

Bird's Eye View of Galatians

The first of the four books of the heart of the divine revelation

- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians

Why does Galatians occur right after Corinthians?

- A look at the sequence of the books of the New Testament

The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

- The life and work of the Lord Jesus
- His introduction
- His birth
- His ministry
- Being the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies
- His calling of, and His relationship with, His disciples
- His interaction with different categories of people: His disciples, the crowds, the sick, the Jews, the Pharisees, kings, Gentiles, Romans
- His death
- His resurrection
- His commission to His disciples, to preach the gospel to all creation, to disciple the nations

The Gospels

- The earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus in the flesh
- All the seeds of the New Testament are sown in the gospels
- Through the words of Jesus spoken to His disciples with Him on the earth
- At the time when Jesus spoke His words, the Spirit was not yet
- The Spirit had not yet entered into the disciples
- Therefore, they were, for the most part, unable to understand or experience what Jesus was telling them

Acts

- The move of the Spirit through the disciples
- The discipling of nations, beginning in Jerusalem
- The establishing of churches
- The spread of the Lord's testimony
- The Lord's work through the apostles and the believers
- The flow of the Spirit, beginning with Jerusalem
- The flow of the Spirit, a new and fresh start, in Antioch
- The spread of the Lord's testimony in the Gentile areas
- The challenges confronted with the ever existing and pervasive influence of Judaism
- The mixture of the Judaism and Christianity
- The gospels and the book of Acts mark the end of the historical and narrative accounts in the New Testament

A potentially tremendous lack, and even a serious threat to the continuation of the Christian faith

- **If the New Testament were to end at this juncture!**

Romans

- The beginning of the epistles
- A time of reinforcement
- A time to step back and consider the meaning and purpose of our faith, our Christian and church life
- What exactly have we believed?
- In whom have we believed?
- From what have we believed?
- Who were we?
- What is our origin?
- What is our destiny?
- What is our life?
- Who is God?
- Who is Christ?
- Who is the Spirit?
- So many things that Jesus talked about in the gospels now start to become clear

Romans: The Gospel of God

Paul's Gospel

- Defined like no where else in the New Testament
- From beginning to end
- From condemnation of the world to the church life
- All the experiences of the growth in life, from redemption and justification to glorification, passing through sanctification and transformation, with the Body of Christ as the sphere

1 Corinthians

- The nuts and bolts of the church life
- The experience of the church life in a locality
- Very practical
- Dealing with problems and issues in the church life and in the daily life
- The unveiling of Christ and His cross as the solution to all the problems

2 Corinthians

- Having dealt with specific problems, the apostle Paul now proceeds to address a more subtle challenge:
- The relationship between the apostle and the church
- Who are the apostles?
- What do they have?
- What is their constitution?
- The new covenant ministry and its ministers
- The effect of the new covenant ministry

Background of Galatians

- Written by the apostle Paul in about A.D. 54
- During Paul's second ministry journey
- Perhaps Paul's earliest epistle
- Written when he was younger

