

Chapter 6

GRACE NULLIFIED

An eye-catching declaration in Galatians 2:21 manifests Paul's concept of the application of Yahweh's gift of grace: "I will not nullify the grace of Yahweh."

How could grace be nullified? The word **nullify** means "to cancel or make useless or valueless." This is possible in several different ways. Almighty Yahweh extends grace, meaning mercy or unmerited kindness, to those repentant people who have completely yielded themselves to Him. When they follow His directions faithfully in all they do, He will no longer remember their past sins. If the people obediently serve Him, He will declare them justified (judged innocent) of their transgressions—Romans 3:23-26.

Grace is **NULLIFIED** by continued transgression of the law of Yahweh after one comes into a knowledge of the truth, Hebrews 10:26-31.

A second way grace could be nullified is by committing the "unpardonable sin." Sin that will not be pardoned or forgiven by Yahweh is described in Matthew 12:31-33, Hebrews 6:4-8, and 2 Peter 2:20-22.

For elucidation, turn to 1 John 5:16-17: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and Elohim will give him life for them that do not sin unto death. There is a sin leading to death: not concerning this I do say that he should make request. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin leading to death."

Judah 4 contains perhaps the most weighty passage in the entire Bible opposing the no-law teaching. "For some unrighteous men, who have slipped in unnoticed among us, distort the message about the grace of Yahweh to excuse their immoral ways, and reject Yahshua the Messiah, our only Master and Savior. Long ago the Scriptures

While I may not agree with every word in this excerpt from a Commentary on Galatians. It is sufficient to explain the context and meaning of a couple of often MISUSED elements in Paul's writings by those manifesting the leaven of the pharisee's ... the doctrine of making void the law by their traditions. A practice found rampant in the solar cult falling away religion of christianity. That being the CURSE Yahweh promised in the "strong delusion" of 2 Thes. 2, with their "man of sin" sitting in their temple, "jesus christ", "Iesous Chrestos". Yes, they have pleasure in unrighteousness, and love NOT the TRUTH! So, He curses them.

Peter warned of those that would twist Paul's writings, so should you not expect them to be doing so today?

2Pe 3:15 And account that the longsuffering of our Master is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 2Pe 3:16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, **which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.**

2Pe 3:17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, **beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.**

Don't let these "WICKED", "LAWLESS", lead you away from the righteousness afforded to us by the blood of the Lamb, Yahshua! The ONLY True Messiah, chosen of Abba Yahweh.

It is important to remember, "unlearned" and "unstable" bring about "THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION". So, make sure you are reading and studying ... and praying for guidance of the Spirit of Yahweh.

NARROW WAY, FEW FIND ... not 3 billion christians, largest religion in the world.

predicted this condemnation that they have received." (Good News For Modern Man version)

The Authorized Version translates part of this passage: "...who have turned the grace of Yahweh into lasciviousness," (meaning licentiousness or license to do as you please). See also **The Sacred Scriptures**, Bethel Edition, Copyright 1981.

The most obvious way Yahweh's grace can be nullified is by turning it into license to do as you please. Paul emphasized that *he did not nullify the grace of Yahweh*. Grace, or mercy, is nullified through continued disobedience. Man spurns the goodness of Yahweh through sin. Active grace is Yahweh's kindness, mercy, and forgiveness bestowed upon the one who accidentally oversteps or breaks His law. Nullified grace is the withdrawal of forgiveness.

Galatian Brethren Deviate

"You stupid Galatians! You must have been bewitched—you before whose eyes Yahshua the Messiah was openly displayed upon his tree! Answer me one question: did you receive the Spirit by keeping the law or by believing the glad tidings message? Can it be that you are so stupid? You started with the SPIRITUAL; do you now look to the MATERIAL to make you perfect? Have all your great experiences been in vain—if vain indeed they should be? I ask then: when Yahweh gives you the Spirit and works miracles among you, why is this? Is it because you keep the law, or is it because you have faith in the glad tidings message? Look at Abraham: he put his faith in Yahweh, and that faith was counted to him as righteousness." Galatians 3:1-6 (NEB)

Careful consideration of this section plainly shows that the law of Yahweh was not annulled by the death of Yahshua the Messiah. Exactly the converse is true. The Galatian brethren were deviating from the Messianic message the Apostles had preached to them by regressing to the physical. The Galatians had embarked upon their spiritual journey down the narrow way in faith just like Abraham, with no physical or ceremonial acts of penitence to atone for previous sins. Suddenly their attitude had changed.

Works can never *atone* for our past disobedience to Almighty Yahweh's commandments. NO special sacrifices or fleshly circumcision could justify our past sinful conduct. NO personal acts of penance could cancel or reverse past transgressions against our Heavenly Father. ONLY the grace

or mercy of Yahweh and the shed blood of Yahshua the Messiah can exonerate our past wickedness. We are now placed on probation by justification and grace. Almighty Yahweh *gave* us an opportunity to prove our sincerity by *righteous living* since the blood of the Lamb washed away our sins.

"Well you know that it was no perishable stuff, like gold or silver, that bought your freedom from the empty folly of your traditional ways. The price was paid in precious blood, as it were of a lamb without mark or blemish—the blood of Messiah." 1 Peter 1:18-19 (NEB)

The Bible writers unanimously agree that the only redemption we may hope to receive is in Yahshua the Messiah. When the sinner comes to repentance, he is obligated thereafter to follow the ways of Yahweh. Yahweh created the plan of salvation from the foundation of the world. Those who repent will obey Yahweh's commandments to merit the sacrifice of His Son to atone for our sins. Yahweh through grace gives us a reprieve from our just sentence of death so He can confirm our future dedication to live a righteous life.

Attributes of the Law

Paul's intention was not to postulate the annulment of Yahweh's covenant law because Yahshua the Messiah had died. Paul asks the Galatians to recall how they had received the Holy Spirit. By believing the good news of salvation and exercising faith in the message, they had received it, Paul declares. He explained this in Romans 7:14. *"For we know that THE LAW IS SPIRITUAL: but I am CARNAL, sold under sin."* He boldly asserts in verse 12, *"So that THE LAW IS HOLY, AND THE COMMANDMENTS HOLY, and righteous, and good."* When the Galatians accepted the Messianic worship they immediately developed a sincere desire to obey Yahweh and henceforth embarked upon the spiritual life, led by the Holy Spirit.

Yahshua the Messiah insisted that the Spirit of Yahweh was in His Word. John 6:63, *"The Spirit alone gives life; the flesh is of no avail; the words which I have spoken to you are both spirit and life."* (NEB)

Paul knew the meaning of Yahshua's statement. Those who receive the words Yahweh's ministers proclaim will be given spiritual life if they obey His commandments and become sinless.

Works—Active Faith

The keeping of a law of works mentioned here must refer to circumcision and animal sacrifice since this is the basic theme of the book. Paul clearly differentiates between the keeping of a law of works and faith in the good news message.

