

## The Circumcision Wars II

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We'll cover more in the book of Galatians today. Let me just say this, brethren—this is very important for you to understand—when we do the Bible studies, we do something quite unusual: we do study the Bible!

What you are learning here you will not learn in any school. You won't learn it in any university; you can't take it in any seminary course. Speaking of seminary courses, I was given three tapes from a Protestant minister and it's pure emotion. All he did was tell stories. He doesn't have a clue as to what the Bible is. He said one statement that is true: 'Legalism is all the laws that men added.' Then he proceeds to throw out all the Laws of God.

What I want you to understand is that what I'm doing right now is three things that all fits together: Sermon Series: *Refuting Sunday-Keeping* (specifically #s4-6); *Justification by Faith* #s 1-4 (Galatians Series). We believe in justification by faith through the sacrifice of Christ, because of His crucifixion, shed blood, resurrection and ascension to heaven to be our High Priest.

All of those things were done because Christ, as Creator, gave Himself as the sacrifice or the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, which the Protestants like to say, 'Christ paid for our sins.' When they say that, they mean that since He did it, you have no obligation to keep any law as long as you have good warm fuzzy feeling in your heart. That's why I've been doing the series: *The Mystery of Lawlessness*. All three of those tie together.

- *Refuting Sunday-Keeping* (specifically #s 4-6)
- *Circumcision Wars*
- *Justification by Faith* (specifically #s 1-4)
- *Mystery of Lawlessness*

Please understand that the *Code of Jewish Law* is the epitome of the mystery of lawlessness. They have created all of these extra laws to be a fence around the Ten Commandments, so that if you keep all of these [Jewish] laws then you won't break the Ten Commandments. That is the complete opposite of how God wants us to approach Him. He doesn't want us to be in a fit and a tither so that we don't break them. He wants us to love Him so that truly from the heart the true Christianity will be that you will desire to obey Him. If you desire to obey Him, then you're not approaching it from the negative point of view that you have to create all of these things, so you won't disobey him.

See the difference in that? It's a complete different thing altogether. There's another complete deception that goes on in the world concerning the New Testament. Part of it is that they say, and actually believe, that none of the New Testament was written down for 300 years. Therefore, it cannot be trusted as the true words of Christ and the apostles.

Therefore, 'we are at liberty to edit, excise, change the New Testament at will based upon our human judgment.' That's what the Catholics have done with the writings of the early fathers. When I was translating Galatians, after having already known concerning the fact that Paul, Peter and John were the ones who oversaw the canonization of the New Testament—it was finalized with John before his death—then when I translated the first part of Gal. 3, I just about came unglued.

In the Greek there's a special word for something that is written—'grapho'—from which we get graphic; it means *writing*.

Here's the whole heart and core of the circumcision wars, Galatians 3:1: "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched [deceived] you *into* not obeying the Truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ crucified was set forth in a **written** public proclamation?" That's what it literally means in the Greek: *written!*

Right at the beginning, what does Luke tells us? Remember that Luke was a companion of Paul. In writing this Gospel, you could say that this is Paul's gospel, written by Luke. Luke 1: "Since **many** have taken in hand to compile a *written* narration of the matters, which have been fully believed among us..." *Many* were writing.

In the introduction to *The New Testament in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* I show that there is evidence that the book of Matthew was being circulated within five years of Christ's resurrection. Don't you think that the most important event that occurred from the creation of the earth:

- the ministry of Christ
- His crucifixion as the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world
- His resurrection
- His ascension

Don't you think that the most important thing that God would have written starting from the beginning? *No question about it!*

Is that not more important than Moses? *Yes,*

*it is!* Paul says so, clearly, in Heb. 3. Then for men, the Gnostic ‘Christians’ as found in *Primitive Christianity in Crisis*:

- of course, they want to debunk it, *so they change it*
- of course, they want to say that the Word of God can’t be trusted, *because ‘we have a greater revelation’*
- of course, the Word of God can’t be trusted, *because ‘we must get rid of the Old Testament’* and whatever else that they want to throw in there

What you are getting here, brethren, is really very, very profound!

A man called me from Alaska. I baptized him five years ago. If you think you feel alone or in a small fellowship group, trust me, he is alone! But he’s making very good use of his time and the Sabbath and everything. He’s studying, growing, overcoming, learning the Word of God.

For some fellowship, he goes to one of the Churches of God not associated with us—taking him an hour to drive there. He’s astonished! Totally astonished! Because with five years of really studying the Bible in the right way, he knows more than all that congregation that have been in the Church of God for 30 years-plus.