**Apostle Paul's
First Missionary Journey
44 - 46 A.D.**

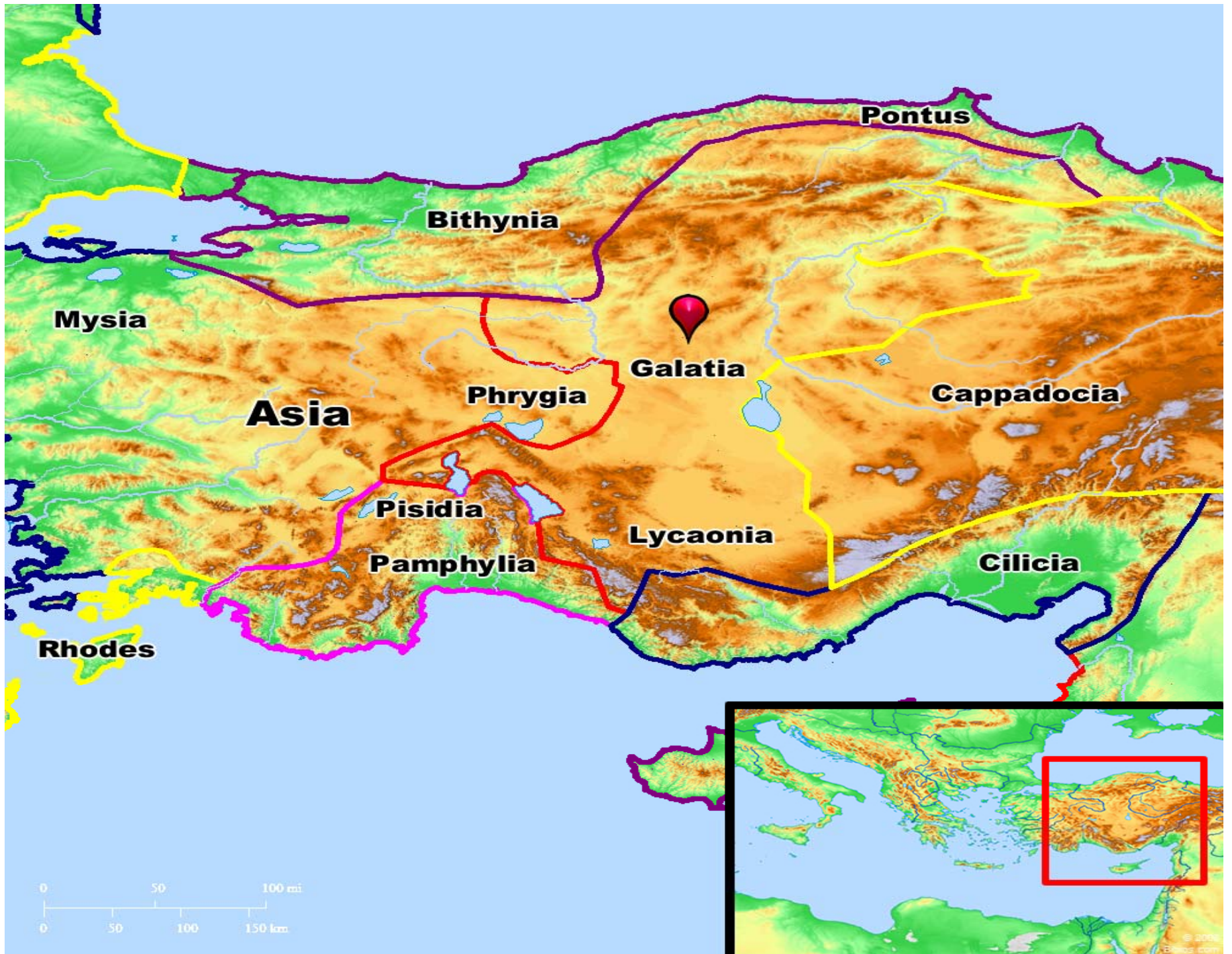


★ Location where Missionary Journey Begins
→ Apostle Paul's First Missionary Journey



**Apostle Paul's
Second Missionary Journey
49 - 52 A.D.**





Written not just to one church, but to several churches in the province of Galatia

- Indicating that this book is not just written to address the individual need of a local church, or problems of a local church, like the book of 1 Corinthians
- Rather, this book addresses the need of churches
- This book is the product or outflow of a minister of the new covenant (2 Corinthians)
- It also addresses a problem that may be the result of an unhealthy relationship between the believers and the apostle (2 Corinthians)

Underlying problems

- Different/another gospel
- The present evil age

The present evil age

- Who gave Himself for our sins that He might rescue us out of the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father. Galatians 1:4
- The religious age
- A part of the world satanic system
- The religious world
- The age that is present, right now
- It is evil
- This is not referring specifically to the sinful or immoral age, but to the religious age
- The religious course of the world
- Caught in this evil age

