgression of the law” in the KJV.

that there is to be “no more sacrifice for sins, but **a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation**, which shall devour the adversaries” – Hebrews 10:26 & 27. Those people who continue in this **wilful** course of transgression, have in actual fact “trodden under foot the Son of God, and **hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing**” – Hebrews 10:29. In fact in the last chapter of the book of Hebrews he wrote further concerning “**the blood** of the everlasting covenant”, that it is able to “**make you perfect in every good work** to do his will” – Hebrews 13:20 & 21. The blood of Christ was shed to stop people from committing sin.

Paul gospel’s message of justification by faith in Christ, was so “that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, **that henceforth we should not serve sin**” - Romans 6:6. Once we have been “made free **from** sin”, we become “the servants of righteousness” – Romans 6:18. And “**being made free from sin**, and become servants to God, **ye have your fruit unto holiness**, and **the end** everlasting life” – Romans 6:22.

All these New Testament passages are teaching the same truth concerning Christ’s being manifested as “the Saviour of the world” – 1 John 4:14. He came to **destroy** and to **take away sin – the transgression of the law**. He was manifested to save us **from** continuing to commit the works of the Devil. He came to save us **from** our sins, and **not** in our sins!

3. WHAT WAS THE CRISIS FACING THE GALATIAN BRETHREN, THAT IMPELLED PAUL TO WRITE THIS EPISTLE?

Galatians 1:6 & 7: - "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

False brethren, who were attempting to pervert the gospel, were turning the Galatians away from the gospel of Christ. There is no doubt in the mind of anyone who carefully reads this epistle, that the Galatians were being lead astray to submit to the rite of circumcision by certain Jewish "false brethren" (Galatians 2:4). Why would these Gentile converts to Christianity be submitting to this Jewish rite? Because these false teachers had led the Galatians to believe that unless they were circumcised, they could not be saved. The following verse from the book of Acts establishes this as the issue these Gentile Christians were being confronted with, "And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, [and said], Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." – Acts 15:1.

The Galatians were therefore looking to circumcision as the **means** of justification. But as there is none other name under heaven, except that of Jesus Christ for salvation (Acts 4:10 - 12), it follows that to depend on anything else than Christ for justification, is in reality a rejection of Christ. This is what impelled Paul to write this memorable epistle to the Galatian churches. And as the Galatians were being lead to trust in circumcision for justification from sin, what else could be Paul's burden in this epistle to correct their error, but the presentation of justification by faith in Christ? We can see that this was his burden in Galatians 2:16 - 21; 3:6 - 8, 10 - 14, 22 - 24, 26 & 27; 4:4 - 7; 5:5 & 6; 6:14 & 15 etc.

The person who rejects Christ, by accepting some other mode of justification, cannot possibly keep God's Moral Law of Ten Commandments, because Jesus stated, "without me ye can do nothing" – John 15:5.

Even though the Galatians had once accepted Christ and known the true God, they were now insensibly turning away from God, and going back to the heathen practices and the sins of the flesh, which would come so naturally to them. "Howbeit then, when **ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods**. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye **again** to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire **again** to be in bondage?" - Galatians 4:8 & 9.

This text shows that which made the case so urgent was the fact that the Galatians were leaving the truth of the gospel of Christ, and going back into idolatry. This was not because the Jewish false brethren were

teaching them to break God's Commandments; but because they were putting their trust in something other than Christ, namely circumcision as though circumcision would cover all sin, both past and future, and in the flesh; and the person who does that cannot keep from transgressing God's law, no matter how hard he tries.

Romans 8:6 - 8: - "For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace. Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: **for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Galatians 5:17: - "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

This had been the consistent failing of the Jewish people throughout the centuries as outlined by Paul in his epistle to the Romans. They had attempted to meet the requirements of "the law of righteousness" by their own efforts to keep that law, and yet they had no faith in Christ. They were bound to fail in all their efforts, because "whatsoever [is] not of faith is sin" – Romans 14:23; and without faith they could not "establish the law" – Romans 3:31. That is why Stephen accused the unbelieving Jews of having "received the law by the disposition of angels, and have **not** kept [it]." - Acts 7:53.

Romans 9:31 - 33: - "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because [they sought it] not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

4.) CIRCUMCISION – WHAT IT SIGNIFIED: -

Paul emphatically warns the Galatians against being circumcised in Galatians 2:3; 5:2 & 3, 6, 11; 6:12 & 13, 15, not because circumcision was such a heinous thing in Paul's eyes, because he himself had Timothy circumcised to reduce the prejudice from the Jews (see Acts 16:1 - 3); but because they were being led to trust in this fleshly rite for salvation, and were thus being separated from Christ.

This brings us to briefly consider why God gave Abraham (and his descendants) the rite of circumcision. It was given to Abraham as a **sign** of the righteousness that he possessed by faith in God's promise. "And he received the **sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which [he had yet] being uncircumcised**: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." – Romans 4:11.

The fitness of this rite as a **sign of righteousness** will readily appear when we understand the physical evils against which circumcision is a preventive. The cutting off of the cause of physical impurity signified the putting off of the impurity of the heart, which was accomplished by faith in Christ.

Deuteronomy 10:16: - "**Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart**, and be no more stiffnecked."

Deuteronomy 30:6: - "**And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart**, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

Jeremiah 4:4: - "**Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart**, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench [it], because of the evil of your doings."