He says, ‘Fred, you’re right, they don’t have a clue! They may know a little of this, they may know a little of that, but they are not grounded in the Truth that they fully understand the Word of God. What we’re doing, you might think at times a little laborious, a little tedious, but please understand that this is profound and important. We’re laying a foundation so that we can have all of the difficult Scriptures already explained and understood so if someone needs to know about them, all we have to say is ‘here, here’s a tape, CD, book, booklet.’ There it is right there, *many* have set forth.

This is what Paul is talking about in Galatians 3:1: “O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you *into* not obeying the Truth...” What is the Truth?

- Your Word is Truth
- man shall live by every Word of God

“...before whose eyes Jesus Christ, crucified, was set forth in a written public proclamation?... [For all to read!] ...This only I desire to learn from you: did you receive the Spirit of God by works of law, or by *the* hearing of faith?” (vs 1-2).

If you will look into any Greek Interlinear, you will see that the two definite articles *the* before *works* and before *law* are not there in the Greek.

When it is not there in the Greek, it should not be added unless there’s a very important reason to do so. If it is added, it should be put in italics so that the reader will know that this was put in there by the one doing the translating. That’s why I have in italic for all to read, so that you know that that is a comment, that is not part of the Greek. If it’s in *written proclamation*, why is it in a written proclamation? *For all to read!*

Here is the whole heart and core of the circumcision wars, v 3: “Are you so foolish? Having begun in *the* Spirit...” See the italic there, put in there for clarification and does not take away from the meaning of the Greek. Whereas, the two definite articles ‘the’ before *works* and *law* do take away from the meaning, because it gives the appearance that he’s talking about the laws and commandments of God, which he is not. “...are you now being perfected in *the* flesh?”

Let’s go back and see how the Galatians were brought into the Church. Let’s see what happened in Acts 13 & 14, because they were the Galatians. Remember, the first part of Acts 13 is talking about a false prophet, a sorcerer, a Jew named Bar-Jesus, which means *the son of Jesus* was preaching Judaism: mystical, magical, witchcraft Judaism. That is what is meant by Elymas the sorcerer. That’s what it’s telling us.

Now there is an entirely different thing starting in Acts 13:14: “Now, after passing through from Perga, they came to Antioch of Pisidia...” Picture in your mind what the big area of what is called Asia Minor or Turkey today. Just picture in your mind right in the southern coast, in the middle of that big peninsula, that’s where Pisidia is. That is in Galatia, and he starts there in Antioch of Pisidia.

There is Antioch of Syria where the disciples went down to Antioch, as we’ve covered in *Circumcision Wars #1* and *Refuting Sunday-Keeping #6*. That is over in the area of what we call Lebanon today. So, there are two Antiochs. One is what is Lebanon and the other one in Asia Minor (Turkey); this is where Paul was.

“...and they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day *and* sat down” (v 14). Why did they go in the synagogue?

1. It was on the Sabbath Day
2. They were keeping the Sabbath
3. They had to preach to the Jews first

In the book by Tardo—*Sunday Facts & Sabbath Fiction*—he claims that the only reason that they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath was because that was a ‘convenient day to evangelize.’ I suppose that’s why the Mormons and the Jehovah Witnesses come every Saturday morning? I don’t

know.

Verse 15: “And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets...” In the synagogues they would do one thing: They would read from the scrolls the Law and the Prophets. What all synagogues have is a reading from the Scriptures. They are supposed to read every Sabbath a certain portion and it’s laid out on a three-year cycle called a triennial cycle. They go through the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms in three years.

On a particular Sabbath, every year, they are to read such and such a verse and every three years they repeat. But after the reading of the Law and the Prophets what do they do? *They keep the Code of Jewish Law!* A good orthodox Jew should not bathe on the Sabbath, because it’s hot water.

“...the rulers of the synagogue said to them, ‘Men, brethren, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, speak’” (v 15). Paul was a former Pharisee and this gave him great entrance into all the synagogues, and after he spoke they gave him urgent exit.

Verse 16: “Then Paul stood up and, after beckoning with his hand, said, ‘**Men, Israelites, and those who fear God**, listen to me.’” Why did he say that? *The ones who were God-fearing were Gentiles who were keeping the commandments of God!* Some were circumcised, some were not. {We’ll cover that out of the book *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism*}

Verse 17: ““The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people when they were sojourning in the land of Egypt...”