- This evil age is insidious
- It is not necessarily the sinful and immoral things
- It is rather the so-called good things that are promoted and taught
- Eventually, these things become an age or a system, according to which we try to live our lives

Producing a different gospel

- I marvel that you are so quickly removing from Him who has called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel. Galatians 1:6
- The present evil age produces another gospel

A gospel according to the Jewish religion

- According to man
- From man
- Taught by man
- Not according to revelation
- Beyond that which the believers received
- Brought in by false brothers
- The observance of the law
- The observance of the Jewish ceremonial laws:
 - Circumcision
 - The Sabbath
 - The dietary regulations

God-given, God-ordained

- Ordained by God in the Old Testament
- Boasted of by the Jews
- Separating God's chosen people (the Jews) from all the other nations in the world
- Designating the Jews as God's peculiar people, a people for His possession
- Even the announcing of the gospel in the New Testament was to the Jew first, then to the Gentile (Romans 1:16)
- Jesus Himself came to the Jews, according to His own words (Matthew 15:24)
- John says: « He came unto His own (the Jews), and His own did not receive Him » (John 1:11)

Almost impossible to let go

- The serious situation in Antioch in Acts 15
- The teaching from Jerusalem that unless one is circumcised according to the custom of Moses, one cannot be saved
- The strong influence of Judaism, exercised by James, the leading elder in Jerusalem
- Peter's testimony concerning his own experience of his contact and speaking with the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius
- Peter's weakness and struggle in coming to grips with God's revelation concerning the gospel coming to the Gentiles, apart from the law
- Instead of a testimony, Peter should have strongly taught the truth concerning the termination of the law and the sufficiency of Christ

The weakness of Peter

- This was Peter's chance to lay down the truth in no uncertain terms
- He was a Jew, and He had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcision (Galatians 2:7)
- He was a pillar in the church in Jerusalem
- He should have been the one to strongly teach
- Paul and Barnabas testified what God had done through them to the Gentiles

To consider

- Should Paul have taught strongly during the conference in Acts 15 what he teaches in his epistle to the Galatians?
- Was that his place?
- Was it the right setting?
- Why did he not do that?
- What about Barnabas?

The influence of James

- James has the final say
- The strong influence of Moses
- Christ plus
- Have Christ, but abstain from contaminations of idols and blood and things strangled and fornication
- A compromise
- With grave consequences which would affect the church in Antioch, the place which was first affected, and the place where the teaching would return, with the consequent divisive practice, as seen in Peter's and Barnabas' hypocrisy

Epitomized by Peter's hypocrisy in Antioch

- Being a Jew, Peter had no problem eating with the Gentiles
- However, when some from James came to Antioch, Peter shrank back from eating with the Gentiles
- He separated Himself from the Gentile members of the Body of Christ, because he feared those of the circumcision
- Peter's hypocrisy actually became a stand to divide the Body, and cause others, including Barnabas, to join in the hypocrisy

What is a different gospel?

- Something very close to the true gospel
- With no revelation
- In the church life, it can be a teaching or a way of life that seems good, that apparently does not adversely affect the truth of the gospel, or the Christian faith
- For example, I may live my life for my children and my family.
- I do everything to provide a good education for my children, and encourage them to take part in many extra-curricular activities
- Nothing wrong in all this
- We may then fit « our gospel » into the church life: choose which meetings we want to attend
- We may determine how much we want to give ourselves to the Lord: only so much, and no more
- We want to have the best of both « worlds »: the material or psychological world, and the religious world
- Then we hope that God will bless our family life, our career, and give us happiness and a peaceful life
- This is our law, and we live according to it

Another example

- New believers, or believers who are not that given to the Lord, are rarely under law
- But once we begin to love the Lord, and begin to serve a little in the church life, it is very easy to live by law.
- What does it mean to live by law?
- To do things without revelation
- Because brothers tell us to do so
- Without contacting the Lord
- No transactions with the Lord
- No transaction of faith
- Seeking to please men
- Such a living in the church life becomes dry and joyless
- No life, no freshness, routine and stale

A different gospel becoming a curse

- For as many as are of the works of law are under a curse; for it is written, « Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all the things written in the book of the law to do them. »
- Eventually, our church life, or our way of the church life, can become a curse, causing us to live in bondage to religious laws and ordonances.
- When shepherding people, perhaps one big challenge is how to encourage them to practice the church life in a practical way by bringing them to the Lord, time and time again.
- Are we satisfied to see people come to the meetings and increase our number, to become good law keepers, or to be those who live by faith, contacting the Lord and responding again and again to the Lord's speaking?