Romans 2:28 & 29: - "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither [is that] circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

But he [is] a Jew, which is one inwardly; **and circumcision [is that] of the heart**, in the spirit, [and] not in the letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God."

See also: - Leviticus 26:41; Jeremiah 9:26 & Acts 7:51.

But if a Jew had been circumcised in the flesh, and did not possess within himself the righteousness, of which circumcision was the **outward sign**, they were transgressors of God's law, and blaspheming his name among the Gentiles. In fact, the Jewish false brethren who were troubling the Galatians had fallen into this trap.

Romans 2:23 - 25: - "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, **through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?** For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, **if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.**"

Galatians 6:13: - "**For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law;** but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh."

The mere act of circumcision never made the Jews God's peculiar people. They were only such, when they had that of which circumcision was the sign, namely righteousness. When they did not possess that, they were just the same as though they had never been circumcised, and were cut off as readily as the heathen were.

5.) JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH – A BRIEF OVERVIEW FROM ROMANS: -

Paul shows in Chapter 1 that the heathen world is in a depraved, sinful condition by rejecting the worship of the Creator God. In Chapter 2 he shows that the Jews for all their knowledge of God's will and of his law, and of their boasting of circumcision, are in no better condition than the Gentiles, because they too have transgressed God's law. Human nature is the same in all races. All have sinned, none are good, we are all guilty before God (Romans 3:9 - 12 & 19). Because **all** of us are in this condition of **condemnation** before God, no person can be justified by the works of the law (Romans 3:20). A holy, just and good law (Romans 7:12) cannot pardon those who transgress its claims.

The **only** way of escape from this condemnation is by faith in the blood of Christ. All who believe on him are justified freely by the grace of God, and his righteousness is imputed to them, although they have violated God's law (Romans 3:21 - 25). Paul sums up justification in the following verse, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." - Romans 3:28.

In Chapter 8 Paul concludes that there is "now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." – Romans 8:1. He has already shown, that before he experiences justification the sinner is under the condemnation of the law, but when he comes to God through faith in Christ, and is "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" – Romans 3:24, he is "not under the law, but under grace" – Romans 6:14. He is no longer under the **condemnation** of the law.

In another vital aspect of his message of justification by faith in his epistle to the Romans, Paul describes the transformation that takes place **within** the repentant sinner who experiences justification. He clearly teaches in connection with his statement in Romans 3:28, that faith will not "make void the law", but will "establish the law" – Romans 3:31. He also teaches in connection with Romans 8:1, that the believer who is in Christ, and who is no longer under condemnation before God, will have "the righteousness of the law", "fulfilled" in their life, as they walk after the Spirit – Romans 8:4.

Romans 6 outlines clearly what the future conduct of a justified believer will be like. Paul makes it plain that being under grace gives the believer no license to "continue in sin", but rather they "that are dead to sin" are **not** to "live any longer therein" – Romans 6:1 & 2.

Paul links Christian baptism to the experience of justification, an experience in which the believer crucifies the body of sin, so that they will no longer serve sin. Without this death to sin, no justification has truly taken place within the sinner.

Romans 6:3 - 7: - “Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized** into Jesus Christ were **baptized** into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by **baptism** into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also should walk in newness of life**. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also [in the likeness] of [his] resurrection: Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin**. For he that is dead is ***#** freed from sin.”

Before a person is justified they were the servants of sin, and could not do righteousness. At the point of justification, they were set free from serving sin, and became the servants of righteousness; with the fruit of holiness being manifested in their lives, and the end will be everlasting life.

Romans 6:17 - 22: - “But God be thanked, that **ye were the servants of sin**, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. **Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness**. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: **for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness**. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from **righteousness**. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things [is] death. But **now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life**.”

The following passage sums up the fruits to be maintained in the life of a justified believer.

Titus 3:7 & 8: - “That being **justified by his grace**, we should be made heirs according to **the hope of eternal life**. [This is] a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that **they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works**. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

*# For the word “freed” in Romans 6:7 the margin in the KJV that is based upon the Greek, has the word “justified”. Thus this verse actually reads, “For he that is dead is justified from sin.” The believer who has died to sin is justified from sin.

6.) “THE CURSE OF THE LAW” AND “THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM” – GALATIANS 3:9 - 14: -

Before we attempt to define the “curse of the law”, we need to understand the following Biblical teaching: -

- Those who transgress God’s Commandments are cursed;
- While those who obey God’s Commandments are blessed.

Deuteronomy 11:26 - 28: - “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; **A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God**, which I command you this day: And **a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God**, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.”

Psalm 112:1: - “Praise ye the LORD. **Blessed** [is] the man [that] feareth the LORD, **[that] delighteth greatly in his commandments.**”

Psalm 119:1: - “**Blessed** [are] the undefiled in the way, **who walk in the law of the LORD.**”

Psalm 119:21: - “Thou hast rebuked **the proud [that are] cursed, which do err from thy commandments.**”

James 1:25: - “But whoso looketh into **the perfect law of liberty**, and continueth [therein], he being not a forgetful hearer, but **a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.**”

NOTE: - This “perfect law of liberty” is defined in the next chapter as being the Ten Commandment Law – James 2:8 - 12.