- How do we begin every Holy Day year? *With the Passover!*
- Where do we start preaching? *The book of Exodus, the children of Israel in captivity as slaves!*
- What is Paul doing? *The same thing!*

Verse 44: “And on the coming Sabbath...” The Greek here means the between Sabbath. When do we have a between Sabbath? When we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread where it falls in such a way that there is a Sabbath between the Holy Days! That’s what this is. What was Paul doing here? *He was preaching during the Feast of Unleavened Bread!* What was he preaching?

- how Israel came out of captivity (vs 17-18)
- about David (v 22)
- then he showed the promise that God is going to raise up a Savior Jesus to Israel (v 23)
- then he talks about John the Baptist, when John fulfilled his course (v 24)

- then he talks about Christ (v 25)

almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God.

Verse 26: “Men, brethren, sons of *the* race of Abraham...”

- Where is the covenant going? *Back to Abraham!*
- Where does the Passover go? *Back to Abraham!*
- Are we preaching exactly the same thing that Paul preached? *No doubt about it; no question about it!*

“...and those among you who fear God...” (v 26)—the Gentiles. This is important to understand. This ties in with Acts 15 (*Refuting Sunday-Keeping #6*). Moses was read every Sabbath in the synagogues and that’s where the Church began. The Gentiles that were in the Church came out of the synagogue setting. Then other Gentiles were added to that as God began to call. Then the Church began to be separate from the synagogue, but they were keeping the same days.

“...to you the message of this salvation was sent” (v 26). We have the principle here: to the Jew first and to the Gentile. I want you to understand how God has put the Scriptures together. Not only does he say to the Jew first and to the Gentile, but when you read through it and study it you see that’s exactly how it was preached.

Verse 27: “For those who were dwelling in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor the voices of the prophets who are read every Sabbath...” There again we have the Sabbath Day, but they didn’t know it. They read it. Do we have the same thing in synagogues today? *Yes, we do!* Do we have the same thing in Catholic churches today, Protestant churches, Orthodox churches? Do they not read certain sections of the Scripture, but they don’t know it? *Yes! Same thing!*

“...have themselves fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him*. And though no one found any cause *worthy* of death, they begged Pilate to execute Him. And when they had carried out all things that were written concerning Him...” (vs 27-29)—down to the parting of the garments {see sermon series: *Prophecies of Jesus in the Old Testament*}. That’s what he’s referring to here.

“...they took *Him* down from the tree *and* put *Him* in a tomb; but God raised Him from *the* dead. *And* He appeared for many days to those who had come up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we are announcing the Gospel to you—the promise made to the fathers—that God has fulfilled this to us, their

children, having raised up Jesus.... [from the dead] ...As it is also written in the second Psalm, 'You are My Son; today have I begotten you.' And *to confirm* that He raised Him from *the* dead, no more to return to corruption, He spoke in this manner: 'I will give You the faithful mercies of David.' Accordingly, he also says in another *place*, 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption'" (vs 29-35). Does this not sound like the same sermon that Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)? *Yes!*

Verse 36: "For David, after ministering to his own generation by the counsel of God, died, and was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption.... [That is exactly the same message that was given on Pentecost—right? *Yes!*] ...But the one Whom God raised up did not see corruption" (vs 36-37).

Now then, Paul is into his *instigating riot in the synagogue* syndrome. There are certain things that you can say to Jews that will set them on fire, and here it is:

Verse 38: "Therefore, be it known to you, men *and* brethren, that through this man *the* remission of sins is preached to you. And in Him everyone... [Jews, Gentiles, uncircumcised Gentiles] ...who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses" (vs 38-39). WAM! BAM! Those are fighting words!

Let's understand something of *justification by the Law of Moses*. There are two versions of it:

1. Judaism's version with their added laws
2. the version that God gave

Let's see what those were.

When a person sinned, he was to come to the temple and he was to offer a certain offering and sacrifice for purification of the flesh. When this was accomplished he was justified to the temple. He was justified to continue living in the land of Israel. He was justified so God would not cut him off from his people, *but he was not justified in heaven above to have his sins removed and have his name entered into the book of Life, because Christ had not yet been sacrificed.*

Only those of the kings and the prophets—Moses, Aaron, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and so forth—will be the ones who will be saved from what we call the Old Covenant or the Old Testament times. They were given the Spirit of God. None of the rest of the people were. All the rest were only purified in the flesh to the temple—that's as far as it went.