The « true » gospel

- Not from man
- Not taught by man
- But by revelation

- But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood (1:15-16)
- And I went up according to revelation, and I laid before them the gospel which I proclaim among the Gentiles... (2:2)

Are we justified by faith?

- And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of works of law, because out of the works of law no flesh will be justified (2:16)
- Yes, I believe. We would all say that we believe. That is the gospel that we heard the first time.
- Yet do I live according to the truth of this gospel? Is my life a life of believing?
- In the labor, do I believe? Am I justified by faith?
- When the requirements are rigorous (memorizing, preparing, visiting, shepherding, coordinating, raising up people, functioning), am I carrying out my works of law?
- If so, then it is my flesh, and not Christ

The hardest lesson to learn

- How to live the Christian life by faith
- Believing for the first time is easy. We have no problem with that.
- But as we grow in our Christian life, as we serve and become manifested, many times, I do things in my flesh, the works of law, seeking to be justified by God

The Son of God gave Himself up for me

- I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me (2:20)

• Why?

To rescue me out of the present evil age

- My « I » must be crucified
- My « I » which wants to do things without revelation must be crucified
- Everything in my life must be of faith
- The Son of God does not care how much I do for Him, but He loves me and gave Himself up for me
- It is not what I can do for Him, but whether I respond to Him and interact with Him
- This is a life of faith

- The different gospel brings us into a curse
- The « true » gospel brings us the Spirit as the blessing of the promise of faith in Christ

The Spirit is received out of the hearing of faith

- This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith? (3:2)
- Do I hear the speaking of the Spirit?
- Do I listen?
- When I listen to another brother, or when I listen to fellowship, do I open myself to hear the speaking of the Spirit?
- Meetings become routine because I do not hear the Spirit
- I can get caught in carrying out meetings faithfully, yet with no speaking from the Lord
- That is an indicator that I am being perfected by the flesh
- The Galatians even suffered so much persecution (3:4), yet without the hearing of faith, any price that I may have paid is in vain
- I cannot rely on past experiences of the Spirit.
- The question is: am I living in the Spirit by faith?

The hearing of faith produces blessing

The works of law produce a curse

- God spoke to Abraham to reveal to Him who He was:
- After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.” (Genesis 15:1)
- The revelation of who God was imparted faith into Abraham
- Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (3:6)
- So then they who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham (3:9)
- Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse on our behalf; because it is written, Cursed is everyone hanging on a tree;
- In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (3:13-14)

Our works; Christ's work; our response	Process	Result	Goal
Works of law	Under a curse	Becoming a curse	Separate us from Christ
The law	A guardian; a child conductor	To lead us to Christ	To be replaced by Christ
Hearing of faith	Believing; faith	Righteousness; Bountiful supply of Spirit; Abraham's seed; heirs accdg to promise	Sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus
Christ's redemption	Out of the curse of the law	That the blessing of Abraham might come in Christ Jesus	To receive the promise of the Spirit through faith
Our baptism	Into Christ	Put on Christ	All one in Christ

The function of the law

- The usefulness of the law
- Why the law?
- It was added because of transgressions
- Until the seed should come to whom the promise was made
- To guard us
- To shut us up unto the faith which is to be revealed (3:23)
- A child conductor unto Christ
- So we might be justified out of faith
- To be eliminated once faith comes (3:25)

The « law » in the church life

- Is there a law or laws in the church life?