Revelation 22:14: - “**Blessed [are] they that do his commandments**, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

Therefore obedience to God’s Moral Law of Ten Commandments **cannot** be the “curse of the law” which Paul is discussing in Galatians 3:10 & 13. Based upon the above Scripture passages, the “curse of the law” must be transgressing God’s Law, which the apostle John defines as being sin, “for sin **is** the transgression of the law.” – 1 John 3:4. And a careful reading of Galatians 3:10 reveals that the curse consists in **not** continuing to do “all things which are written in the book of the law.” *#

*# Paul is quoting directly in Galatians 3:10 from Deuteronomy 27:26, “Cursed [be] he that confirmeth not [all] the words of this law to do them.” He has taken this quotation from the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures that are known as the Septuagint. The whole context of Deuteronomy 27:1 4 -26 is dealing with the transgressing of the Moral Law.

👉 The “curse of the law” equals not doing all things that the written law requires. It is transgressing the law which we have found from the apostle John is defined as sin. The fact that the “curse of the law” still exists when Paul wrote this epistle many years after the death of Christ, is proof that the Moral Law is still in existence, because it is the not obeying all things that this law requires which brings the transgressor under its curse. And it also proves that the written law is still binding, because the curse applies for not doing all that the written law requires.

Those false brethren who were trusting in circumcision for justification (which in reality represents trusting in the flesh and their own attempts at keeping the law for justification), according to Galatians 3:10 are still under the “curse of the law”. They were **not** keeping the law - Galatians 6:13. Paul describes them as being those who are “of the works of the law” – Galatians 3:10.

In Galatians 3:11 Paul repeats the simple truth which we outlined in our “Justification Overview”, that “no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, [it is] evident: for, **The just shall live by faith.**” In making this last statement in this verse, the apostle is **not** originating this gospel teaching. He is quoting directly from the book of the prophet Habakkuk (Habakkuk 2:4). The message of justification by faith has **always** been the only way of justification since the fall of mankind. In Galatians 3:12 Paul states what the law requires, namely perfect obedience – “The man that doeth them shall live in them.” (This is a quotation taken from the writings of Moses from Leviticus 18:5.) This is the equivalent truth that Paul stated to the Romans that, “the doers of the law shall be justified” – Romans 2:13. The sad fact that there have been no doers of the law does not destroy the truth that the doers of the law shall be justified. Perfect obedience to the Moral Law is all that God can possibly require of any person. Such service would necessarily give eternal life. But because we have all sinned against God’s Moral Law, justification has to be by faith in Christ.

Galatians 3:13 & 14: - “Christ hath redeemed **us** from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. ”

Three important points are presented in these verses: -

1. Christ has redeemed **us** from the “curse of the law”. The word “**us**” must include the Gentiles so that they can receive the blessing of Abraham;
2. The curse of the law, unless Christ removes it, stands between the blessing of Abraham and “**us**”.
3. Therefore this Law holds the Gentiles under its curse, as well as the Jews. This helps establish the truth that this Law is binding upon **all** mankind, irrespective of race.

The redemption of Christ reaches those **only** who are under “the curse of the law”; the law curses **only** those who transgress it; and those who can transgress it, are those who are obligated to keep it. Therefore **all** mankind is under the obligation to keep God’s Moral Law of Ten Commandments. If we claim that we have never been under “the curse of the law” because we are a Gentile, then Christ’s redemptive work **cannot** benefit us!

This truth is further reinforced by Paul in the next chapter of Galatians, where he states God sent his Son Jesus to the world, “to **redeem** them that were **under** the law” – Galatians 4:5. Clearly to be “under the curse of the law”, **is the same thing** as being “under the law”; and Christ **only** redeems this group of people. Whom did Christ come to redeem? “Christ Jesus came into the world **to save sinners**” – 1 Timothy 1:15. Jesus “gave himself a ransom for **all**” – 1 Timothy 2:6. **Christ came to redeem all sinners – therefore all sinners are “under the curse of the law”**. This is added proof that the transgression of the Moral law is “the curse of the law, and that the Moral Law is indeed binding upon **all** mankind!

What did Christ redeem us from? The “curse of the law”. Paul taught Titus that our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us, “that he might **redeem** us from **all *# iniquity**” or lawlessness – Titus 2:14. “Lawlessness” therefore **is** “the curse of the law”. This is reinforced further by the next phrase in Galatians 3:13, where Christ was “**made** a curse for us”. Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning Christ, that God “**made** him [to be] sin for us” – 2 Corinthians 5:21. The “curse of the law” which Christ was made for us, **is** sin.

When did Christ become a curse for us? When he was hung upon the tree – Galatians 3:13. Paul is quoting from Deuteronomy where Moses states concerning a person being put to death upon a tree for a capital crime that, “he that is hanged [is] **accursed of God**” - Deuteronomy 21:23. The only time that Jesus was hung upon a tree was when he was crucified and bore **our sins** in his own body. “Jesus, whom ye slew and **hanged on a tree**” – Acts 5:30. “Who his own self **bare our sins in his own body on the tree**” – 1 Peter 2:24. All these simple truths help to reinforce the fact that SIN or LAWLESSNESS **is** the curse of the law that Christ redeemed us from, when he died upon the tree!

