

Covenants of God XIV Perverting the Gospel of Christ

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So that we can fully grasp where we're heading with this, we'll just summarize and review some of the things beginning in Galatians, the first chapter. I want to focus in on very important key verses.

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." We're going to see that there are many different kinds of changes and twisting of the Gospel. There obviously is the pagan twisting and the Jewish twisting.

All of these pervert and take away from the Gospel of Christ, which He says, v 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." In this case we see, as we go through Galatians, there are Jewish perversions and there are pagan perversions. Paul always goes back to and refers to the law.

If you want to do law—the law that God gave Israel—even though it was right and good, still did not bring the salvation, which had to come through Jesus Christ. We'll see a modern-day example of that in just a minute.

Verse 8: "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!" That's pretty strong! God—through Paul—is saying that even if an angel preached something else, let the angel be accursed. We're dealing with a situation that is really very profound.

Verse 9: "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!"

I want to show you part of the Jewish perversion of the Gospel, and then we will see part of the pagan perversion of the Gospel. In both instances, these are the beginning sources.

Acts 13:6: "And when they had gone through the island as far as Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer..." Remember what I read about Judaism and sorcery and mysticism and the occult? Get the book *Anti-Semitism and the Babylonian Connection*_[transcriber's correction] What do you suppose a sorcerer is going to do? Here's a Jew who would be keeping all the days—the Jewish days and the pagan days. That's what the Jews do today—the broad-

minded Jews who are not the Orthodox, but who are into the more reformed type of stuff. They get into everything, even atheism. "...a false prophet, a Jew whose name *was* Bar-Jesus" (v 7).

Verse 8: "But Elymas the sorcerer (for so was his name interpreted) withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith. But Saul, who *was* also *called* Paul, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him, *and* said, 'O full of all guile and all craftiness, *you* son of the devil..." (vs 8-10). {note: 1-John 3, child of the devil} There are those who have given themselves over to the devil so much that they are actually 'the children of the devil.' Remember what John said of the Jewish leaders? *You are of your father the devil!* (John 8)

1-John 3:8: "The one who practices sin is of the devil..."—'ek'—*out from*—originating from the devil. There are people who have totally given themselves over to that, *completely!*

We won't get into the thing of kidnapped children and never finding them, and human sacrifice and so forth; but it's going on more and more here, even here in the United States.

"...because the devil has been sinning from *the* beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil. Everyone who has been begotten by God does not practice sin... [it's not a person who commits no sin whatsoever] ...because His [God the Father] seed *of begettal* is dwelling within him, and he is not able to *practice* sin because he has been begotten by God. By this *standard* are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. Everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, and neither is the one who does not love his brother" (vs 8-10).

I want to establish clearly that there are children of the devil who pervert the Gospel. Elymus was one.

Acts 13:10: "And said, 'O full of all guile and all craftiness, *you* son of the devil *and* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the straight ways of *the* Lord?" Here's one of them who was perverting. Notice that he said "...will you not cease..." perverting—which shows that it was going on a continual on-going basis. There is a Jewish perversion of the Gospel right here—*perverting the Gospel of God!*

Acts 8—let's see the pagan perversion of the

Gospel through one called *Simon Magus*. We will notice that they both use sorcery—both of them.

Acts 8:9: “But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria...” Who were the people of Samaria?

2-Kings 17 shows when the children of Israel sinned and Shalmaneser—king of the Assyrians—took them away captive. Who did he bring in there to replace them? What religion did they have? This becomes very important.

2-Kings 17:23—They sinned “until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away out of their own land to Assyria, *as it is* to this day. And the king of Assyria brought *men* from Babylon and from Cuthah and from Ava and from Hamath and from Sepharvaim and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel. And **they possessed Samaria** and lived in its cities” (vs 23-24). So, they brought with them the Babylonian religion.

The lions in the area started devouring the people because of their idolatry, so they sent away for one of the Levites and he taught them to use the name of the Lord. But they just added that to *their* religion.

I draw your attention also to Ezra and Nehemiah, and remember the problems that Ezra and Nehemiah had with the renegade priests who were from Samaria. This comes down to the time of Simon Magus.

So, we have a ‘religion’ that is pagan using the name of God. That’s nothing strange; that’s happened how many times? We have something here we got in the mail and all the weirdo stuff that’s in it. We’ll see how they pervert the Gospel in a minute, because there is a good counterfeit and it looks so real; but it cuts people off from the grace of God.

Acts 8:9: “But *there was* a certain man named Simon, who had from earlier times been practicing sorcery in the city and astounding the nation of Samaria, proclaiming himself to be some great one.” The *great ones* are the religious leaders and the benefactors. Great ones are just like popes. Let’s see what Jesus said about that:

Luke 22:24: “And there was also an argument among them, *even* this: which of them should be considered *the* greatest. And He said to them, “The kings of the nations lord over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors”” (vs 24-25). Those exercising authority

are the ‘great ones’; that’s why he says, ‘it shall not be so among you.’