Hebrews 9:13: "For if the blood of goats and bulls, and *the* ashes of a heifer sprinkled *on* those

who are defiled, **sanctifies** to the purifying of the flesh... [to be made Holy or to be justified; it was only to the flesh; it was not in the Spirit] ...to a far greater degree, the blood of Christ, Who through *the* eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, shall purify your conscience from dead works to serve *the* living God" (vs 13-14). That's the difference.

Hebrews 10:4: "Because *it is impossible* for *the* blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." This is what Paul was talking about in Acts 13:39. But the Jewish perspective was that the temple was everything, the sacrifices were everything, and that by those they could receive eternal life. But *God never taught that! God never revealed that!* It's not true, you cannot receive eternal life that way.

- Is there eternal life in a bull or a goat that can be killed? *No!*
- Is there eternal life in Jesus Christ Who was raised from the dead? *Yes!*

***It's got to come from God! Not from an animal!*** This really set them on fire. Let's see what happened:

Acts 13:39: "And in Him **everyone**..."—not just the Jews; we need to understand that the Jews have absolutely the wrong concept that they are the 'chosen people'; they are NOT the chosen people. Those that *God calls are the chosen people*, because God has personally chosen them. The truth is that the Jews, at this present time, are the rejected people in exile, in the Diaspora, because they rejected Jesus Christ.

The reason that they keep proclaiming that they are the 'chosen people' is so that they can intimidate everyone else. You don't find a white person going up and saying, 'I'm a white person.' But a Jew, if he says, 'I'm a Jew,' you better be fearful, you better not say anything against Jews, because he's the 'chosen person.'

What you have to do is read John 8 and you'll find out whom their god is. Christ said that it was Satan the devil as well as the god of all the rest of the 'religions.' That's why they do that.

Next time a Jew does that to me, I'm going to say, 'What are you trying to do? What difference does it make?' Same way with people of color, they always have to say they're black. For what purpose? Everyone who can see them knows it. Everyone has suffered things. What it really gets down to is this—and you will see this in action; politically in action—blacks are blacks first, Latinos are Latinos first, Jews are Jews first, because they're all carnal.

What we're talking about here and what Paul is doing is saying, 'God is not a respecter of persons'

and it does not have to do with *who your ancestors are!* It doesn't have to do with *the status of your flesh!* It has to do with the *status of your heart!* That's where it's all at, brethren.

Verse 39: "And in Him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Take heed, therefore, lest that which is spoken in the Prophets come upon you: 'Behold, you despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work that you will in no way believe, *even* if one declares it to you.' And when the Jews had gone out of the synagogue..." (vs 39-42). They were apparently insulted with this. I don't know if I could get out alive if I tried this.

"...the Gentiles entreated *him* that these words might be spoken to them on the next Sabbath.... [the between Sabbath] ...Now, after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the proselytes who worshiped *there* followed Paul and Barnabas..." (vs 42-43). The Jews who came down from Antioch thought that the conversion of the Gentiles was a continuation of the proselytism of Judaism, and *it was not!*

They "...followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God" (v 43). This is where we have Sabbath-keeping and Holy Day keeping connected with grace. You are not under the grace of God to sin. God does not save you *in* your sins. *God saves you from your sins!*

Verse 44: "And on the coming Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God. But when they saw the multitude, the Jews were filled with envy..." (vs 44-45).

Why were they filled with envy? *Because the Jews taught and Philo of Alexandria taught*—which is in this book *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism* by Peder Borgen—that soon, after they rejected Christ, a Messiah would come and raise the Jewish nation over all of the Gentiles and the Gentiles would serve them as vassals and serfs and secondary citizens. They can only join the Jewish nation if they were circumcised.

Here they are looking at it and filled with envy because all of the proselytes that were with them *left them!* Plus a whole multitude of more. It's like coming into the synagogue one Sabbath—say there were 200 people—and the next Sabbath there are 20 Jews. Then you go find where Paul and Barnabas are and here's almost the whole city! 'We're losing our power!' See what was happening? In this is tied up the circumcision question. This is why there were the circumcision wars.

Let's see another point of envy, because

remember it was said that Pilate understood that they delivered up Jesus to be crucified because of envy. Let's see a good example of this:

John 12:10: "But the chief priests took counsel in order that they might kill Lazarus also; because by reason of him... [being raised from the dead] ...many of the Jews were leaving *them* and believing in Jesus" (vs 10-11). They were deserting the synagogue, the power-base for the Jewish community.