*# The Greek word that is translated in the KJV as “iniquity” in Titus 2:14 is the word ἀνομία - anomia – Strong’s Concordance; Greek No. 458. It is defined as “lawlessness” - “A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature”, by Walter Bauer’s , page 71. This same Greek word is used by John in 1 John 3:4 and is translated as “transgression of the law” in the KJV. Our Saviour Jesus gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity – or lawlessness, which is the “curse of the law”. This is the same truth concerning Christ our Saviour as the heavenly angel told Joseph that, “he shall save his people **from** their sins” – Matthew 1:21.

Why did Christ become a curse for us upon the tree? “That the **blessing of Abraham** might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ” – Galatians 3:14.

What is the blessing of Abraham, that “they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” – Galatians 3:9? “God would justify the heathen through faith” – Galatians 3:8. The blessing of justification by faith in Christ is to be shared with the Gentiles as well as with the Jews through Christ. “Seeing [it is] one God, which shall **justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.**” – Romans 3:30.

Paul quoting from David’s writings in Psalms describes the blessing justification by faith brings to the repentant sinner, “Even as David also describeth the **blessedness** of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, [Saying], **Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.**” – Romans 4:6 - 8. (This quotation is taken from Psalm 32:1 & 2.)

**7.) “THE SEED”, THE PROMISED INHERITANCE AND “THE
ADDED LAW” – GALATIANS 3:16 - 19: -**

Galatians 3:16: - “**Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.** He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, **And to thy seed, which is Christ.**”

What is the inheritance God promised to Abraham and Christ who is his seed? Paul tells us that God promised, “that he should be the **heir of the world**”, was based upon “the righteousness of faith” – Romans 4:13. In other words, that Abraham and Christ should inherit the earth made new. This promise was first made to Abraham after God called him from his family in Ur of the Chaldee’s (Genesis 12:7). But the formal ratification of the covenant or promise God made to Abraham and his seed occurred in Genesis 15:7 - 21, which took place when Abraham “believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” – Genesis 15:6. Because the promised inheritance is not through the law (Romans 4:13), Paul asks a vital question concerning the function of the law in Galatians 3:19.

“Wherefore then [serveth] the law? It was added because of transgressions”. That this law was “added” 430 years **after** God’s covenant to Abraham concerning the promised inheritance is stated plainly by Paul, “the law, which was four hundred and thirty years **after, cannot disannul**, that it should make the promise of none effect” - Galatians 3:17. Israel’s exodus from Egypt was 430 years **after** God’s formal ratification of the promised inheritance to Abraham (See Exodus 12:40 & 41). And God’s public speaking of his Moral Law of Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai occurred a few months after the exodus (See Exodus 19:1).

This law “was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; [and it was] ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” – Galatians 3:19. A number of vital points need to be made concerning Paul’s answer: -

1. The Greek word which is translated in the KJV as “**added**” is the word προστίθημι - prostithemi – See Strong’s Concordance; Greek No. 4369. This same word is used in the book of Hebrews referring to God’s **speaking** the Moral Law of Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. In the following verse we have highlighted how it has been translated in the KJV: - “And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which [voice] they that heard entreated that the word should not **be spoken** to them **any more**” – Hebrews 12:19. When God **spoke** the Ten Commandments, the people of Israel did not want them **to be spoken** any more to them. After God had **spoken** all of the commandments, “**he added no more**” – Deuteronomy 5:22. It is the equivalent of saying that God “**spoke no more**”. In Galatians 3:19, “**added**” simply means “**spoken**”. “The law **was spoken** because of transgressions.”

2. The statement that “the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ” – Galatians 3:17, shows that the covenant to Abraham confirmed the forgiveness of sins through Christ (See Romans 4:5 - 8 where Paul describes the blessing which Abraham received through the righteousness of faith). But the forgiveness of sins necessarily implies knowledge of sin. And that knowledge Paul affirms comes through the law, “for by the law **[is] the knowledge of sin**” – Romans 3:20; “**I had not known sin, but by the law**: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” – Romans 7:7. The public speaking of the Moral Law by God himself in such a grand and majestic manner was necessary in order that the people might partake of the blessing of forgiveness and of the promised inheritance with Abraham.
3. This truth is repeated by Paul in his letter to the Romans, “**Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound**. But where sin abounded, **grace did much more abound**” – Romans 5:20. The Moral Law existed from the time of Adam, as is established by the following facts: -
- a.) Paul taught that sin causes death - “**death by sin**” – Romans 5:12.
 - b.) “Sin is not imputed when there is no law” – Romans 5:13.
 - c.) “Death reigned from Adam to Moses” – Romans 5:14.
 - d.) Therefore the law had to exist in the days of Adam for there to be any sin and death.

The existence of the Moral Law **before** God spoke it at Mount Sinai, is further established by the fact that “**Abraham** obeyed my voice, and **kept** my charge, **my commandments, my statutes, and my laws**” – Genesis 26:5. And God himself tested the children of Israel **before** Mount Sinai concerning the manna and the 7th day Sabbath commandment (See Exodus 16:23 - 30).

The entering in of the law took place in the days of Moses, so that “**the offence might abound**”, “that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful” – Romans 7:13.

Why did the Moral Law **come in** or was **spoken** at Sinai? “Because of transgressions” – “that the offence might abound”; in order to make sin seem greater than ever before, so that men might be driven to the super-abounding grace of God, as manifested through Christ. And thus the law was the “schoolmaster” to bring sinners to Christ so that they could be justified by faith – Galatians 3:24, even from the time when God spoke his Moral Law at Mount Sinai. We must remember that the law is **not** “against the promises of God” – Galatians 3:21. It works in harmony with the promise, and this emphatically attests to the continuing perpetuity of the Moral Law.