Verse 26: “But *it shall* not be this way *among* you; rather, let the one who is greatest among you be as the younger, and the one who is leading as the one who is serving.”

What did Simon Magus want to do? *He wanted to buy the Holy Spirit!* There is the pagan version; we also have the Jewish perversion.

Galatians 1—if anyone perverts the Gospel (v 7). How was the Gospel being perverted? *From both sides—Jewish and pagan!* Sometimes—believe this or not—*pagan Jewish*, because that’s essentially what the Essenes were. The Essenes were essentially sun-worshippers. There are different perversions from the Jews, which came from sorcery, from Babylon, from the Gentiles who came from sorcery and Babylon. They both look a little different, but the basic thing is that they have *salvation by works*, and the Jews had *salvation by circumcision plus works!*

Galatians 1:13: “For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism, how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it; and I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many *of my* contemporaries in my *own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the traditions* of my fathers” (vs 13-14). What are *traditions*? *They require works of law!* Do this, do that, do the other thing; don’t do this, don’t do that, don’t do the other thing.

You can even, as the Jews do this day, worship the Law. You can even worship God’s Law as an idol, and not have Christ, and not have salvation—which then is *a perversion of the Gospel*. What makes that so insidious? *If you have the right laws out of the Bible, it appears correct!* That’s what makes it so insidious!

Galatians 2:1—the problem that was had because of the Gentiles vs circumcision and uncircumcision. “Then after fourteen years I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus with *me* also. And I went up according to revelation, and laid before them the Gospel that I preach among the Gentiles, 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). An uncircumcised man in religious circles in Jerusalem is absolutely anathema as far as the Jews were concerned.

Verse 4: “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.” What was the bondage they would

be brought into? Here we have a problem with the Jews bringing in a type of perversion of the Gospel—*bringing them into bondage!* What would be that bondage that would seem right? *Law and circumcision!* Law is right; you must have law. The Bible states very clearly you can't sin.

But this takes a very mature, Christian mind and knowledge of the Bible to understand it. If you put Christ aside and worship law, you have no salvation, even though the law itself is right. That's what becomes so confusing, because people cannot separate out the need for keeping the laws of God, but the need for having Christ for salvation. Both are required!

- You cannot have Christ without keeping the commandments of God.
- You cannot have the commandments of God without Christ and have salvation.

We get into the situation here that it's brought out that Paul was to be the apostle to the Gentiles or nations. Then we've already reviewed twice Gal. 2 about *works of law for justification*.

- How is a person justified before God the Father in heaven above? *Through the sacrifice of Christ!*
- Is there any law that is equal to that sacrifice and that justification? *No!*

No law is equal to that. You must be justified through Christ.

- God does expect us to have good works
- God does expect us to keep His commandments

But, we cannot take that commandment-keeping and substitute it for Christ! We cannot take *any work of any law* and substitute that for the sacrifice of Christ!

Galatians 2:14: "...I said to Peter in the presence of them all, 'If you, being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles, and not according to Judaism, why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize? We who are Jews by nature—and not sinners of *the* Gentiles—**knowing that a man is not justified by works of law...** [you see very clearly that it is *the* works of *the* law] **...but through the faith of Jesus Christ...**'" (vs 14-16). I just want to review that so that we have that clearly in mind.

"...we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by *the* faith of Christ, and not by works of law; because by works of law shall no flesh be justified" (v 16). It isn't going to happen! God decreed that it won't happen.

Now, let me read you a *current perversion* of the Gospel, which is very close and very similar. Here you're going to have to really listen carefully

to see what is happening, because what is being said is right.

This message is dedicated to God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; to Jesus Christ our personal Messiah; and also to-----who built the foundation of the true church in the 20th century.

My name is Gerald D. Langensderfer, founder and editor and chief of *Israelites International Directory* who has surnamed himself by the name of Israel (Isa. 44:5)

A work of law! He takes a surname to himself setting him apart.

My associates Stephen C. Mehl and Judy Rocha will be witnessing the first outline of the directory submitted to the ministry of the WWCG (delivered Oct. 1985).

The doctrines of Israelites International is founded upon the law and statutes written from Genesis to Revelation given to the Israelites for all generations: to know, to keep, to practice forever. This means past, present and future Israel.

All sounds good—doesn't it? But notice that once they mention Christ, they slip right past Him into law.

Beginning with the three basic laws of nature: spiritual, physical and mental character of God.