Hebrews 11:1 tells us, "*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*" Faith is a living, dynamic, active force propelling the people of Yahweh in a spiritual direction. "*Faith without works is dead,*" James 2:17 and 26. Faith is such a strong, active hope and trust in the lives of believers that one lives as if he had already received Yahweh's promise.

Yahshua the Messiah's evangel was the good news message to which Paul refers. Mark explains what the message was: "*After John had been arrested, Yahshua came into Galilee proclaiming the Good News of Yahweh: The time has come; the KINGDOM OF YAHWEH is upon you; repent, and believe the GOOD NEWS.*" Mark 1:14-15 (NEB)

Mark uses the term **kingdom** prominently in reporting the beginning of Yahshua's ministry. **Kingdom** means the government of Almighty Yahweh through His Messiah Yahshua. The mission of Yahshua the Messiah was to proclaim that the government (an administration of authority based upon a code of laws) of Yahweh would take over the rulership of this earth. The "*gospel*" or **good news (evangel)** means **salvation. Its meaning is parallel to the word Kingdom.** Those who are saved at Yahshua's coming receive a part in that blessed Kingdom age.

Paul followed in Yahshua's footsteps. He proclaimed the identical message the Messiah had preached. Paul asked, "Did you then receive the Holy Spirit of Yahweh through the keeping of the law [ceremonial circumcision] or when you believed in [began to have faith in] the good news message?"

Paul told the Roman brethren, "*So belief comes of hearing, and hearing by the word of Yahweh,*" Romans 10:17. When someone hears the message of Messiah and believes it, he must act on faith to live a righteous life. He has not yet received salvation

in the Kingdom of Yahweh. The Word of Yahweh contains His covenant law.

The Holy Spirit of Yahweh came to the Galatian brethren when they repented of their sins. Turning toward Yahweh in faith, believing that He would be merciful, they manifested their commitment in water baptism. Faith in Yahshua's announcement of the good news of Yahweh's Kingdom government means obedience to His rules and regulations.

Spiritual Emigration

To explain this concept more thoroughly, we use the example of someone born and reared in an underdeveloped nation. Eventually he hears about the advantages of living in an advanced country. Anticipating a better life, he packs his belongings and moves to the land of opportunity. There he discovers the many possibilities for improving his quality of living, and he is greatly encouraged. He becomes so inspired by the benevolent environment of this new land that he decides to become a naturalized citizen.

Similarly, we who are born in sin have **heard** from the biblical record of a new land of opportunity—the **Kingdom of Yahweh**. The Good News was preached and we believed. We have exercised our faith and begun our journey toward this promised land. The possibility of living forever in the Kingdom of Yahweh in the restored Eden (*which is an earth made new*) has greatly appealed to us and inspired us. We no longer delight in our old sinful lives.

Although we have not yet seen this promised abode, the description of the Kingdom found in the Bible has motivated us to begin naturalization proceedings. By preparing now, we can become citizens of Yahweh's Kingdom when it is inaugurated on earth. In our former lives, since we were wrongly taught, we undoubtedly broke the laws of Yahweh's Kingdom, but we are held accountable only for our conduct from the time we emigrated.

Do you see how perfectly this example illustrates Paul's comments in Galatians 3:1-6? For instance, no person is allowed to enter the United States unless he faithfully and sincerely promises to obey the laws of the land. The expectation of a better life, with its advantages, motivates people to seek a new homeland. Those who immigrate submit

themselves willingly to the requirements for residence in the new nation because they have a bright hope of a better future.

Spiritual Versus Physical

Another important aspect of this section is Paul's comparison of the spiritual with the material and physical. Let us note another reason Paul made these statements.

Paul discusses the *beginning* of a rewarding spiritual life in the Assemblies of Yahweh through **faith** (obeying through believing) **rather** than starting that journey with a physical act, **circumcision**. **NO ONE** can become perfect in heart through a physical act. Marking the flesh will never create spiritual perfection in Yahweh's sight, nor can it ever atone for sin. Yahweh does not demand penance from the repentant believer. Only **faith** in Yahshua the Messiah and in Yahweh's grace leads us into a state of perfection through obedience to the commandments.

After coming to repentance, we must no longer sin. If we do, an adverse reflection will be cast upon the Messiah's sacrifice. By continuing to sin we put His death for us to **an open shame**. We **INSULT** Him when we spurn His benevolent offer of pardon. Spiritual perfection must come through *circumcision of the heart* rather than of the flesh. Circumcision of the flesh will never make us perfect spiritually because Messiah's sacrifice will be nullified when we depend on a personal physical act, rather than on the object of our salvation.

Abraham's Faith

"You may take it, then, that it is the men of faith who are Abraham's sons. And Scripture, foreseeing that Yahweh would justify the Gentiles through faith, declared the Good News to Abraham beforehand: 'In you all nations shall find blessing.' Thus it is the men of faith who share the blessing with faithful Abraham." Galatians 3:7-9 (NEB)

In the Bible, men of faith were men of action. Portrayed in Hebrews 11 are a succession of brief biographies regarding those who lived by faith in biblical times.

Abraham's journey toward perfection began when Yahweh told him to come out of **Babylon** (*Ur of the Chaldees*), Genesis 12:1. While in Ur of the Chaldees (Babylon), Abraham

lived under the regulations of a corrupt, worldly government. It was a government begun by Nimrod, the mighty one who was a hunter in opposition to Yahweh, Genesis 10:8-12. Moreover, the city of Ur was dedicated to idolatrous worship, the moon mighty one.

When Yahweh spoke, Abraham believed and acted on faith. He immediately departed from Babylon and entered a land where he could serve the Heavenly Father unhindered by degrading pagan influence.

Similarly, we must make a spiritual exodus from the modern-day Babylonish system, with its degenerate way of life, so that we can serve Yahweh unencumbered by the influence of the world, Revelation 18:4. Abraham put his faith in Yahweh. **He acted**. His obedience produced works of faith. Upon leaving Babylon he was rewarded with the commendation of being called a righteous man. We must follow this same pathway spiritually.

Works or Grace

"On the other hand those who rely on obedience to the law are under a curse, for Scripture says, 'A curse is on all who do not persevere in doing everything that is written in the Book of the Law.'

It is evident that no one is ever justified before Yahweh in terms of law; because we read, 'he shall gain life who is justified through faith.'

Now law is not at all a matter of having faith: we read, 'he who does this shall gain life by what he does,'

Messiah bought us freedom from the CURSE of the law by becoming for our sake an accursed thing; for Scripture says, 'A curse is on every one who is hanged on a gibbet.'

And the purpose of it all was that the blessing of Abraham should in Yahshua Messiah be extended to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith." Galatians 3:10-14 (NEB)

As we consider this portion of the third chapter of Galatians, we will also consult the **Benjamin Wilson Emphatic Diaglott**. This translation offers a more lucid rendering of the Greek text. Note carefully the absence of the definite article in relationship to the word **law** in comparison with the translation in the **Authorized Version**.