Verse 12: "On the next day, a great crowd of *people* who had come for the Feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem, took branches from palm trees and went out to meet Him, and were shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel.' Now after finding a young donkey, Jesus sat upon it, exactly as it is written: 'Fear not, daughter of Sion. Behold, your King comes, sitting on a colt of a donkey.' And His disciples did not understand these things at the beginning; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him, and that they had done these things to Him. Then the group that was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, testified of *what they had seen*" (vs 12-17).

They were going around, 'Look, here's Lazarus; we saw him come out of the grave. We saw him put in there. We were there weeping with Martha and Mary and Jesus came and said for Lazarus to come forth and he walked out of that tomb.' I tell you, if you had something like that on TV you'd bring up the biggest stir that had ever been!

Verse 18: "Because of this, the people also met Him, for they had heard of this miracle that He had done." The reason that I'm going through this is because don't you know that the Jews who were in the synagogue of Antioch and Pisidia had heard of this? This was known in the whole world, in all the Jewish community. How many of the Jews from Antioch and Pisidia went up to Jerusalem for Pentecost and saw these things going on? Brethren, this was not done in a corner.

(go to the next track)

The reason we're going through this is so that you get a feeling and understanding of what is happening. The Bible is not meant to be read in isolation. It's not meant to have 'my text for today is...' We are to *study* the Word of God. It says, 'the reading of the Law and the Prophets' at least they were doing the right thing, but they didn't listen to it—did they? Had they listened to it, they would have understood what Paul was saying.

Verse 19: "Then the Pharisees said among

themselves, ‘Do you see that we are not gaining in any way? Look! The world has gone after Him.’” In other words, ‘we’re losing all our power.’ Stop and think about that, what a threat this was to them. They didn’t say, ‘Hoorah! Here’s the Savior!’ NO! They said, ‘we’re losing power.’ “...‘Look! The world has gone after Him.’” That’s how they viewed it. This is what happened in Acts 13. They perceived exactly the same thing, that now at the preaching of Christ they were losing everything.

Acts 13:45: “But when they saw the multitude, the Jews were filled with envy...” They were no longer in the synagogue: ‘Rabbi, we could have had all of these, and every Sabbath they would have brought an offering and paid for their seat in the synagogue. Now we have nothing; we’re going broke! We have no power!’ If some people are offended at that, then go ahead and be offended; I’m just telling you the truth.

“...and they spoke against the things proclaimed by Paul, *and* were contradicting and blaspheming.... [What do we do in the wake of that?] ...But Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly, saying, ‘It was necessary for the Word of God to be spoken to you first; but since you reject it and do not judge yourselves worthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles’” (vs 45-46). You talk about adding salt in the wound, this is more than salt.

Verse 47: “For so the Lord has enjoined upon us: “I have set You for a light of *the* Gentiles that You should be for salvation unto *the* uttermost parts of the earth.” And when the Gentiles heard *this*, they rejoiced...” (vs 47-48). ‘No more *Code of Jewish Law*, hooray!

“...and they glorified the Word of the Lord, and believed, as many as were appointed to eternal life. And the Word of the Lord was carried throughout the entire country.... [This was a mammoth thing!] ...But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the principal men of the city, and raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their borders. And after shaking the dust off their feet against them, they came to Iconium. Then the disciples were filled with joy and *with the Holy Spirit*” (vs 48-52).

How did they receive it? *It doesn’t tell us here*, but there were probably lots of baptisms going on. It doesn’t tell us how long they stayed in Pisidia, but they stayed there more than just the two Sabbaths that are mentioned, we can be guaranteed that, otherwise the whole thing would have died down. But it didn’t, it grew! Let’s see what happened:

Acts 14:1, here we have full-fledged Gentiles: “Now, it came to pass in Iconium *that* they went together into the synagogue of the Jews and

spoke so *powerfully* that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. For this reason, **they stayed a long time**, speaking boldly in the Lord...” (vs 1-3). We don’t know how long a ‘long time’ is, but you can be guaranteed that it is much more than a couple of months.

“...Who bore witness to the message of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done through their hands. But the multitude of the city was divided; and some were with the Jews, and some *were* with the apostles” (vs 3-4).

Galatians 3:4: “Have you suffered so many things in vain... [Look at what they suffered from the Jews] ...if indeed it *has been* in vain? Therefore, *consider this*: He Who is supplying the Spirit to you, and Who is working deeds of power among you, *is He doing it* by works of law or by *the* hearing of faith?” (vs 4-5).