I didn't know that these were three basic laws of nature, but here's what they have:

1. Spiritual—keep the Sabbath, the identifying sign between Christ and the true God

The Sabbath is a sign, that is correct. But what makes you belong to Christ? Sabbath-keeping? Think on this, because some people will be begin to say that if you say Sabbath-keeping is a sign, but what is a sign of a Christian beyond just Sabbath-keeping? *The Spirit of God!* 'By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. And if you love Me, keep My commandments.'

I want you notice how closely this counterfeit is. This is a *twisting* of the Gospel.

Keep the seven annual Feast days of God. To accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and to be a witness of His works until the end.

So, they have a little bit of Christ in there; obedience to God's commandments.

2. Physical law—eat kosher foods (pure foods), food combinations to balance the chemistry of man with the laws of nature: tissue cleansing, rebuilding, fasting, using herbs.
3. Mental character of God can only be accomplished by harmonizing spiritual and physical laws, thus creating a God-like character.

What creates a God-like character? Law? *No!* See how close this is? *Law does not create God-like character!* What creates God-like character? *Christ in you!*

Wisdom—seeking the relationship between problems of life and the principle of Scripture, which have been violated (Deut. 28).

Very close! Let's see what makes us spiritual, what makes us a Christian.

Galatians 2:20—a key important thing: “I have been crucified with Christ, yet, I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I... [‘ego’—he’s not living for himself] ...but **Christ lives in me...**” That’s what makes you a Christian!

- If Christ is *in you* will you keep the commandments of God? *Yes!*
- If Christ is *in you* will you also keep the Passover and Holy Days, etc.? *Yes!*
- How do you keep them?
- What is of paramount importance in everything?
- The Law?

or

- Christ?
- **Christ!**

“...For *the life* that I am now living in the flesh, I live by faith—that **very faith of the Son of God**... [Christ’s own faith *in you!*] ...Who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness... [right standing with God the Father in heaven above] ...*is* through works of law, then Christ died in vain” (vs 20-21).

Then what does Paul always do? *He comes right back to Abraham to show the principle of everything that is involved!*

Galatians 3:10: “For as many as are *relying* on works of law...”—any work of law. What do the Catholics say concerning grace? What is the Babylonian *perversion of the Gospel* as outlined in Catholicism? *You receive grace by works!* You don’t receive grace by works. What is a work of law that Catholicism would have? *Hail Marys, our fathers!* What other penance do they have besides that? *Keeping Easter, Christmas, etc., genuflecting when*

you come before a cross!

- Are there works of law that Jews have? *Yes, there are works of law that Jews have!*
- Are there works of law in any other religion that they have to make them right with God? Their concept?
- What does a Hindu have to do to be accepted into nirvana?
- What is one of the most important things for them to do? *Go bathe in the Ganges River!*
- Is that a work of law? *Yes!*
- Why are works of law under a curse? *It’s not through Christ!*

“...are under a curse, because it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things that have been written in the book of the Law to do them” (v 10)—and no human being on earth except Jesus Christ did all of the things contained in the laws that God gave. *No one!*

- Has anyone here lived a sinless life? *No!*
- Has any Jew lived a sinless life? *No!*
- Has any pagan lived a sinless life? *No!*
- Do they all have works of law? *Yes!*
- Why are you under a curse? *Because when you transgress the Law, you’re a sinner!*

The wages of sin is death, and the death penalty is the curse of the Law!

Verse 11: “Therefore, *it is* evident that no one is being justified before God by *means of* law; because *it is written*, ‘**The just** shall live by faith.’” What does the phrase **the just** mean? *The one who has been justified!*

Verse 12: “Now then, the Law is not based on faith; but, ‘The man who practices these things shall live in them.’ **Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law...**” (vs 12-13). He didn’t redeem us from the law-keeping required by God. *He redeemed us from the curse of the law, which is our sins*; we were bought back; bought with a price, and it was His the price of His life.

“...having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree’) in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, *and* that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, (I am speaking from a human perspective) even when a man’s covenant has been ratified, no one nullifies *it*, or adds a codicil to it” (vs 13-15).

There are several things you need to understand is that there were several covenants with Abraham and God.

Verse 16: “Now, to Abraham and to his Seed were the promises spoken...” This was done before the ritual of circumcision was required. Abraham *believed God*, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

“...He does not say, ‘and to *your* seeds,’ as of many; but as of one, ‘and to your Seed,’ which is Christ. Now this I say, *that the* covenant ratified beforehand by God to Christ cannot be annulled by the law, which was *given* four hundred and thirty years later, so as to make the promise of no effect” (vs 16-17). It doesn’t change what God promised Abraham. But the Law was necessary.