"For as many as are of Works of the Law are under a Curse, for it has been written, 'Accursed is every one who continues not in All those things having been written in the Book of the Law to do them.'

Besides, That no one is justified by Law before Yahweh is clear; Because, 'The righteous by Faith, shall live.'

Now the law is not of Faith; but He having done these things 'shall live by them.'

The Messiah has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a Curse on our behalf; (for it has been written 'Everyone who is hanged on a Tree is accursed');

So that the blessing of Abraham might be for the nations, by Messiah Yahshua; and that through the Faith we might receive the annunciation of the Spirit." Galatians 3:10-14, (Benjamin Wilson)

Keeping Yahweh's commandments cannot be the "works of the law" indicated by Paul. Let us obtain a definition of the term that we may understand.

The book of Hebrews will help define what Paul meant. Hebrews 9:9-10 reads, *"All this is symbolic, pointing to the present time. The offerings and sacrifices there prescribed cannot give the worshiper inward perfection. It is only a matter of food and drink and various rites of cleansing—outward ordinances in force until the time of reformation."* (NEB) How perfectly plain!

Works of Death

The ritual sacrifice system of ceremonial Temple worship that could not make the worshiper's conscience perfect was fulfilled by the Messiah's death. Sacrifices were needed because of sin. The Holy Spirit of Yahweh places within the hearts of true believers a desire to obey Him and to live in spiritual perfection.

Dead works (works of death; the penalty for sin) were explained for us in this same chapter, verse 14. *"How much more shall the blood of the Anointed One, who, through an aionian (everlasting) Spirit offered Himself spotless to Yahweh, cleanse your conscience from WORKS OF DEATH, for the SERVICE OF THE LIVING ELOHIM?"* (Benjamin Wilson)

Sacrifices are unnecessary for those who more faithfully obey Almighty Yahweh to the end. Sin demands the death penalty, Romans 6:23. Animal sacrifices were a substitute death for the one who sinned. The animal took the sinner's place, just as Yahshua the Messiah shouldered the death

penalty for all sinners by His vicarious death on the torture stake.

Let us hear the words of one of Yahweh's prophets. *"For I spoke not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Listen to my voice, and I will be your Elohim, and you shall be my people; and walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you. But they listened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: yet they listened not to me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff: they did worse than their fathers."* (Jeremiah 7:22-26)

Circumcision is also unnecessary because one does not rely on works—physical deeds—that cannot atone for our sins. The just (innocent one) shall live by faith, Habakkuk 2:4.

Those who live an *obedient life* by keeping all of the commandments of Yahweh's moral code are no longer sinners, they are repentant. Accepting the shed blood of Yahshua the Messiah our Redeemer, and trying to live a perfect life through the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, allows one to partake of the life of Almighty Yahweh and His Son Yahshua. When our Heavenly Father finds a repentant person living a righteous spiritual life, will He not accept him even though he is uncircumcised in the flesh? Paul declares that the *repentant* one has FULFILLED the requirements of Yahweh.

Yahshua the Messiah became the curse of the law. He died an accursed death for us upon the tree of Calvary. Our redemption was then completed. The CURSE of the law identified as the penalty for transgression was expressed in such places as Deuteronomy 27 and 28. (Why not take the time to read these chapters?)

The WORKS of the law were abolished in Him. Grace to keep the law of Yahweh has been freely bestowed upon us. We obey by keeping the law through the Holy Spirit that leads us to do good toward Almighty Yahweh and our fellow man. Showing spontaneous love toward Almighty Yahweh and other members of the human race is the first fruit of the

Holy Spirit. To conduct ourselves righteously toward Yahweh and our fellow men is keeping the covenant law, a concept based on love.

The works of the law (ritual ceremonial worship) are codified in the Old Testament in conjunction with the moral standard the Almighty has set forth in His Word. The sacrifices of Leviticus as well as the moral code were legislated from Mt. Sinai, Leviticus 27:34.

That two different, separate laws were given clearly emerges as we study the Word. Just as has already been shown from Hebrews 10:9, the division of the Bible between the sacrificial system and the moral code of law is firmly fixed, and clearly visible.

Good Works Antedate Sacrifices

Ephesians 2:8-10 will help to clarify. *"For by grace have you been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of Yahweh; not of works, that no man should glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Messiah Yahshua for good works, which Yahweh previously prepared that we should walk in them."*

In all his letters to the young Assemblies of Yahweh, Paul showed the correct interpretation and division of the Word. The works that Yahweh had **"BEFORE ORDAINED** that we should walk in them" (before the sacrificial system was established) were obedience to His moral law. This is the way to life.

"In that I command you this day to love Yahweh your Elohim, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his ordinances, that you may live and multiply, and that Yahweh your Elohim may bless you in the land which you go in to possess. But if your heart turn away, and you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other elohim, and serve them; I declare to you this day, that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land, which you pass over the Jordan to go in to possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse: therefore choose life, that you may live, you and your seed; to love Yahweh your Elohim, to obey his voice, and to hold fast to him; for he is your life, and the length of your days; that you may dwell in the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." (Deuteronomy 30:16-20)

The works that led to boasting were physical acts performed by the individual. Some added to the Word and went far beyond the intended regulations, and thereby boasted about their superior performance of *physical acts*. Purity of heart didn't matter to the legalist who was exclusively concerned with outward appearances.

Adam and Eve were shown the way of life through obedience to the commandments of Yahweh, Genesis 2:16. Only after they sinned was a sacrifice needed. Substitute sacrifices (substitute deaths) were provided in Yahweh's mercy, Genesis 3:21. That the moral law antedated the sacrificial law is clearly obvious from a close study of Genesis 2 and 3. Grace was provided as a means for Adam and Eve to escape the death penalty for breaking Yahweh's commandments. From the very beginning the salvation of Yahweh was operating. The law of Yahweh is not a curse. Yahweh's law is a good law, Psalm 119:39, (etc.) and Deuteronomy 6:24. The curse of the law is the penalty for breaking it, proven from Deuteronomy 27 and 28.

Messiah—The Promised Seed

"My brothers, let me give you an illustration. Even in ordinary life, when a man's will and testament has been duly executed, no one else can set it aside or add a codicil.

Now the promises were pronounced to Abraham and to his 'issue.' It does not say 'issues' in the plural, but in the singular, 'and to your house,' and the 'issue' intended is Messiah.

What I am saying is this: a testament, or covenant, had already been invalidated by Yahweh; It cannot be invalidated, and its promises rendered ineffective, by a law made four hundred and thirty years later.