Thus also showing that there is no need for God's saving grace, if there is no law. **"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"** – Romans 5:20.

☞ **Therefore the abounding grace of Christ was freely available to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai when God spoke his Moral Law to them. This establishes the little known truth that God's abounding grace and his Moral Law have always worked together to bring lost sinners to justification and redemption through Christ.**

"Wherefore then [serveth] the law? It was **spoken** because of transgressions, **till the seed should come to whom the promise was made**" – Galatians 3:19. We have already seen that Christ is the seed of Abraham according to Galatians 3:16. In reality the last phrase means – "till Christ should come to whom the promise was made". Throughout the Scriptures we have many references to the coming of the Lord, some of which refer to Christ's 1st coming, and some to his 2nd coming. The only way we can distinguish between them is by the events mentioned in connection with the references. And so we must decide here in this verse.

The apostle is speaking of the promised inheritance that was made to Abraham and **to his seed** – Christ – Galatians 3:16 - 18. But no part of the promise made to Christ was fulfilled at his 1st coming when he was "despised and rejected of men" – Isaiah 53:3. Moreover the promise "to Abraham and his seed" – Galatians 3:16, is a **joint** promise. But no part of the promise was fulfilled to Abraham at Christ's 1st advent. Reading Galatians 3:19 carefully, we gather that at the coming referred to, the seed will inherit the promise.

Concerning the promised inheritance we have already found from Romans 4:13, that it refers to Abraham's inheriting the earth made new. The following prophecy concerning Christ's inheritance and possession of the earth, has a direct bearing on Galatians 3:19.

Psalms 2:8 & 9: - **"Ask of me, and I shall give [thee] the heathen [for] thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth [for] thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."**

That this prophecy of Christ receiving his promised inheritance was **not** fulfilled at his 1st advent, but will be fulfilled at his 2nd coming is further established by the following passages: -

Revelation 11:15 - 17: - **"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become [the kingdoms] of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and**

worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.”

Matthew 25:31 - 34: - **“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:** And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth [his] sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, **Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”**

The public speaking of the Moral Law “because of transgressions”, so “that the offence might abound”, as a schoolmaster to point sinners to the abounding grace of Christ, is to continue in this function until all sinners who will avail themselves of the gospel, have been brought to repentance and faith in Christ. But finally, when all who have desired to accept the gracious offering of mercy and pardon have done so, then when Christ comes the 2nd time to claim his promised inheritance, the Moral Law of Ten Commandments will no longer function as a schoolmaster to point sinners to Christ.

8.) “SHUT UP” UNDER THE SCHOOLMASTER BEFORE FAITH IN CHRIST HAS COME – GALATIANS 3:22 - 25: -

It is popularly believed by many Christians that this passage is teaching two different means of salvation, throughout the history of this world. Namely, that before Christ's 1st Advent and death upon the cross, salvation was by the “schoolmaster of the law”; but after Christ's 1st Advent and death salvation is by faith in Christ. In other words, faith in Christ only came in with the 1st Advent of Abraham's seed – Christ (Galatians 3:16), while the godly patriarchs and Hebrew people were under the law and without faith in Christ. This popular belief teaches that there are two distinct plans of salvation, one before and one after Christ's 1st Advent.

Although this belief is widely held among professed Christians, it is unbiblical for the following Scriptural reason: -

Salvation by faith in Christ has **always** been the **only** way of salvation, and was freely available to the godly patriarchs and the Hebrew people, throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. The following passages establish this truth abundantly.

Hebrews 11:4: - **“By faith Abel** offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which **he obtained witness that he was righteous**, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”

Hebrews 11:7: - **“By faith Noah**, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, **and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.**”

Genesis 15:5 & 6: - “And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. **And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.**”

NOTE: - This passage applies to the patriarch Abraham.

Psalms 32:1 & 2: - “Blessed [is he whose] transgression [is] forgiven, [whose] sin [is] covered. Blessed [is] the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit [there is] no guile.”

Romans 4:6 - 8: - “**Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works**, [Saying], Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”

NOTE: - By comparing Psalm 32:1 & 2 with Romans 4:6 - 8, David clearly understood the truth that God imputes righteousness by faith.

Habakkuk 2:4: - “Behold, his soul [which] is lifted up is not upright in him: but **the just shall live by his faith.**”

Romans 1:17: - “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: **as it is written, The just shall live by faith.**”

NOTE: - By comparing Habakkuk 2:4 with Romans 1:17, it is obvious that Paul did **not** originate the teaching – “The just shall live by faith”; he quoted this from the teachings of the prophet Habakkuk.

2 Timothy 3:15: - “And that from a child thou hast known **the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**”

NOTE: - The Scriptures that Timothy knew from a child that Paul stated contained the message of salvation through faith in Christ, were the Old Testament writings. (We must remember that Timothy’s mother was Jewish – Acts 16:1.)

Paul states, “the scripture ***#**hath concluded **all under sin**, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” – Galatians 3:22. **All** have been “shut up” (which is the literal meaning of the Greek verb used in this verse - see the Footnote on this point) under sin, so that those who believe might receive the promise of justification by faith in Christ. **All** means **all**, both Jew and Gentile.