Verse 18: “For if the inheritance *is* by law... [of eternal life in the Kingdom of God] ...*it is* no longer by promise. But God granted *it* to Abraham by promise. Why then the Law?...” (vs 18-19). That’s the next thing that everyone is going ask. If the promise was given to Abraham:

- Why didn’t God just start right out to do it right then?
- Why couldn’t it have not been put into effect generally for everyone at that time?

Because it could not be put into effect until after Christ came, live, died and was resurrected!

- Now what are you going to do?
- Are you going to let everyone just do as they please?
- What are you going to do?

You’re going to fulfill another one of the covenants that God gave to Abraham—that is the children of Israel!

And God is going to have His plan to show that even though you have the laws of God...

- What did God say right after He gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites?

After He gave the Ten Commandment, ‘Oh that there were such a heart in them that they would keep My commandments and fear Me always!

- Did God have to teach the whole world that even a nation given the laws of God still could not do it? *Yes!*

That’s why the covenant given to Israel is generally called *The Law*. Obedience to God’s Law is required for salvation. Yes, but:

- How does the salvation come?
- Through law-keeping?

or

- Through Christ?
- *Through Christ!*

You can’t have one part without the other, and that’s how they were perverting the Gospel. They were saying, ‘We don’t need Christ, we just need law.’ Why would God make it through Christ

and not through law? That’s what people can’t understand. The reason is that *eternal life can only come from God!* Since it can only come from God, then it has to be something that God does *for you and through you and to you*, that you can’t do for yourself. That’s why God did it, and also to show that you cannot keep the law to sidestep Christ.

That’s why with our carnal minds, has there ever been anyone to fully keep the laws of God? *No!* Which then brings them *under a curse!* The curse is sin because you’ve broken the laws of God. How did God determine to take care of that? *Through the sacrifice of Christ only!* Present law-keeping does not forgive past law-breaking.

How can you be under a curse if you’re keeping God’s Law? *You’re not under a curse if you’re keeping God’s Law with Christ!* You are under a curse if you try to keep the laws of God without Christ, because you can’t keep them in the way that God demands.

That’s the whole example of the Jews. If you take and strip away all their traditions and say, ‘That’s a bunch of junk, but we’ll just look at what they have with Sabbath-keeping, Holy Day-keeping, clean and unclean meats, which are all to be done.’ But they do it without Christ.

Do they have salvation? *No!* That’s why it becomes so confusing, especially when such great stress has been laid by religious leaders on keeping the Law—which you need to do—but when you go so far as to keep the Law and emphasize the Law so much that you forget Christ or put Him over here, then your law-keeping becomes in vain, because you’ve forgotten Christ! Your law-keeping may put you in good stead with society, because you’re not committing murder, lying, cheating, and committing adultery—that’s fine, but does that bring you Christ? *No! Only God the Father can you bring you Christ!*

It has to be through Christ. We’re talking about salvation vs law-keeping. You cannot have salvation apart from Christ. It just won’t be!

Verse 19: “Why then the Law?...” We read in Romans that the Law is Holy, just, good and spiritual—which it is. The Law is fine! Is the Law Christ? *No!*

Analogy: What is water composed of? $H_2O - 2 \text{ parts of hydrogen, } 1 \text{ part of oxygen} = \text{water!}$ You have to have both to have water—correct? Can you have hydrogen alone over here in a tank all compressed? *Yes, you can!* Is that water? *No, it’s hydrogen!* Then you have over here in another tank compressed, oxygen. Do you have water in the oxygen? *No, you have oxygen!*

You can take oxygen and hydrogen alone.

You can open the valves and a match or lighter and you have a fire! The fire is opposite of water. In either case oxygen alone or hydrogen alone does not produce what you want. What you want is *water*. Both are necessary to have water.

Same way with salvation: ***You must have Christ and you must have obedience to the commandments of God.***

- What is the ingredient that puts them together?
(go to the next track)
- Does the analogy follow through?
- Can you have Christ over here and just do what you want to?

You can't accept Christ do what you want to because Christ is not the minister of sin! God forbid! Sin is the transgression of the Law!

- Can you just have over here law? *No, because law alone doesn't do it!*
- How many times have you had to go to Christ and repent for your sins?
- Doesn't that illustrate the point?

In order to have salvation, you need Christ and then you need the commandments of God. You can't have salvation through law alone; you can't have salvation just by taking the name of Christ alone—there's more to do than just that. You must have them both together.

Now, when you put them both together then you have a different combination than separate. Just like with hydrogen and oxygen, when you have them separate you can have them of instruments of burning. When they're together, water is an instrument to put out fire.

Same way with the Law: The Law, we find here, v 19: "Why then the Law? It was placed alongside *the promises* for the purpose of *defining* transgressions... [added to the promise given to Abraham of the coming Christ] ...until the Seed should come to Whom *the* promise was made... [the Seed is Christ] ...having been ordained through angels in the hand of a mediator."