If the inheritance is by legal right, then it is not by promise; but it was by promise that Yahweh bestowed it as a free gift on Abraham."
Galatians 3:15-18, (NEB)

As we scrutinize each statement from this passage in its proper context, the depth of Paul's reasoning shines forth. Messiah was prophesied to be the issue of Abraham. The seed through whom all the nations of the world would be blessed was to come through Abraham. No law given **430 YEARS LATER** could annul what Yahweh had promised.

The Added Law

The law that was added to the moral law observed by Abraham was the sacrificial law. The law of sacrifices the Messiah fulfilled was added 430 years after Abraham.

Abraham was obedient to Yahweh's moral law. Confirm this fact from Genesis 26:4-5. *"And I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto your seed all these lands; and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because Abraham obeyed my voice, and KEPT MY CHARGE, MY COMMANDMENTS, MY STATUTES, AND MY LAWS."*

Defining each last term reveals that the word **charge** means a commission or obligation; **commandments** in the Bible (Hebrew *mitzvah*) are **regulations**; statutes mean *sub-ordinate rules* clarifying specific applications of the broad principles of basic laws; **law** is from the Hebrew word *torah* and means a *regulatory system leading to a way of life*. Consequently, Abraham was clearly fulfilling the obligations of Yahweh's moral law.

Messiah lived a perfect life and therefore could be called the perfect man. The seed through whom the promise would be given to all nations and the sacrifice for humanity to bring them back to the Heavenly Father was encapsulated in Messiah.

"For to this were you called: because the Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judges righteously: who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose stripes you are healed. For you were going astray like sheep; but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." 1 Peter 2:21-25.

Previously in this commentary we discussed the rabbinical interpretation of circumcision. They believed that the children of Israel were circumcised at Passover, their blood mixing with the Passover sacrificial lamb. The rabbis contended that because circumcision is mentioned in the same chapter with the directions for the first Passover, and because no Israelite could partake of the Passover uncircumcised, their circumcision was performed on the same evening the Passover lamb

was slain. Such could not have been the case because no male would have left Egypt that night.

Apparently the false teachers mentioned by Paul in Galatians 2 had applied Exodus 12 to prove that no one could take the Passover or accept the sacrifice of Yahshua the Messiah unless he was circumcised, and this included the stranger (Gentile), Exodus 12:48.

Paul shows that theirs was an inaccurate teaching. He stressed that the promise was made to Abraham and to his seed. This meant that Yahshua the Messiah was circumcised for us by His righteous life, so that He could be the lamb of Yahweh to take away the sin of the world. We keep the Passover Memorial with circumcised hearts each year in memory of His atoning death upon the tree of Calvary.

The law of Exodus 12:48 could not remove a promise that had been made almost five centuries before. Again, the crux of the entire passage hinges upon the doctrine of circumcision, not the keeping of Yahweh's moral law code. Circumcision is the subject of the book of Galatians. It does not abrogate Yahweh's moral law that stands unalterable from the foundation of the world.

The inheritance we shall receive in the Kingdom of Yahweh is not by legal right. Rather, it is through the Seed, the promised Messiah—Yahweh's Son. Eternal life is a free gift to the world from our Heavenly Father bestowed as a promise upon Abraham while he was yet uncircumcised. This will be explained more thoroughly in following chapters.

Chapter 7

Which Law Was Added?

"Then what of the law? It was added to make wrongdoing a legal offence. It was a temporary measure pending the arrival of the 'ISSUE' to whom the promise was made. It was promulgated through angels, and there was an intermediary, but an intermediary is not needed for one party acting alone, and Yahweh is one." Galatians 3:19-20, (NEB)

The added law was a temporary measure, Paul explains, appended to an existing code of ethics. Similar to the United States legal system, Yahweh's laws were enacted to regulate specific life situations. They legislate conduct between individuals within society. Laws declare the moral responsibility each person has toward his fellow men. Added to that system of regulations is a system of punishment—fines and prison sentences—that set forth a penalty for offenses that could be committed. This is what gave the law teeth, legal stature. Law is worthless unless it can be enforced, if broken, with punishment.

Furthermore, the presiding judge at a trial can hand down a sentence that is applicable to the particular case of the person found guilty. Habitual criminals may be given the maximum sentence and a first offender a minimum or even a suspended sentence, according to the best interests of justice. Have you ever looked into the penal code of your state? These facts emerge clearly.

The law added to another law contained the sentence of death. At Mt. Sinai, Yahweh outlined a sacrificial system that could postpone the imposition of the death penalty upon sinful people until the Messiah would come. The seed

(Messiah) came to remove the capital sentence with His redeeming blood.

This law was given by angels through a messenger. It could not have been the moral law code which was spoken directly to Israel (and later Moses) by Yahweh, Deuteronomy 4:10-14. After Israel ran away upon hearing Yahweh begin to declare His laws, they implored Moses to be the intermediary for them, but they agreed to obey every injunction Moses was to deliver to them. See Exodus chapter 20.

It therefore becomes plainly obvious that this added law applied to offering sacrifices that were imposed because of sin (transgression of the law) and included the commandment of the bloody personal sacrifice of circumcision.

The Angel of Yahweh

Let us give further consideration to what Paul has tried to convey. The one who was to carry out the sentence of death was the angel of Yahweh, Exodus 23:21. Yahweh's Name was in Him, and He would not pardon the transgressions of Israel. This supernatural messenger of Yahweh carried out the will of the Most High. Notice also the reference to an angel in Exodus 32:34. *"But go now, lead the people to the place which I have told you of. My angel shall go ahead of you, but a day will come when I shall punish them for their sin. And Yahweh smote the people for worshipping the bull-calf which Aaron had made."* (NEB)

Commentators have shown that this second reference points to the angel of Yahweh commissioned to guide Israel to their destination. Each of these passages shows that the angel was sent to maintain a rigid system of strict justice among the Israelites, to execute sentence without mercy (grace) upon those who sinned.

The promise of salvation and grace was first offered through the seed of the woman, Genesis 3:15. This designated seed would be a descendant of Abraham, since we find the same word used in reference to the seed of Abraham through whom all the earth would be blessed, Genesis 17:7-8. As the word *seed* was used in Genesis 3:15 in the promise to Adam and Eve, the seed (Messiah) is the mediator of a better covenant. Yahshua did not come to condemn, but to preach repentance, Hebrews 9:14-15 and John 3:17-18. While He was the promised seed of the woman, and of the family of

Abraham, principally He was the Son of the Father in Heaven—Yahweh.

Unity of Yahweh's Law

Many times the added "law" is misunderstood to mean the commandments that were added to the original 10. Deuteronomy 5:22 is used to support this concept.

Let us examine the unfolding drama on the day when Israel received the covenant law from Yahweh at Sinai. This episode will throw light upon what was added to the law, revealing that no separation between the Ten Commandments and the remainder of the covenant was ever intended.

Almighty Yahweh meant to speak His complete covenant law to the entire nation of Israel He had released from bondage, Exodus 19:5-6. He preceded His audible presentation of the covenant by an awesome, supernatural demonstration of power from the mountaintop. When Yahweh Elohim spoke the Ten Commandments, Israel could not endure the penetrating sound of His voice, Exodus 20:18.