Paul has stated this same truth to the Church at Rome, “we have before proved **both Jews and Gentiles**, that they are **all under sin**” – Romans 3:9. The apostle states the same truth later on in the same epistle, “For God hath **shut them all up together in unbelief**, that he might have mercy upon all.” – Romans 11:32 marginal reading. **All** of us are in the same prison, whether we are Jew or Gentile – we are all under the **condemnation** of the law as transgressors (Romans 3:19 & 23). None of us can be delivered from this prison house of condemnation and slavery to sin, until we come to Christ to be justified by faith.

***#** The Greek word which is translated in the KJV as “hath concluded” is συγκαλείω - sugkleio – See Strong’s Concordance; Greek, No. 4788. It is defined as “close up together, hem in, enclose, confirm, imprison” – “A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other early Christian Literature”, by Walter Bauer, page 774. This same verb is translated in Galatians 3:23 as “shut up”.

Paul clearly portrays our condition **before** we experience justification by faith in Christ, when he states that, “But **before** faith came, we were kept under the law, **shut up** unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed” – Galatians 3:23. Putting Galatians 3:22 & 23 together, the expression being “under sin” is the same condition as being “under the law”. And this condition applies to **all** of us! We have **all** been “under sin” – under the **condemnation** of the law, “shut up” in prison before we individually exercise faith in Christ for justification.

The office of the Moral Law to sinful men is to so overwhelm them with a sense of their guilt, by giving them the knowledge of their sins (“for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin” – Romans 3:20), and thus drive them to Christ so that they might be justified by faith. As the Psalmist stated, “The law of the LORD [is] perfect, **converting the soul**” – Psalm 19:7. It is the same experience Paul personally went through in his conversion, “**I had not known sin, but by the law**: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” – Romans 7:7. This is exactly what Paul is teaching in Galatians 3:22 - 24. Without the “schoolmaster of the law” we cannot truly come to Christ, to experience justification by faith.

“But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” – Galatians 3:25. Paul in this verse is describing our relationship to the “schoolmaster of the law”, **after** we have experienced justification by faith. We are no longer under the **condemnation** of the law (Romans 8:1), for we will be having “the righteousness of the law” being “fulfilled in us” – Romans 8:4, through our faith in Christ establishing “the law” – Romans 3:31.

One final point concerning the expression “under the law” in the epistle to the Galatians needs to be made. Most Christians believe that this expression of Paul’s means to be “subject to the law”, in the sense of being obligated to keep it. We have already established from Paul’s own writings in Romans & Galatians, that “under the law” means “to be under the **condemnation** of the law” – “to be under sin” – Romans 3:9 & Galatians 3:22, “to be guilty before God” – Romans 3:19.

Concerning the redemptive work of Christ, we read that Christ came “**To redeem them that were under the law**, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” – Galatians 4:5. Christ redeems **only** those who “were under the law”, so that they could be adopted as sons of God. Our Bible tells us “that Christ Jesus came into the world **to save sinners**” – 1 Timothy 1:15; that he “gave himself a ransom **for all**” – 1 Timothy 2:6; that “Christ died **for the ungodly**” – Romans 5:6; that Jesus “should taste death for **every man**” – Hebrews 2:9; “that the Father sent the Son [to be] **the Saviour of the world**” – 1 John 4:14; that Christ came to call “**sinners** to repentance” – Mark 2:17.

Christ died for **all** mankind; therefore **all** of us were under the **condemnation** of the Law of God. This also is powerful proof that **all** mankind are to be amenable to the Moral Law of Ten Commandments.

If we insist on holding onto the tradition that “under the law” means, “to be subject to the law”, and that “only the Jews were required to be subject to the law”, we have **excluded** ourselves from the group whom Christ came to redeem. We are lost, without Christ and without hope!

9.) “THE WEAK AND BEGGARLY ELEMENTS” AND THE OBSERVING OF DAYS, MONTHS, TIMES AND YEARS: -

Paul refers to the time when we were all “in bondage under the elements of the world” – Galatians 4:3. And then further on in this fourth chapter he describes these elements as “the weak and beggarly elements”, which the Galatians desired “**again** to be in bondage” to – Galatians 4:9. What ever these “elements” were, it is clear from reading verse 9 that the Galatians had been in bondage to them previously before they knew the true God.

We can certainly state what these “elements” were not. They are referring **not** to obedience to God’s Moral Law of Ten Commandments, which the Psalmist describes in the following terms, “the law of the LORD [is] **perfect**” – Psalm 19:7; and which the apostle Paul describes as “holy, and just, and good” – Romans 7:12; and which the apostle James calls “the perfect law of **liberty**” – James 1:25. What has God’s perfect Moral Law got in common with the “elements of the world”? Nothing!

Paul warns the Colossians against being spoiled by “the ***#rudiments of the world**” – Colossians 2:8 & 20. In the context of Colossians 2:8 he warns them against being spoiled “through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men.” This helps us understand a little more concerning these “elements of the world”.