The apparent full meaning of Gal. 3:19:

Why then the Law? That is the purpose of the Law—which is the Old Covenant. In relationship to the original covenant and promise given to Abraham. It was appointed the Old Covenant (or Law) was ordained in addition to and placed alongside of the promises given to Abraham for the sake of transgression. That is to point out clearly what sin is until the Seed should come to whom the

promise was made.

That's why the Law was given.

"...having been ordained through angels in the hand of a mediator" (v 19). Who was the mediator? *First it was Moses, then the high priest!* Who is our mediator today? *Christ is the only Mediator between God and man!* Not an angel.

1-Timothy 2:4: "Who desires all men to be saved... [That's God's desire; so the decision is left in the hands of the individual whether they want that salvation or not.] ...and to come to *the* knowledge of *the* Truth. For there *is* one God, and one Mediator between God and men—the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself *as* a ransom for all..." (vs 4-6)—redeemed or ransomed from the curse of the Law, which is sin.

There's one Mediator! The Catholics say that there is Mary who is a mediatrix. Is that a *work of law*? If you put down an edict and say this is canon law in the Catholic Church, the only way you have your sins forgiven is to go through Mary, the mediatrix—a *work of law*! You go pray to Mary because it's canon law—that is a *work of law*! ***Your salvation is in vain, because it's not through Christ!***

I know this is pretty heavy stuff. We're going through the most difficult part that there is. I understand that. If it's kind of tough to wade through, I understand that. I hope we can grasp some of it. It took me a long time as a minister before I came to an understanding of it, and I'm still coming to a better understanding of it as I'm going along. I hope I'm sharing that with you in a way that will be profitable for you.

Galatians 3:20: "Now then, a mediator does not *act on behalf* of one... [there were many high priests and they came along and it was from the high priest to angel to God] ...but God is one." Now we're in a situation where Christ is the only One mediating, and God the Father and Christ are one.

Verse 21: "*Is* the law then contrary to the promises of God? MAY IT NEVER BE! For if a law had been given that had the power to give life, *then* righteousness would indeed have been by law." What does that mean?

(KJV): "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life... [What kind of life? *Eternal life*—that's what we're talking about.] ...verily righteousness should have been by the law."

(Interlinear): the word 'quicken' comes from Greek 'zoe'—*life*—from which we get the

word *zoology* today, the study of life. We're talking here about *eternal life*.

"...*then* righteousness would indeed have been by law." That becomes a very confused statement.

- Why does that become a confused statement in the mind of some people?

Because we're really heavily in the thick, in the middle, of it!

- Why does it become confusing?

Because the term 'righteousness' here means right standing with God the Father in heaven above, through the justification of Christ!

- Is there another term called 'righteousness' that we ordinarily think of?
- What is that?

Psalm 119 can be a source of this confusion if you don't understand the difference between the righteousnesses. There is a righteousness in law, and that righteousness in law is not right standing before God the Father in heaven above through the sacrifice and justification of Christ.

I will have to admit that Psa. 119 is what got me started in studying all of this years ago. Psalm 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of Your Word, for **all Your commandments are righteousness.**"

The confusion comes if all the commandments of God are righteousness, and you can't have the righteousness of God through law, what on earth is it talking about? That does become confusing—doesn't it? *It sure does!*

- What is the answer to the dilemma? *There is a righteousness that is through law!*
- Does that righteousness through law bring eternal life? *NO!*
- How does eternal life come? *Through the righteousness of Jesus Christ!*

Which means that through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ you are put in right standing with God the Father in heaven above. What it's talking about in Psa. 119:172 is the *righteousness of the Law*, which even Paul said that a man that does them shall live in them. That's fine! But **there is no law given that gives eternal life!**

Example: Law-keeping that was very hard to be understood. We are to keep the commandments of God—absolutely! Don't anybody misunderstand that. *We are to keep the commandments of God! We are to keep the Sabbath Day Holy, absolutely!* We cannot say, through Christ, we can do anything we

want to. Jesus said, 'If you love Me, keep My commandments.

What if you kept the commandments of God all your life—which was right and good and you should—without Christ, will that law-keeping force God to give you eternal life? That's the question involved. That's what you have to understand. If you keep the commandments of God and obey Him, what can you do that is wrong? *If you do it through Christ, you're doing what is right!* How can you keep the laws of God without Christ? But are there people who keep the laws of God without Christ and think God owes them something?

Matthew 19:16: "Now at that time, one came to Him *and* said, 'Good Master, what good *thing* shall I do, that I may have eternal life?'" Isn't that the heart and core of the question that we're asking here? What may **I** do to have eternal life?