Acts 14:3: “For this reason, they stayed a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, Who bore witness to the message of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done through their hands.... [by faith and belief through the Spirit of God] ...But the multitude of the city was divided; and some were with the Jews, and some *were* with the apostles. And when an assault was *about to be* made by both the Gentiles and *the* Jews with their rulers to insult and stone them” (vs 3-5). Talk about causing trouble in the city!

Verse 6: “They became aware of it; so they fled to Lyconia, into the cities of Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding region. And there they preached the Gospel” (vs 6-7).

This is all part of Galatia, so when it’s to the Church in Galatia (in Gal. 3), this is what it’s talking about. All of this is a prelude to Acts 15 (see *Circumcision Wars #1* and *Refuting Sunday-Keeping #s 5-6*). You have to put all of these together. When you put them all together, brethren, you are going to have an understanding that is going to be absolutely solid! It’s going to be airtight against all the arguments.

Verse 8: “Now, in Lystra a certain man was sitting who had never walked; he was impotent in the feet, having been crippled from his mother’s womb. This *man* heard Paul speaking; who, after looking intently at him, and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, ‘Stand upright on your feet.’ And he leaped up and walked” (vs 8-10). This was in a totally Gentile town.

- Is this a manifestation of the Spirit? *Yes!*
- By belief? *Yes!*

That's why Paul was so upset that they were trying to force circumcision on them *after the fact*. He Who gives the Spirit, did you receive it by *believing* or by *works of law*? *By believing!*

Verse 11: "And when the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices in Lyconian, saying, 'The gods have become like men *and* have come down to us.' And Barnabas they called Zeus; and Paul, Hermes, because he was the principal speaker. Then the priest of Zeus, who *officiated* before their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, desiring to sacrifice with the multitudes" (vs 11-13).

And Paul said, 'I am so glad that you recognize me. I'm so glad, because I've come to tell you that all of these pagan rituals we're just going to rename, and you can keep your Sunday-worship, and you can keep your pagan temples and idols. Let me go up and bless it and we'll 'Christianize' this idol. We'll sanctify your pagan church. Thank you for worshipping me and calling me Mercurius because that's what I am.'

*NO!* He didn't say that—did he? But that's what's happened to the Christianity of this world—isn't it?

Verse 14: "But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard *this*, they ripped their *own* garments in *disbelief*, and rushed into the multitude, shouting out and saying, 'Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, with the same nature as you, and we have been preaching the Gospel to you, *so that* you will turn from these vanities... [that also includes the day they worshiped on; undoubtedly Sunday] ...to the living God, Who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all the things in them; Who in the past generations allowed all peoples to go in their *own* ways; though, indeed, He did not leave Himself without witness, in doing good to us from heaven *by* giving rain and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' And *even* by saying these things, they could hardly keep the multitudes from sacrificing to them. Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and **after persuading the multitudes...**" (vs 14-19).

They came in subterfuge and undermined what was done. These must have been very emotional people, swinging from one end of the pendulum to the other to be persuaded one way one day, and another way another day.

"...they stoned Paul... [I wonder what they threatened with. I'll bet they threatened him with economic boycotting—correct? *Yes!*] ...and dragged *him* outside the city, supposing *that* he was dead. But while the disciples were standing around him, he arose; and he went into the city *with them*. And the

next day, he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And after preaching the Gospel to that city, and making many disciples, they returned to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch" (vs 19-21). He came right back through.

What had happened between the time when he originally was there? *All of these people who believed formed new congregations **separate from** the synagogue!* Notice what they did:

Verse 22: "*Where* they established the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *declaring* that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God." He was living proof of it. Do you want to see the stone scars?

Verse 23: "And when they had chosen for themselves elders in every church, *and* had prayed with fasting, they committed them to the Lord, on Whom they had believed. And they passed through Pisidia *and* came to Pamphylia. And when they had spoken the Word in Perga, they came down to Attalia; and from there they sailed to Antioch [Phoenicia or Syria], where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. And when they arrived, they gathered the Church together and declared all that God had done with them, and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there with the disciples *for* a long time" (vs 23-28).

Now we can understand the problem in Galatia. The big mistake that people make—I've seen it happen over and over again—when someone gets interested in God and wants to know about church. They go to church and the first thing they are hit with are the difficult Scriptures in Romans, Hebrews and Galatians, and told that the Law has been done away. They don't have a clue as to why these things were done!