The apostle John helps us to further understand these “elements of the world”, describing them in these terms, “all that [is] in the world, **the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life**, is not of the Father, but is of the world” – 1 John 2:16. Paul refers to the condition of all of the followers of Christ **before** we had experienced conversion and justification, when we followed “the course of **this world**”, and “we all had our conversation in times past **in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind**” – Ephesians 2:2 & 3. And Peter refers to believers having “**escaped the pollutions of the world** through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” – 2 Peter 2:20. Clearly the “elements of the world” refer to the carnal lusts and sins of the flesh, which the knowledge of the gospel of Christ had freed the Galatians from serving.

*# The Greek word which is translated in Colossians 2:8 & 20 in the KJV as “rudiments” is the word στοιχείον - stoicheion – See Strong’s Concordance; Greek, No. 4747. It is translated as “elements” in Galatians 4:3 & 9.

With this understanding of the “weak and beggarly elements”, we are now prepared to consider the following passage.

Galatians 4:8 - 10: - “Howbeit then, when **ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods**. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye **again** to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire **again** to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.”

From a careful reading of verse 8 we find that the Galatians were Gentile converts to Christianity, who before they had come to the knowledge of the true God, had been idol worshippers. This is established by Paul’s use of the expression “no gods”, concerning the Galatians’ former way of life. The following Scriptures establish that this expression “no gods” is referring to idols, the works of man’s hands.

2 Kings 19:15 - 18: - “And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest [between] the cherubims, thou art the God, [even] thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, **and have cast their gods into the fire: for they [were] no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone**: therefore they have destroyed them.”

Acts 19:24 - 27: - “For a certain [man] named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made **silver shrines for Diana**, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, **this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands**: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of **the great goddess Diana** should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.”

Clearly the Galatians were idol worshippers before Paul preached the gospel of Christ to them. They would have been in the bondage of idolatry and to all the immorality and lusts of the flesh – “the elements of the world”, that were associated with idolatry. In Galatians 4:9 Paul uses the word “**again**” – twice, concerning the Galatians going back into the bondage of the “elements of the world”, that they had left behind when they turned to Christ.

Turning our attention to the observance of days, months, times and years in Galatians 4:10, in the context of this passage, we have just established from the Scriptures, that the Galatians were going back to their

idolatrous ways, from which they had been converted from. It would be natural therefore for the observance of these particular occasions to be associated with heathen idolatry. And this is exactly what we do find in the following Scriptures.

Deuteronomy 18:9 - 14: - "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, **thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.** There shall not be found among you [any one] that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, [or] that useth divination, [**or**] **an observer of times**, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things [are] an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. **For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times**, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so [to do]."

2 Kings 21:1 - 6: - "Manasseh [was] twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name [was] Hephzibah. **And he did [that which was] evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.** For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he made his son pass through the fire, **and observed times**, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke [him] to anger."

Isaiah 47:12 & 13: - "**Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries**, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. **Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators**, stand up, and save thee from [these things] that shall come upon thee."

That the heathen, idolatrous nations had particular sacred days or festivals in their worship of their idols is well established from the study of history. Two notable days that preceded Christianity by centuries was the observance of what we today call Easter, and Christmas Day. These ancient heathen observances were in the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era, "sanctified" by the fathers of the Roman Church, to become part of the festivals of the Christian Church. But the heathen nations had these stated times and days in their religious worship for centuries before Christ. It is to these "elements of the world", going back into the servitude of the lusts

of the flesh, that the Galatians were becoming enslaved with again, because they had been removed from the gospel of Christ.

10.) BONDAGE VERSUS FREEDOM: -

Most Christians reading the book of Galatians believe that Paul is teaching that obedience to the Moral Law of Ten Commandments, is a “yoke of bondage” (Galatians 5:1), which Jesus Christ has set the justified believer free from through faith in Christ. As we read the Scriptures, and particularly the book of Galatians carefully, we find that the truth is the very opposite of this commonly held belief. **SIN – THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW** (1 John 3:4) is the **bondage** that Christ sets the believer free from, through justification by faith. Galatians 5:1: - “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled **again** with the yoke of bondage.”

Christ had certainly freed the Galatians from some “yoke of bondage”, when they were converted to the gospel. Whatever “the yoke of bondage” was which Paul warned the Galatians against becoming entangled with, he clearly states that they were becoming entangled with it **again!** It was something that they had **previously been in bondage to!**

We pose a number of simple questions concerning what the Galatians had been in **bondage to before** they experienced justification by faith: -

- Had they been in servitude to Circumcision and the Ceremonial law of the Jews before they came to Christ? No. They were Gentile converts to Christianity.
- Had they been obeying the Moral Law of Ten Commandments before they came to Christ? No. They had been Gentile idol worshippers before their conversion (Galatians 4:8).
- Had they been in bondage to sin and the lusts of the flesh, before Paul preached the gospel to them? Yes. We shall now establish this truth that **SIN** is the **bondage**, from which justification by faith in Christ sets the believer free from continuing to serve.

Paul in his letter to the Romans states concerning a believer who experiences justification and Christian Baptism, that “the body of sin might be destroyed, **that henceforth we should not serve sin**” – Romans 6:6. He continues this theme throughout this chapter, stating concerning those who have been justified that “**being then made free from sin**, ye became the servants of righteousness” – Romans 6:18. Before the Roman Christians had been justified, they “were the **servants of sin**” – Romans 6:20. But after experiencing justification they were “**now being made free from sin**, and become servants to God” – Romans 6:22. Paul plainly states concerning himself, that Christ “**made me free** from the law of sin and death” – Romans 8:2. Plainly the repentant sinner who experiences justification by faith in Christ, **has been set free from serving the bondage of sin, so that they**

will be servants of righteousness. This is what Christ set the Galatians free from, when they accepted Paul's preaching of the gospel to them. And this is what they were departing from, becoming entangled **again** with the **bondage** of sin.