Verse 17: "And He said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good except one—God. But if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments.'" True, that's just what we're talking about. Keeping the commandments is a condition. But a condition is not the real thing.

If I say to you, if you are here precisely at eleven o'clock, I will give you a Cadillac—brand new with a pink slip, paid for, free and clear and the key. You can drive off with it and you'll have one year's insurance on it. What if you get there ten minutes after eleven, you don't get it because it was a condition. It's a contract. A contract is like a law. You must be there exactly at eleven. I give you a watch that is exactly synchronized with my watch so you can be there at eleven o'clock.

If you show up at one minute after eleven you don't get the car, even though you get there. That's tough! You did everything. You hurried, you ran, you did everything you could to get there and you didn't get the Cadillac because you broke the contract. You broke the law of that contract.

Any contract that is ratified is law. Like if you buy a car, it's law. So, you didn't get the Cadillac and you come up to me and say, 'Mr. Coulter, I was only one minute late. Why won't you give me the Cadillac?' *Because you didn't keep the law!* 'I was trying! I was coming! But, but, but.... Could you please give me the Cadillac, because I put forth all of this effort to be here.'

Now, I could be a dirty, rotten guy and say, 'No, you didn't keep the law, you don't get the Cadillac.' That's the law! Now, if I say, 'In spite of the contract that we had that you signed and I signed and you're one minute late and you didn't make it, I am still going to give you the Cadillac.' *That is mercy!*

So, we have the same thing here, "...if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments. Then he said to Him, 'Which?' And Jesus said, 'You shall not commit murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother; and, you shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (vs 17-19). Are all of those good and right and should be done? *Yes!*

Verse 20: "The young man said to Him, 'I have kept all these things from my youth. **What do I yet lack?**'" That's a pretty strong case. He's keeping the commandments, which he should have done. But what did he want?

Verse 16: "...'Good Master, what good thing shall I do, **that I may have eternal life?**'" What is the problem with commandment-keeping only; without Christ? *Commandment-keeping cannot give you life!* No law was ever made to give you life.

Verse 21: "Jesus said to him, 'If you desire to be perfect, go *and* sell your property, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come *and follow Me.*'" What was he going to do with his commandment-keeping? *Learn a whole new way of commandment-keeping by following Jesus Christ!* Either that, or reject it!

Verse 22: "But after hearing this word, the young man went away grieving, because he had many possessions."

- What is that God wants?
- Does He want law-keeping alone?
- Even though it's required, is that all God wants?
- *NO! He wants you!*

Anything physical standing in the way will hinder you from eternal life.

Romans 8:1—let's see something here concerning what is the true righteousness of the Law: "Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are **in Christ Jesus**, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit." What does *walking according to the flesh* mean? Even if you're keeping the commandments of God, you're only keeping it in the letter of the Law. The letter of the Law *kills because you can't keep it perfectly.*

Verse 2: "Because the Law of the Spirit of life **in Christ Jesus** has delivered me from the law of sin and death. For what *was* impossible for the Law to do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; in order that the righteousness of the law might be **fulfilled in us...** [the new way of keeping the laws

of God] ...who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit" (vs 2-4). That's why it's very clear that Christians are to keep the laws and commandments of God **in Christ, through Christ!**

What is the point? *If you try and rely on law-keeping only, and push Christ over here to the side, can you demand from God salvation? No!* Did Christ say to the young man who was keeping the laws, 'Oh good, you're ready for eternal life, I'll open the door, step in'? *NO!* He said, 'I want **you**, not just your law-keeping.'

It sounds somewhat like reasoning in a circle, but it's not when you understand the vast difference between the sacrifice of Christ and law-keeping without Christ. There's a vast difference. Though Christ living in us, Christ in us, we're going to fulfill the true righteousness of the Law. Why? *Because we have right standing with God the Father in heaven above through Jesus Christ!*

Can you take that and set it aside and say, 'Oh, I don't need Christ, but I'm going to keep law.' That's what they were doing. Did that put them into a position then where they could demand of God to give them salvation because they were keeping the commandments of God? *NO!* That's where the Protestants go off the deep end and say you don't have to keep the commandments. That is not what God says. God says that the "...righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us."

Now let's go back to this deep and troubling part of Gal. 3. I know, brethren, it is difficult. We are studying and understanding things that even theologians do not comprehend.

What Paul is trying to show is like we have today, the extreme of the Sunday-going Protestant *born again* who doesn't believe in any obligation in keeping any of the laws of God on the one hand. Then you have the ultra-Orthodox Jew and their traditions and rituals and law-keeping without Christ on the other hand. *Both extremes are wrong!*

One over here says they have Christ, but they don't keep any commandments. The others say 'we have law and we reject Christ.' *Neither one has salvation!* Where the Truth is right down the middle where you have Christ in you and you're walking in the ways of God, you're keeping the commandments of God, because God says to love *Him*. That's what all this complication is all about.