In their great fear, Israel ran away! By this thoughtless act, they became personally responsible for not hearing or listening to the entire covenant agreement. Although they did not hear, the entire law remained in effect and Israel had promised to keep it. Israel requested that Moses serve as their mediator so that they could receive the remainder of Yahweh's law.

Israel voluntarily agreed to abide by all the terms to be submitted to them. This was to become their national constitution as the nation of Yahweh. Yahweh accepted their proposal. Moses became the intermediary between Yahweh and Israel. Yahweh spoke to him face to face as a man speaks to his friend, Exodus 33:11. Moses carried Yahweh's message back to Israel.

Read the entire fifth chapter of Deuteronomy at this point. A correct interpretation of Deuteronomy 5:22 may be obtained by defining the word *yasaph* from a Hebrew lexicon. This word was best defined by William Holliday in his **Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament** and means *continue to do*. The same word is used in Numbers 11:25 and translated in the Authorized text as *cease*. The correct meaning of Deuteronomy 5:22 is that

Yahweh did not continue to speak. Why should He continue to speak to those who ran away? His effort would have been wasted. Israel was terror-stricken by the voice of Yahweh and could not endure the meaning behind His words. In plain language Israel was a nation of sinners!

Nevertheless, those who do not understand the passage from the Hebrew texts have made an ill-advised separation in Yahweh's law between the Ten Commandments and the remainder of the covenant law. Thereby they have nullified many important commandments, such as the dietary laws and Yahweh's annual Sabbaths of Leviticus 23. They have perverted the meaning of this passage and clearly undermined the authority of a portion of Yahweh's Word. They have wrongly divided the sacred Scriptures, the word of Yahweh.

Obviously the added law to which Galatians 3:19 refers is a law that "was added because of sin" (transgression of the law, 1 John 3:4). Paul intended the meaning of the term "added law" to stand for the sacrificial law. The circumcision law was also included since this rite portrayed a personal blood offering (as the rabbinical authorities interpreted it). This law made sin more sinful since the breaking of the moral code became a personal repudiation of the covenant.

Note that passages in Exodus and Leviticus indicate that the sacrificial law was not delivered audibly in the hearing of all Israel, as was the covenant. It was transmitted through Moses as intermediary as he alone appeared before Yahweh on the mountain for 40 days where Yahweh instructed him in the ceremonial worship of the Tabernacle era, Hebrews 8:5-7.

The Law Separated at a Natural Point

Clearly there is a separation in the law at Exodus 24. Moses wrote the covenant law in a book. Israel then ratified their national constitution. Afterward, Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the 70 elders went up to the mountain to fellowship with Yahweh. Sin separates Yahweh and His people (Isaiah 59:2), while obedience unites us in personal fellowship. When they returned from that fellowship, Moses was told to come alone to the mountain where he remained with Yahweh 40 days.

The Ceremonial Law Instructions

Moses on Mt. Sinai received the blueprint for the Tabernacle and the ritual worship that was to unite the nation of Israel under the banner of Yahweh. Furthermore, we should note that when Israel was in Egypt, they had no direct contact with Yahweh except through Moses. Moses first received the commandment of circumcision in Egypt (Exodus 12:43-44, 48) which he in turn delivered to the Israelites. The moral law is quite clearly distinguished from the ritual and ceremonial law of sacrifices and circumcision, when we correctly interpret the Word of truth.

Let us further consider the ceremony of circumcision and its meaning. Yahweh originated the sign of circumcision as the ultimate, visible, **physical** evidence that Abraham had proved himself faithful and obedient to the covenant he was keeping. Abraham submitted to a fleshly alteration of his body at the direction of Yahweh, similar to a slave who submitted to physical marking by the beloved master with whom he wished to remain until his death. Please see Deuteronomy 15:16-17.

Yahweh's mark of circumcision was hidden from public view, but spiritual circumcision of the heart is open, obvious to all. It is visible to anyone scrutinizing the fruits in the life of an individual. The covenant between Yahweh and Abraham, sealed by circumcision, was so binding that there was no way either side could abrogate the covenant.

Abraham was the servant of Yahweh, a faithful slave to the day of his death. Spiritual circumcision of the heart points toward life in Messiah. Circumcision made disobedience to the law of Yahweh more sinful than before. It brought to the mind of the **sincere** individual a penetrating feeling of guilt when he committed an offense against the one who literally owned him.

Therefore, the sign of circumcision made sin more serious because the sinner had now renounced the authority of his master through disobedience to His Word. The one who broke the covenant fell to a lower state at that time than he had been before entering into the covenant agreement with Yahweh. Now he was treading underfoot the blood of Yahweh's sacrifice, His Messiah (Hebrews 10:26-31).

Our Father, Who Art in Heaven

Can you grasp the deep-seated meaning behind Galatians 4:6-7? *"To prove that you are sons, Yahweh has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying 'Abba! Father.' You are therefore no longer a SLAVE but a SON, and if a SON, then also by Yahweh's own act an HEIR."* (NEB)

Yahshua the Messiah is a *kind* and *loving master*. He has bought us by His blood shed at His death, 2 Peter 2:10. We are His people. He released us from the bondage of slavery in sin. We are now accepted as **children** of the Heavenly Father, Almighty Yahweh. We serve Him **voluntarily** because we *love* Him. He has done so much for us that out of gratitude we should earnestly **desire** to do His will, not because we are forced to obey as a slave. The sign of His ownership over our lives is the mark of His character stamped forever upon us when we keep His law. We become children of the Most High when we live as **He** would live.

This is an outward visible sign for all the world to see. It cannot be hidden under a garment. Our lives are an open book—always visible to those with whom we are in contact—compelling us to live for the Messiah. When we enter True Worship, our Heavenly Father bestows His Name upon us. Much more is then required of us. Because we bear His magnificent family name, the world will closely scrutinize our personal conduct. We must uphold the honor and name of the spiritual family we have joined.

Circumcision of the heart produces righteous lives that are epistles (letters from Yahweh) known and read of all men, 2 Corinthians 3:2-6. It is a voluntary act on the part of the individual. Just as in the case of Abraham, the individual must first prove himself to Yahweh before he is accepted. Yahshua the Messiah will accept our spiritual sacrifice if we continue faithful.

The Basis for Promised Blessings

"Does the law, then, contradict the promises? No, never! If a law had been given which had power to bestow life, then indeed righteousness would have come from keeping the law. But Scripture has declared the whole world to be prisoners in subjection to sin, so that faith in Yahshua the Messiah may be the ground on which the promised blessing is given, and given to those who have such faith." Galatians 3:21-22 (NEB)

The moral law of Yahweh is not opposed to the blessings because He informs us in such Scriptures as Deuteronomy 28 that those who keep His law will be blessed.