Every exhortation or charge can become a law

- Yet there must be exhortation
- There must be charge
- There must be shepherding
- There must be encouragement to come to the meetings
- There must be encouragement to read the Bible
- There must be encouragement to pray
- There must be encouragement to preach the gospel
- There must be encouragement to serve
- All are necessary

The law in itself is not evil

- The law is holy, righteous and good
- The law is spiritual (Romans 7:12, 14)
- How do I receive it?
- Do I depend on myself, on my own efforts to please the Lord or please the brothers?
- Or do I open myself to the hearing of faith?
- Do I seek the Lord's voice in every exhortation?
- Do I seek transactions (faith) with the Lord?
- Can I say that I serve because the Lord told me so?
- Or is it because a certain brother or sister asked me to?
- The « law » must lead me to Christ, to contact Him, to be assured that I am serving Him, and not man
- Otherwise, my serving is in my flesh, of no value
- Paul is very strong and cutting in Galatians.
- There is no gray area in this book.
- Either I serve in my flesh, or in the Spirit

Growing as heirs from children or slaves to sons

- But I say, As long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave, though he is lord of all (4:1)
- In the church life, we live many times as children, or slaves.
- Yet we need to remain in the church life, even in our condition
- It depends on our growth in life
- Even if we serve in our flesh, we need to stay in the church life
- How much we know the Lord will determine the extent to which we will turn to the elements that enslave us and cause us to live a routine church life (4:9)

Until Christ is formed in us

- Even if I know the Lord very little, I can still function and operate, according to my measure of life
- I may still be a child or a slave, under certain laws
- Yet willing and open for the effect of Christ's redemption in my church life, and His Spirit to be poured into my heart
- Paul does not tell the Galatians to stop living the church life because of their immaturity
- Rather, he travails and labors upon them, that Christ might be formed in them

Producing fruit according to the Spirit, and not the flesh

- Two women: Sarah and Hagar
- A free woman and a maidservant
- One with no husband (barren, desolate)
- One who has her husband (many children, travailing)
- Allegorizing two covenants:
- The covenant of promise or grace
- The covenant of law
- With two children:
- One born through promise
- One born according to the flesh, unto slavery

We like to bear children in the church life

- But what kind of children?
- For it is written, Rejoice, barren one who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not travailing, because many are the children of her who is desolate rather than of her who has her husband (4:27)

Who is our husband?

- What we rely on
- My ability
- I do not need the Lord, if I can trust in my ability to bear fruit
- Somehow, I still think that I can bear fruit, or do Christian things, on my own
- Yes, I have Christ in theory, but in practicality, I still need my husband to lean on, my self with my ability and skill
- I don't like to be desolate
- I would rather be doing things than praying and seeking the Lord
- I like to feel useful, as if I am earning favour with the Lord
- I feel justified by my serving and hard labor

Not our ability according to our flesh

- We do not bear children according to our ability in the flesh
- It is not what we can do skillfully. That will only bring us into slavery
- Rather, our bearing of children is according to God's promise, according to His grace
- Who are we?
- We are barren, desolate
- We have nothing.
- What do we do?
- We rejoice
- We break forth and shout unto the Lord
- This is to live by faith
- This is to live by grace

- We like to be fruitful, to care for people, to raise people up
- Yet what is my fruit like?
- Do I raise up people who love the Lord, love the church life, love the Bible, love to come to the Lord?
- Or do I raise up people who come to meetings to please me?
- My fruit will be according to who I am
- Many times, I like to be fruitful
- But do I like to be desolate?
- Someone who is desolate is desperate, dependent, crying out for help
- Do I cry out to the Lord as a desolate person?
- This is faith
- Do I live in the covenant of grace, dependent on the Lord for His supply and leading?
- How many prayers do I have to the Lord for children that satisfy Him?
- To bear children through promise means I do not see results quickly. I have to wait
- It is much easier to bear children through my flesh