But what you do if you were the Apostle Paul? What would you do if some renegade Jew was coming in here and half pagan and half Jew and say, 'Oh well, Jesus really wasn't the Messiah. We've

got the Law.’ Paul is saying, ‘Look, the promise of Christ was before the Law.’

If you get this and grasp this, it will help you love and appreciate God even more, because now you know why you could not tell a Pentecostal Sunday-keeping, Easter-keeping, born again of the Spirit, over here doing anything they want to do; you can not convince them one iota why they really believe what they believe when you tell them they ought to keep the commandments of God.

Nor could you convince a Jew over here on the other side that their commandment-keeping without Christ is in vain. He would say, ‘No, the Law was given through Moses at Mt. Sinai by God Himself. I’m going to keep this.’ Without Christ and without Christ in you and the commandment-keeping that God gives, **you have no salvation**. Paul was faced with a difficult problem. Imagine what it was like with Paul dealing with this, let alone us trying to understand it here 1900 years later.

Galatians 3:21: “*Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? MAY IT NEVER BE!* For if a law had been given that had the power to give life... [Greek: ‘zoopoiesai’—which means *to give eternal life*] ...**then righteousness would indeed have been by law**”—*in right standing before God the Father in heaven above*. If there was any law!

This young man said to Jesus, ‘What must I do to have eternal life.’ He was looking for Jesus to say, ‘Do this or that or the other.’ And the young man would have said, ‘Yes, sir! It’s done, now give me eternal life.’ Jesus said, ‘**NO!** Sell everything that you have and come and follow Me.’ Different circumstances for eternal life.

Verse 22: “But the Scriptures have **shut up all things under sin**, so that by *the* faith of Jesus Christ the promise might be given to those who believe.”

- *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God!* All have sinned—Jews and Gentiles.
- *There is none righteous, no not one!* That’s the same thing we found in Romans.
- *All shut up under sin!* We have the same thing today in the world—don’t we?

1-John 5:19: “We know that we are of God, and *that* the whole world lies in *the power of* the wicked one.... [All are shut up until they’re brought to God.] ...so that by *the* faith of Jesus Christ the promise might be given **to those who believe.**” Believe what?

- *Believe that Christ was the Messiah!*

- *Believe that only through Him is salvation!*

That’s what they are to believe. What law says that? *No law!* That’s the whole point.

Galatians 3:23: “Now, before faith came...” When did faith come? When did *true* faith come? *When the Holy Spirit was given!* True faith did not come until the Holy Spirit was given, which came after the resurrection of Christ.

“...we were guarded under law...” (v 23). Does the Law set boundaries: you shall/you shall not? *Yes, it does!* If you keep them, are you guarded? *Yes, you are! You’re protected from certain things!* It guards us! Nothing wrong with the Law. That is fine, but **the Law doesn’t give eternal life**—that’s the whole question here.

“...having been shut up unto the faith that was yet to be revealed” (v 23). It means that until the faith revealed by Christ came, we were all guarded by law, *but we were also under sin*.

Verse 24: “In this way, the law was our tutor *to lead us...*” To teach us, to bring us to the understanding of right and wrong. The *KJV* says ‘schoolmaster’—makes it sound really bad.

“...to Christ... [In other words, until the time we came to Christ the Law has been our tutor] ...that we might be justified by faith” (v 24).

Now don’t let this next verse throw you. What did we originally talk about? *Justification by works of law or justification by faith of Christ!*

Verse 25: “But since faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” Why? What is the tutor? *The Law!* By Christ where is the Law to be? *In our heart, mind and inward parts!*

If you go to school and learn something, should you perpetually stay in the fifth grade? *No! You go beyond the fifth grade!* It’s the same way when you have the Spirit of God *in you to lead you and guide you and justify you*, then you’re not justified by works of law. *By faith we might be justified!* “...we are no longer under a tutor.” That doesn’t mean we don’t have to keep the commandments of God. It means we have graduated from the sandbox.

Verse 26: “Because you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” You’re elevated to a different level. Does the Spirit of God bring you to a different level? *Yes!* That’s what it’s talking about. The Law is fine, it was our tutor and led us to Christ, but what do we do when we come to Christ? Step aside and say ‘Christ, no I don’t want You’? *NO!* You say, ‘Yes, God, thank You for Christ.’ God through His Spirit puts His laws in our inward parts

and in our mind. Then is fulfilled in us the righteousness of the Law, which you couldn't do without the Spirit of God.