Paul explains that the Scriptures declare everyone in the world to be prisoners of sin. Sin is the transgression of the law, 1 John 3:4. Every human being has broken Yahweh's law. Therefore, all are under sentence of death.

The law done away was the law that could not produce life in us. It could **not make a man righteous nor could it bring blessing. The law of sin and death was the sacrificial law setting forth the penalties** for disobedience to Yahweh's moral law. Keeping Yahweh's moral law makes a man righteous, Deuteronomy 6:25. Only Yahweh's grace and His Holy Spirit given to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32) can bring us life and reverse the law of sin and death.

Obviously, these two identifying characteristics could be applied only to animal sacrifices, and by extension, to the personal sacrifice of blood connoted by the circumcision law. We have already seen that the writer in Hebrews 9:9-10 made this quite plain. The law to be set aside was designated as the ritual Temple worship and sacrificial system, **imposed until the Messiah's death.**

The only righteousness in the New Testament era can be found through keeping Yahweh's commandments and in our faith in Yahshua the Messiah and His shed blood. Even in the Old Testament, the righteousness of the patriarchs depended entirely upon their **faith** in the forthcoming seed of the woman that was to crush the head of the serpent while they faithfully kept Yahweh's law. None of the Old Testament men of faith depended upon their personal merits which they knew carried the carnal (fleshly) stigma of sin.

Sin Shouldered by Messiah

Yahshua the Messiah never taught that the covenant law of Yahweh would be annulled. He actually taught the opposite, Matthew 5:17-20. He was Yahweh's **obedient son**, not rebellious, and He taught obedience to our Heavenly Father. Today we keep Yahweh's commandments because we love Him, 1 John 5:3. Analysis of this Scripture clearly proves that the added ritual law was imposed because of sin, given to roll back the trespasses of the world to the time of the Messiah.

Then it was set aside by the perfect fulfillment of Messiah's death upon the tree of Calvary.

Every question about the law that Paul has raised thus far can be applied to animal sacrifices and circumcision, and how the rabbinic authorities interpreted the ceremonial law. It **cannot** be applied to the covenant moral law code.

The law of circumcision did not oppose or contradict Yahweh's promises of everlasting life and blessings. It merely showed that the human being bears in his flesh the identifying mark that he was the property of another party.

Circumcision could not promise righteousness or everlasting life. Faith through living a righteous life can. Fleshly circumcision could not stop anyone from sinning. Keeping Yahweh's law as an obedient child because it is written on our heart and conscience has always been the criterion for receiving the Holy Spirit, Acts 5:32. The Holy Spirit dwelling in the hearts of obedient people will powerfully overcome sin in the flesh.

You can reread all of the passages we have thus far examined and you will never find one instance when circumcision promised everlasting life as has been promised in the New Testament era of grace. Circumcision of the **heart**, then, is the most important aspect of showing you are a child of the Most High because converted actions cannot be hidden.

Perfection Before Circumcision

Before Abraham received the physical rite of circumcision, he was commanded to be perfect, Genesis 17:1. Abraham kept the law of Yahweh and by so doing he demonstrated that he was a submissive child of the true Mighty One. Only then would Yahweh accept him with the sign of ownership that physical circumcision symbolizes. Circumcision of the heart is a much better indication or sign of our relationship to the heavenly family, and it came first in Abraham's case also.

The Law as Tutor

"Before this faith came, we were close prisoners in the custody of law, pending the revelation of faith. Thus the law was a kind of tutor in charge of us until Messiah should come, when we should be justified through faith; and now that faith has come, the tutor's charge is at an end.

For through faith you are all sons of Yahweh in union with Messiah Yahshua. Baptized into union with him, you have all put on Messiah as a garment. There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Messiah Yahshua. But if you thus belong to Messiah, you are the 'issue' of Abraham, and so heirs by promise." Galatians 3:23-29 (NEB)

Here again we must conclude that Paul deals with the doctrine of circumcision. If we are Abraham's seed by faith, we will live righteous lives and keep Yahweh's laws just as he did. We must recall that Abraham kept Yahweh's charge or obligation, all of the law, Genesis 26:5. If we hope to be counted worthy of receiving the promises made to Abraham, we must practice the same life of faith in which he excelled.

It requires little faith, if any, to be circumcised. It does require a continuing, living faith to become a worshiper of Yahweh and to obey His commandments. An active faith (*works*) will convert your human life into a state of perfect character through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Circumcision of the heart produces a mature-spirited person, totally yielded to Yahweh, living in His ways, because we must exemplify the character of the Heavenly Father and His Son Yahshua the Messiah. Remember, circumcision of the heart means to love Yahweh with all our being, Deuteronomy 30:6.

Paul illustrates the point with the example of a tutor. The ritual Temple law, sacrifices, circumcision, and the rigid rabbinical interpretations were stern taskmasters to bring Israel to the Messiah. The ceremonial law guided Israel and kept them in subjection with a rigid code of severe penalties and judicial decisions. When the Messiah came, He showed the human family how to keep the law of Yahweh joyfully and not as a burden, Isaiah 42:21. The Holy Spirit was given to assist the believers to keep the law. When one lives obediently, no continuing sacrifice is necessary. Please note Jeremiah 7:22-24.

The converted person sincerely desires to become a child of the Most High, to do His will because he loves Yahweh. His commandments written on human hearts will not allow the believer to sin against Him, although he is not circumcised in the flesh.

Paul explained in Romans 7:14 that the law is spiritual. Those who delight in the flesh cannot please Yahweh because Yahweh is Spirit. His law is spiritual and was given to the human race so that man could visualize the higher way of life of the spiritual family. Yahweh's code of moral laws raises us from the level of the degenerate physical to the perfection of the spiritual.

Now the picture becomes very clear. Yahweh's law was not annulled when Yahshua died, but it was the sacrificial system that was **changed**. Those who obey Yahweh must have a sacrifice for past sins, Romans 3:25. The sign of Yahweh's authority over an individual is manifested in the personal life of the believer who is obedient and merits Yahweh's mercy.

Paul explained this in 2 Timothy 2:19. "*However, the firm foundation of Yahweh stands, having this seal, Yahweh knows them that are his: and, Let every one that names the name of Yahweh depart from unrighteousness.*" Notice carefully—all who accept the Name of the Messiah must depart from **iniquity** (the Greek word means *lawlessness—sin*).

It was the physical sacrificial system that led Israel to their Messiah. Paul informed the Galatians that they could learn a great, invaluable lesson from this illustration.

A student will be asked by the tutor to do many purely mechanical things to develop good study habits and instinctive abilities. When he graduates from the educational institution he must apply what he has learned without someone constantly reminding him to go systematically through every step of the basic system. The physical system of animal sacrifice and circumcision prepared Israel for *mature, responsible, spiritual life in the Messiah*. A spiritual believer will have learned the importance of sacrifice so that the significance of the perfect sacrifice, Yahshua the Messiah, can be applied.