Who, or what I beget, is still a matter of the growth in life

- For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,
- Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman” (4:22-23, 30)
- Paul does not tell the Galatians not to beget children
- Who we are results in who we beget, according to our growth in life
- We cannot stop being who we are. To try to do so without Christ would be in vain, still an act of the flesh
- Even to try to cast out the son of the bondwoman, our living in our flesh, would be something of the flesh
- How can we cast out the son of the bondwoman?
- Chapter 5 gives us the answer

The growth from children to sons
leads to three things

1. A standing in the
freedom with which
Christ has set us free
2. The twofold walk by
the Spirit

1. Freedom from the slavery of the law

- « You have been brought to nought, separated from Christ, you who are being justified by law; you have fallen from grace » (5:4)
- Who is it that has fallen from grace? Is it those who are “living in sin” that we so frequently condemn and point the finger at as those who have fallen?
- No, it is remarkably the opposite. Those who have fallen from grace are those who are “seeking to be justified by the law”!
- To fall from grace is to knowingly or unknowingly revert back to thinking that I can do something to maintain the right standing I already have with God through Jesus Christ.
- We need to stand in the freedom with which Christ has set us free
- Faith operates through love
- The freedom we enjoy in Christ causes us to serve one another through love
- The fulfillment of the law: « You shall love your neighbour as yourself »

2a. Walk by the Spirit

- To be led by the Spirit
- Not to be under law
- When we are led by the Spirit, our works of flesh are manifest (5:19)
- I realize that all that my flesh can produce is rotten (5:20-21)
- The living by the Spirit causes me to know myself, and eventually produce the fruit of the Spirit (5:22)
- This refers to our general, daily walk, a living that is dependent on the Spirit

2b. Walk by the Spirit

- Not a general walk, but a specific walk, a military walk, a walk according to rules
- A walk that is regulated
- A walk that is in line with God's goal, God's testimony
- A walk that is not according to the worldly elements of the outward regulations, but a walk that is according to the elements of God's life
- This is the result of the growth in life from children or slaves, to sons of God

The manifestation of the walk by the Spirit

- Restoring the brother overtaken in some offense (6:1)
- Bearing one another's burdens
- When we are under the slavery of the law, we have no ability to restore anyone or bear anyone's burdens
- Rather, we impose burdens on others
- This is the way of Jerusalem
- The law keepers have no heart for others
- They are zealous to bring others into a movement devoid of Christ
- As soon as I see myself fall into the slavery of the law, I realize that I am cursed, and have lost Christ
- Anything I minister to others will be Christ plus something else,
- The walk by the Spirit, the second kind of walk, the military kind of walk, seeks to bring the saints to Christ, from one degree to another, regardless of the condition of the saints
- When the Lord, through His light, shows me that I am apt to fall into the same temptation, I see myself, who I am, and realize that my only way of salvation is to come to Christ and enjoy Christ alone
- That brings me into the Spirit, where I am able to bear the burdens of others in order to bring about restoration

Walking by this rule

- And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God (6:16)
- This is the walk by the Spirit, the walk according to a rule, the walk by the Spirit with a purpose
- This kind of walk is what constitutes us God's testimony, the Israel of God

To become the Israel of God

- To become God's testimony
- Not merely a matter of living as sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus
- As sons, living in the household of God, the church life, we enjoy the life of our Father, the sweet family life.
- This is the general walk by the Spirit
- As sons, we also need to be trained or perfected to become kings
- This is the specific walk by the Spirit, the walk by rule, to fulfill God's purpose
- Are we satisfied with being good brothers and sisters, with attending a certain number of meetings every week?
- Are we satisfied with offering up prayers during the meetings?
- Are we satisfied with taking care of our quota of people every week?
- To walk by the Spirit according to this rule, there is the need for training
- I must seek the Lord in my daily church life and take every opportunity to be trained, from the smallest to the largest matters
- Every experience is an opportunity to be trained for me to walk according to the Spirit
- Arranging the chairs, communicating with saints through email, down to the smallest detail: all these things will expose me concerning how much the church life matters to me. How am I walking? According to what rule?