The wise man Solomon stated concerning the wicked, that "he shall be **holden with the cords of his sins**" – Proverbs 5:22. Peter stated concerning the sorcerer Simon that he was "in the **bond of iniquity**" – Acts 8:23. Jesus taught that "whosoever committeth sin is **the servant of sin**" – John 8:34. The prophet Jeremiah refers to "the **yoke of my transgressions**" – Lamentations 1:14. Peter states the truth that "of whom **a man is overcome**, of the same is he **brought in bondage**" – 2 Peter 2:19. And then in the next verse he refers to the fact that "through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" believers had "escaped the pollutions of the world", but unfortunately, some of them through the influence of false teachers were "**again entangled** therein," – 2 Peter 2:20; they were becoming **entangled again** with "the pollutions of the world". This is exactly the same situation that was facing the Galatians. They were backsliding into the sins of the world and lusts of the flesh, which they had escaped from through the knowledge of the gospel of Christ.

The Psalmist stated a simple truth concerning those who seek God's precepts that they "will walk at **liberty**" – Psalms 119:45. James calls God's "royal law according to the scripture" (James 2:8, and in context we know that he is referring to the Ten Commandment Law, because James quotes directly from the 6th and 7th Commandments in James 2:11), and calls it "the law of **liberty**" – James 2:12. In the previous chapter he calls it "the perfect law of **liberty**" – James 1:25, and pronounces a blessing upon the person who "**continueth [therein]**, he being not a forgetful hearer, but **a doer of the work**." How can obedience to "the perfect law of liberty" be bondage? It is a contradiction in terms! Clearly obedience to this "perfect law of liberty" is **not** the bondage that Paul is referring to in Galatians 5:1, or throughout any part of the book of Galatians. It is the **bondage** of continuing to serve **sin** that Christ sets the believer free from by justification by faith!

11.) “A DEBTOR TO DO THE WHOLE LAW”: -

For any person who was trusting in circumcision for salvation, Paul warned, “if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing” - Galatians 5:2.

Paul testified to the Galatians that “every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law” – Galatians 5:3. Every man that trusts in circumcision for salvation, has taken his trust away from Christ, and now trusts in this outward sign for justification and righteousness. The inevitable result will be falling a prey to sin and transgressing the law, making him a **debtor** to keep the law. Paul also stated in this verse, that he was testifying to them “**again**” concerning this truth. This indicates that he had **previously** testified to this truth earlier in his epistle. This reference clearly points us back to Paul’s statement concerning the “curse of the law” in Chapter 3. “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, **Cursed [is] every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them**” – Galatians 3:10.

Putting these two verses together we can see that those who “are of the works of the law” – Galatians 3:10, are the same group of people who are trusting to be circumcised for justification in Galatians 5:3.

Many Christians assume from reading Galatians 5:3 that “the law is a thing to be avoided, because Paul states that those who are circumcised have got to do the whole law; and he warns the Galatians not to be circumcised.” But if we read the verse a little more carefully, Paul is warning the Galatians against being a **debtor** to the law. Now to be a debtor means that you owe or have a debt to someone or something. So to be a **debtor to the law** means that you owe the law some debt. And in the context of Galatians 3:10 & 5:3, that debt is **the doing of all the law**. Reading Paul’s previous testimony on this point in Galatians 3:10, clearly the debt is incurred because this person is **not** doing all the things that the written law requires. He is under “the curse of the law” as a **transgressor**. He owes what the law requires, namely righteousness.

But we repeat again what we previously stated in Section 3, on Pages 9 & 10 of this Study Document that: -

“The person who rejects Christ, by accepting some other mode of justification, cannot possibly keep God’s Moral Law of Ten Commandments, because Jesus stated, “without me ye can do nothing” – John 15:5.”

“... they (i. e. the Galatians) were putting their trust in something other than Christ, namely circumcision and in the flesh, and the person who does that cannot keep from transgressing God’s law, no matter how hard he tries.”

Romans 8:6 - 8: - “For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace. Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: **for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Galatians 5:17: - “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

“This had been the consistent failing of the Jewish people throughout the centuries as outlined by Paul in his epistle to the Romans. They had attempted to meet the requirements of “the law of righteousness” by their own efforts to keep that law, and yet they had no faith in Christ. They were bound to fail in all their efforts, because “whatsoever [is] not of faith is sin” – Romans 14:23; and without faith they could not “establish the law” – Romans 3:31. That is why Stephen accused the unbelieving Jews of having “received the law by the disposition of angels, and have **not** kept [it].” - Acts 7:53.”

Romans 9:31 - 33: - “But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because [they sought it] not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

For any person to attempt to be justified by circumcision (which represents “the works of the law” and trusting in the flesh), and not through faith in Christ, they will incur the debt of “the curse of the law” as a continuing transgressor.

The fact that a person is in debt to the law shows that he **ought to do** all the things that the written law requires! If the law had been abolished by Christ’s death, a person could **not** incur a debt to an abolished law. This is again proof of the continuing binding claims of the Moral Law of Ten Commandments.