The spirit behind the keeping of the law is **love**—love for **Almighty Yahweh** and for our **fellow men**. **Love** is the fulfilling of the law because love will not wrong his neighbor, even if no commandment is recorded, Romans 13:10. Loving Yahweh will compel us to keep His commandments. Loving our neighbor will cause us to do nothing to injure him. Yahweh's commandments explain our responsibilities.

"We know that Elohim hears not sinners: but if any man is a worshiper of Elohim, and does his will, him he hears," John 9:31.

Paul taught the keeping of the law of Yahweh, but he taught it in a higher, more meaningful way than was common at that time. He taught the message of Yahshua found in Matthew 5:20. *"I tell you, unless you show yourselves far better men than the Pharisees and the doctors of the law, you can never enter the kingdom of Heaven."* NEB. Paul said, *"Do we then make the law of no effect through faith? By no means: No, we establish the law,"* Romans 3:31. Our desire to show love to Yahweh and His creation will motivate us to obey the commandments.

The Assemblies of Yahweh in these last days continues to proclaim this identical apostolic message. We bear the identifying characteristics of True Worshipers found in Revelation 12:17. *"And the dragon became exceedingly angry with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of Yahweh, and hold the testimony of Yahshua."* Please see also Revelation 14:12.

From these passages we know that only those who keep the commandments will have right to the tree of life.

Chapter 10

Circumcision—The Root of the Problem

"Stand firm, then, and refuse to be tied to the yoke of slavery again." Galatians 5:1 (NEB)

With this stirring command Paul continues his exhortation to the Galatian brethren in the fifth chapter of his letter to them. Do not fall victim to slavery all over again, to be entangled with a yoke of bondage! As we have already seen, the Bible defines the yoke of bondage as **sin**. The keeping of the Law of Yahweh means liberty.

Israel was enslaved in Egypt, a type of sin, Hebrews 11:25. Yahweh released them through miraculous acts and brought this nation into the righteous way of life found in His covenant. His law is liberty. Psalm 119:45, *"And I shall walk at liberty; For I have sought your precepts."* Jacob (James) 1:25, *"But he that looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and continues, being not a hearer that forgets but a doer that works, this man shall be blessed in his doing."*

Keeping the law of Yahweh brings us liberty from eternal death. It breaks the yoke of bondage that sin holds on us, Lamentations 1:14.

Yahshua also has a yoke. His burden is light and easy, Matthew 11:28-30. To be fastened in the yoke of bondage is to recognize that sin can hold a death dealing dominion or authority over our minds and bodies. Yielding ourselves to Yahweh's government will place us under the authority that releases us from death and gives us eternal life.

Under the Old Testament system, when someone recognized any possibility of atonement in circumcision and sacrifice, he

acknowledged that he would need a continuing sin offering. The sacrifice of Yahshua the Messiah atoned once for all time, and completely cleansed the sinner from all sins that are past, Romans 3:25. In the water of baptism we have buried the old man and the weak fleshly tendency to sin. The old man, the lower carnal nature, is replaced with the dynamic new man, regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit of Yahweh. A person who does not continue to commit sin needs no further sacrifice.

We are living in the era of grace when Almighty Yahweh mercifully pardons those who accidentally break His commandments without premeditation of sin, Hebrews 10:26-31.

Consequently, what Paul meant becomes obvious. As long as the True Worshipers obey Yahweh and seek to live righteously, free from sin (transgression of the law of Yahweh), they have no further need of sacrifice. Sacrifice is only necessary to atone for sins. Yahshua has already perfected that sacrifice.

The Galatians had the assurance of forgiveness of past sins in Yahshua's blood. While they continued to serve Yahweh they could now live free from an archaic ceremonial structure of worship that annually demanded certain ritual sacrifices. That oppressive system did not forgive sin, but only acknowledged it with a sin offering of repentance pointing toward the Messiah, the perfect sacrificial lamb of Yahweh.

"Stand firm, then, and refuse to be tied to the yoke of slavery again."

Mark my words: I, Paul, say to you that IF YOU RECEIVE CIRCUMCISION Messiah will do you no good at all. Once again, you can take it from me that every man who receives CIRCUMCISION is under obligation to keep the entire law. When you seek to be justified by way of law, your relation with Messiah is completely severed: you have fallen out of the domain of Yahshua's grace. For to us, our hope of attaining that righteousness which we eagerly await is the work of the Spirit through faith. If we were in union with Yahshua Messiah CIRCUMCISION makes no difference at all, nor does the want of it; the only thing that counts is faith in love." Galatians 5:1-6, NEB (Emphasis ours)

Circumcision is the core concern of the book of Galatians, as this passage clearly proves. All of the various arguments Paul employed up to this point are directed toward proving that if any baptized member of the Galatian assemblies of Yahweh was to yield to the pressures of the Jewish pharisaical

legalists, he would deny the sacrifice of the Messiah. Their interpretation allowed no room for the atoning death of Messiah.

The question of circumcision (as was pointed out previously in this commentary), occupied a great concern among the Galatian brethren. The Messiah (and His purpose for coming to this earth as the lamb of Yahweh) is rejected when one rebuilds a structure of worship that relies upon our human capability to somehow make atonement for our personal sins. If we reject the Messiah and His blood through trusting in our human blood shed at the time of circumcision (as the seal and sign of the covenant), we have fallen from grace.

In this regard all biblical sound doctrines regarding salvation are integrated into the spiritual experience of the believer. Grace, faith, and the blood of the Messiah stand in close interrelationship performing the work of Yahweh to raise us from sin into a state of sonship. Since the sin that separated us is now banished from our lives, we are reunited with our Heavenly Father through obedience to His commandments. Now we receive His unmerited pardon (grace) for the sins of the past. A new life, a spiritual life for eternity is now ours.

Paul raises the question of a return to keeping the whole law. By checking verse 14, you will note the same term used in many translations. But, the Greek text informs us that although the word **nomos** (law) is used in both instances, two different words are employed for "whole."

In this instance (verse 3) the word definitely means the whole of the law. This indicates that if one wishes to return to a personal shedding of blood in the ceremony of circumcision, he will be obliged to return to keeping the whole law, meaning the entire corpus of ritual ceremonial sacrifices along with Talmudic interpretations. This can be proven by Hebrews 9:9-10.

We must maintain the context so that a true understanding may be secured. Paul pointedly refers to the rabbinical interpretation of circumcision here, asserting that the rite served as a personal atonement for the sins of the individual. As pointed out previously, an eight day old baby would have no sins, neither could he repent. No provision in the law was made for a female baby's circumcision; therefore, could she ever be forgiven of her sins or could she even be saved under

the old system?

It is not the act of circumcision that bears significance. But, each person's life, his daily walk with the framework of obedience is critical.