It has nothing to do with the preaching of any Protestant doctrine. It has nothing to do with the preaching of any Catholic doctrine. In *Refuting Sunday-Keeping* you will know that the Protestants are nothing more than 21<sup>st</sup> century Gnostics. Everything they preach about Christ is a fake! A counterfeit! I enumerate all of those things. They are part of the *mystery of lawlessness*.

You can't understand Galatians by just jumping into the middle of it and reading it. There's a lot of background that goes into it, which we just covered. There is also the history of Judaism, which has to be added into the mix. Why was there a circumcision problem in the first place? Paul probably wrote Galatians soon after he got back from Jerusalem with the council that they had up there.

Galatians 1:1: “Paul, *an* apostle, not *sent* from men nor *made* by man, but by Jesus Christ and God *the* Father, Who raised Him from *the* dead.” I want you to notice how Paul is consistent in everything that he teaches. Did we not read these same things in Acts 13 & 14? *Yes!*

Verse 2: “And all the brethren who are with me... [in the Church at Antioch of Syria] ...to the Churches of Galatia... [we just read about them] ...Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, in order that He might deliver us from the present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father; to Whom *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen. I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel” (vs 2-6). This happened quickly!

Verse 7: “Which *in reality* is not another *gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ.” How are they desiring to pervert the Gospel of Jesus Christ? *We’ll see there are several ways!* Here are the ‘certain ones’:

Acts 15:1: “Now, certain men who had come down from Judea were teaching the brethren, *saying*, ‘Unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’” Plus, when you are circumcised you must obey all the *Code of Jewish Law*.

Believe it or not, brethren, there are even some churches that call themselves The Church of Yahweh who do that very thing today. All—everyone who comes into the church, men or women—must be baptized again in the name of Yahweh. This is just a form of Judaism in afflicting the Church of God. All men must be circumcised. When you pray you must have a *prayer shawl* over your head. You must wear a *yamaka*; and many other *Jewish traditions* that they follow. It’s caused a lot of trouble with the brethren. You have to use the sacred name.

I’ll tell you what the sacred name is: *our Father and Jesus Christ!* Those are the sacred names.

Galatians 1:6: “I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel... [Notice how quickly they were turned from one side to the other when they stoned Paul.] ...which *in reality* is not another *gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ. But if we, or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!” (vs 6-8).

That’s exactly what Paul would say to all of those who are similar to the houses of Yahweh that I just mentioned. You are adding Jewish things to it and you are being accursed!

Verse 8: “But if we [the apostles], or even an angel from heaven... [Remember our study on the Gnostics? *This covers the Gnostic preaching, too!* We have message from an angel in heaven.] ...should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!” (vs 8-9). Those are the strongest words in the Bible.

You can take that gospel and pervert it toward Judaism. You can take that gospel and pervert it toward Gnosticism. They’re both included in this. Plus you have the strange mix of Jewish Gnosticism, which required circumcision. It’s amazing what is contained in the book of Galatians.

Verse 10: “Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

We’ll stop here and add a little bit of politics. Paul was not a politician, you can rest assured on that. The Church should never come to a situation that is run and motivated by politics. We are brethren and we’re to love one another. We please men by pleasing God first. If it doesn’t please them, then that’s just too bad!

There are many people today who have compromised what they believe because their idols are the people they know. They will sit in congregations and tolerate all kind of heresies being preached because these are ‘our friends.’ Well, if they are your friends, then you’d better make them aware of the truth, otherwise you are trying to please people and you have an idol before God.

That’s how simple it is! Paul wasn’t motivated to please men. If he wanted to please the Jews, what would he preach? *Being a Pharisee, he would preach circumcision and the Code of Jewish Law to all the Gentile proselytes!* Did he? *No!* He could have stemmed the tide of the Jewish attacks if he would have stood up and told the Gentiles: ‘Let’s avoid this persecution, hatred and stoning. All you have to do is be circumcised and these Jews will back off.’ He didn’t do that—did he? *No, he didn’t!*

Verse 11: “But I certify to you, brethren, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not according to man; because neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught *it by man*; rather, *it was by the* revelation of Jesus Christ” (vs 11-12). His first



encounter was Christ knocking him off his donkey on the way to Damascus!

Verse 13: “For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism... [Do you remember what his conduct was? *Persecuting the Church*: leading people off into captivity in chains. Taking them to jail! Taking them to be beaten and scourged for believing in Christ!] ...how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it.” Part of it there where it says ‘Saul wreaked havoc with the Church’ where it’s just like a big boar, swine with the big tusks, that they just root up the soil and tear it apart. He was wreaking havoc with it, destroying it. What was he getting for it?