Isn't it amazing, we've all been doing this all along. Just like with our children, when they finally get it in their heads that they want to do whatever their supposed to do on their own, then it's in their mind and it's part of them. Same way with God! With Christ in us we don't want to sin. Do we want to sin? *NO! We don't want to sin!* As Paul said, 'What? Shall we sin that grace may abound? *God forbid! May it never ever be!* We don't want to.

But there is something greater than law-keeping—isn't there? *Yes! Christ in you is greater than law-keeping!* How about when you pray, isn't that a greater experience with God's Spirit than coming to Sabbath services? *Yes! That is a far greater experience!* But are we to keep the Sabbath? *Absolutely, we're to keep the Sabbath!* But what if we all just went around and said, 'Well, we've got to keep the Sabbath' and every Sabbath you came here and I gave you a sermon on the Sabbath and that's all you ever heard. You would say, 'I know as much as the teacher. Can't I be taught anything else? Isn't there more to Sabbath services than Sabbath? *Yes!*

Here we can express what we need to say and ask what we need to ask so we can understand it. That's the way it needs to be. You cannot have freedom in Christ to be shackled by a minister to tell you to 'shut up and do what you're supposed to do and how dare you ask any questions.' That's nonsense! It can't be. With the mind of Christ do you have to worry about rebellion? *No! You don't have to worry about rebellion!*

In addition to it, we understand by degrees. What if you were in the third grade and someone gave you twelfth grade trigonometry and said, 'Study this and if you don't pass it, you're going to flunk out in life.' Same way with us, we grow in grace and knowledge.

Verse 27: "For as many *of you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female... [spiritually speaking before God] ...for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (vs 27-28).

Very important to remember: In this life we're still in the flesh and there's still male and female. But no one is to lord it over anyone and say because you are this, that or the other that God thinks more of 'me because you're not like me.' Or God thinks more of those because of such and such.

It is not so, and too many times that was even exemplified in the Church of God. Yes, it was!

Before Christ, is the prayer of woman just as powerful as prayer of a man? *Yes! If she has more faith, more powerful!*

Verse 29: "And if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to *the* promise." What about the promise of God? The promises of God are sure!

Hebrews 6:13: "For God, after promising Abraham, swore by Himself, since He could swear by none greater, saying, 'Surely in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you.' Now after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (vs 13-15)—which was *Isaac! A type of Christ!*

Verse 16: "For indeed, men swear by the greater, and confirmation by an oath *puts* an end to all disputes between them. In this *way* God, desiring more abundantly to show the heirs of the promise the unchangeable nature of His own purpose, confirmed *it* by an oath; so that by two immutable things... [the existence of God Himself and His promise and swearing by Himself] ...in which *it was impossible for God to lie*" (vs 16-18).

That's why the promise of Christ is so important and cannot be replaced by law-keeping without Christ. It was the promise given by God.

"...we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope *that has been* set before *us*; which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and steadfast, and which enters into the *sanctuary* within the veil" (vs 18-19).

Here is why Christ is so much greater than law-keeping. The Law said that only the priests could go into the Holy of Holies once a year. Through Christ *we come into the presence of God into the Holy of Holies every time we pray!* That is fantastic! That is greater than law! Besides, the priests had to have certain qualification:

- he couldn't be blind
- he couldn't be a humpback
- he couldn't have a shorter leg
- he had to be only of the lineage of Aaron
- he could not start until he was 30-years-old
- he had to finish when he was 60-years-old

Anything in-between the Law couldn't allow him to do it.

- What if you're deaf? Does it matter today if you're blind? *No!*
- Can you pray to God in heaven above in the very Holy of Holies in heaven above? *Yes!*
- What if you're a humpback? *It doesn't make a difference, you can come before*

God!

- What if you've lost both legs? *You can come before God!*
- *You can still pray to God!*

That's what's so fantastic! ***God has opened the way for people to come into the very presence of God through Christ!*** Speaking of Paul, Paul was short, almost blind—they couldn't even stand to look at him, he was repulsive. He'd never been a priest even he were of Aaron. Quite a different thing. That's what's so magnificent, we can have that direct connection with God the Father in heaven above through Jesus Christ.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) Galatians 1:6-9
- 2) Acts 13:6-10
- 3) 1 John 3:8-10
- 4) Acts 13:10
- 5) Acts 8:9
- 6) 2 Kings 17:23-24
- 7) Acts 8:9
- 8) Luke 22:24-26
- 9) Galatians 1:13-14
- 10) Galatians 2:1-4, 14-16, 20-21
- 11) Galatians 3:10-19
- 12) 1 Timothy 2:4-6
- 13) Galatians 3:20-21
- 14) Psalms 119:172
- 15) Matthew 19:16-20, 16, 21-22
- 16) Romans 8:1-4
- 17) Galatians 3:21-22
- 18) 1 John 5:19
- 19) Galatians 3:23-29
- 20) Hebrews 6:13-19

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