Verse 14: “And I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation... [Who was he pleasing? *The priests, the Pharisees, the Sadducees!*] ...being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers.” He knew everything that was in the *Code of Jewish Law*. That’s why he had to go down to Arabia for three years and be re-taught by Christ and get his brain unscrambled! Now you know why Paul was so vehement in these things. To fight against them!

Verse 15: “But when it pleased God, Who selected me from my mother’s womb, and called *me* by His grace... [Christ probably told him that He had His eye on him before he was born] ...to reveal His own Son in me, in order that I might preach Him as the Gospel among the Gentiles... [That’s very profound to understand. You preach Christ, because His *is* the Gospel.] ...I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years... [how long he was in Arabia] ...I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Peter, and I remained with him fifteen days. But I did not see *any* of the other apostles, except James the brother of the Lord” (vs 15-19).

Verse 20: “(Now the things that I am writing to you, behold, before God, I am not lying.)... [indicating that there were many of the other Jews who were bothering them, sending lying epistles and lying teaching] ...Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. But I was unknown by face to the Churches in Judea which *are* in Christ; they only heard, ‘The one who once persecuted us is now preaching the Gospel—the faith which he once destroyed.’ And they glorified God in me” (vs 20-24).

That’s the preface and introduction for Gal. 2. We covered most of Gal. 2, we’ll just review a little bit of it.

Galatians 2:1: “Then after fourteen years I again...” Remember, he ‘sat on ice’ in Tarsus; Barnabas had to go get him from Tarsus {see *Refuting Sunday-Keeping #6*}. So, after he had been preaching for a total of about 8 years—a total of 14 years after he was called:

“...I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus with *me* also.... [Titus was a Greek. This became a test case.] ...And I went up according to revelation, and laid before them the Gospel that I preach among the Gentiles... [not requiring *physical* circumcision] ...but privately to those of repute, lest by any means I should be running, or had run in vain. (But indeed, Titus, who *was* with me, being a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised.)” (vs 1-3).

Remember, that was the requirement, and the final step of a proselyte to be considered a bona fide citizen of the Jewish nation, otherwise he was *common*.

- An *unclean* Gentile is someone who lives Gentile ways, worships Gentile gods, and is uncircumcised.
- A man who is *common* is a Gentile who has forsaken the pagan way and who is trying to keep the Laws of God and live a righteous life, being yet uncircumcised.

That’s why Peter—when he came to Cornelius—said that ‘God has shown me that I should call no man common or unclean.’ God gave the Holy Spirit to the household of Cornelius and all of those there being in uncircumcision. Paul went out and preached and the Gentiles came into the Church and received the Holy Spirit without circumcision.

The Jews who came down from James and the other Jews wanted to bring in the regimen of Jewish proselytism, which meant that in order to really be correct. You had to finish it with physical circumcision.

Titus was an important test case. Why? *Because Titus also was to be an elder!* Read the book of Titus. This is a very important test case here.

Verse 3: “(But indeed, Titus, who *was* with me, being a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised.) Now *this meeting* was *private* because of false brethren brought in secretly, who came in by stealth to spy out our freedom, which we have in Christ Jesus, in order that they might bring us into bondage” (vs 3-4). I mentioned ‘latrine inspection.’ Talk about being oppressed!

Verse 5: To whom we did not yield in subjection, *not* even for one hour, so that the Truth of the Gospel might continue with you.”

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*  
by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Galatians 3:1
- 2) Luke 1:1
- 3) Galatians 3:1-3
- 4) Acts 13:14-17, 44, 26-39
- 5) Hebrews 9:13-14
- 6) Hebrews 10:4
- 7) Acts 13:39-45
- 8) John 12:10-19
- 9) Acts 13:45-52
- 10) Acts 14:1-4
- 11) Galatians 3:4-5
- 12) Acts 14:3-28
- 13) Galatians 1:1-7
- 14) Acts 15:1
- 15) Galatians 1:6-24
- 16) Galatians 2:1-5

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 3
- Acts 13:18-25; 15; 2
- John 8
- Titus

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- *Refuting Sunday-Keeping* (specifically #s 4-6)
- *Justification by Faith* (specifically #s 1-4)
- *Mystery of Lawlessness*
- *Circumcision Wars #1*
- *Prophecies of Jesus in the Old Testament*

Books:

- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin
- *Primitive Christianity in Crisis* by Alan Knight
- *Sunday Facts & Sabbath Fiction* by Russell K. Tardo
- *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism* by Peder Borgen

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