Paul has plainly stated that circumcision or uncircumcision meant nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of Yahweh (means everything), 1 Corinthians 7:19 (also Galatians 5:6). If someone breaks the commandments of Yahweh (His moral law), then he will be considered uncircumcised by Yahweh. Those who keep the commandments of Yahweh will find their uncircumcision accepted as circumcision by our Heavenly Father, just as was the case with Abraham when he was called a righteous man some 15 years before his circumcision.

Consequently, we must conclude that the designation "whole law" does not mean the keeping of Yahweh's covenant law, but it designates the sacrifices and the rituals connected with it, along with the system of traditional Jewish interpretation known as the law of Moses (the Oral Law), but which in reality was originated by the Rabbis without biblical foundation in many cases.

Paul next turns to consider the concept of being justified by law. Justification is another "religious" term that many people use, but few seem to understand. It is surprising how many nominal Christians only parrot words which they do not fully understand but which sound spiritual. These words have been completely removed from their definitions, so the term sounds lofty but it is devoid of conveying understanding. Let us not be guilty of such pseudo-intellectual error.

Justification means to be **declared or judged innocent** of breaking the law of Yahweh. We cannot be declared **innocent** of past wrong-doing by a later rehabilitation. Our past record of doing evil continues to stand as a glaring testimony against us unless something or someone can erase that sin. Nothing will erase sin completely except grace, meaning total pardon and forgiveness by Almighty Yahweh who recognizes the atoning blood of Yahshua the Messiah as it is applied to our lives. It is obvious that when we choose to be justified by WORKS of the law, like doing penance (meaning circumcision and animal sacrifices), the original plan of salvation centered upon Messiah Yahshua as early as Genesis 3:15 cannot fulfill its purpose.

The logic of Yahshua's sacrifice becomes very plain and clear as Paul explains to the Galatian brethren that there is a difference between the moral law and the sacrificial law. Our relationship to the Messiah is based entirely upon living as He did, living free from sin, so that we can merit His atonement. Nevertheless, we cannot depend on any righteousness that we may do by way of ritual, physical observances, or we will be rejecting the purpose of the Messiah who came to replace the ritual sacrifices with His own blood. To be like Yahshua we must never sin (1 Peter 2:22), or His death will avail nothing to cleanse us of righteousness, 1 John 1:5-9.

Let us never forget that "grace" in the Bible represents a gift from Yahweh. It is unmerited kindness or mercy. When a superior (a judge, perhaps) bestows forgiveness upon a guilty party through giving a full pardon, and then additionally reinstates him to his former position, mercy or grace is activated.

The Holy Spirit of Yahweh places conviction upon the heart of the believer, bringing him to repentance. Brokenhearted, he asks the Heavenly Father to forgive him. The sinner does not try to evade just punishment, but he throws himself on the mercy of the heavenly judicial system. Almighty Yahweh has every right to demand the full penalty for law breaking—the death sentence. But in boundless great mercy for His children, He pardons the offender who must promise in the future never to sin again. The repentant person promises to live in harmony with the way of life that has been laid down for the human family in the Word of Yahweh. With the help of the Holy Spirit the repentant person is successful.

The action of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of the sinner begins with conviction. The individual subsequently begins to acquire faith in the Word of Yahweh and in His plan of salvation through the mercy of the Almighty so he can merit His grace.

Paul explains all this to mean that physical circumcision makes no spiritual difference, since each individual must come before the Heavenly Father to ask forgiveness for a sinful life. Our faith in the plan of salvation is perfected by our love for Yahweh. His great love for His people is recorded in the Scriptures and manifested to the world.

And what great love that is, that He would send His own son to this earth to provide the redemptive sacrifice for those

who are truly repentant! The act of grace is a free gift from Almighty Yahweh that cannot be earned in any way. It is freely bestowed upon all who request. It totally erases the past sinful life of the repentant sinner. Almighty Yahweh gives grace and pardon to the one who has sincerely repented, but will not forgive the person who continues to sin, break His laws, 1 John 3:4. Certain judgment awaits the unrepentant!

Let us focus for just a moment on the concept of love and how this quality is manifested in the life of the believer. When one has learned of the serious nature of the offenses that we have committed against the Most High Heavenly Father during our past life and how He would be totally justified in carrying out the full death sentence against us, our hearts are just flooded with love for Him and His plan of salvation. Yahweh manifests love in all He does. Throughout the Bible He says, "You did Me wrong, you have taken the pathway of death, but I am giving you a new opportunity to heal the division between us that you have caused. You can make a change in life and come back to me through the way provided for you in the shed blood of the Messiah Yahshua, My Son. The reason why I am doing this is because I love you as one of My beloved created human beings and I want to give you every possible opportunity to rise to the exalted position of being one of the members of My very family."

To direct your thoughts toward the subject of love and what our Heavenly Father has done for the human family, turn to the book of 1 John and read chapters 2-5.

After such a genuine demonstration of love from our Heavenly Father for a wayward, prodigal child, we cannot help but love Him in gratitude for what He has done for us. We owe Him something for His benevolence toward us. From henceforth we must please Him in all we do by obeying His commandments. We turn our backs on the world (which habitually breaks the commandments). We make our exit from a degenerate Babylonish system by turning toward Yahweh who has offered us these magnificent blessings in such abundance.

The Tree—A Stumbling Block

"You were running well; who was it that hindered you from following the truth? Whatever persuasion he used, it did not come from Yahweh

who is calling you; 'a little leaven,' remember, 'leavens all the dough.' United with you in Yahweh, I am confident that you will not take the wrong view; but the man who is unsettling your minds, whoever he may be, must bear Yahweh's judgment. And I, my friends, if I am still advocating circumcision, why is it I am still persecuted? In that case, my preaching of the tree is a stumbling-block no more. As for these agitators, they had better go the whole way and make eunuchs of themselves!" Galatians 5:7-12 (NEB)

In this section Paul firms up his stand against the false doctrines that crept into Yahshua's assemblies in Galatia. He insists that if even a little false doctrine is introduced into a group it will eventually leaven the entire assembly and corrupt it.

How perfectly true is this summary! It may be seen on many occasions that false doctrine works as does leaven, in the end a great upheaval will result until the corruption is somehow eliminated.

One might observe that in Yahshua's Apostolic Assembly (of which those in Galatia formed a part), there was a deep difference of opinion. Not all was smooth sailing for that fledgling assembly. With joy the people had accepted the doctrine of the Messiah and His kingdom to come. They had begun to work out their personal salvation in fear and trembling.

Then false doctrine appeared and it was allowed to infiltrate the assembly. The false doctrine had come from Jewish rabbinical legalists who were taking devious interpretations out of the Scriptures, as has been shown previously. Now Paul calls for the judgment of Yahweh upon the erring individuals. He strongly hints that if one wishes to follow Jewish rituals that are in error, why not also follow the rites of popular, worldly Cybelle worship in ancient times, which was self-mutilation?

Sound doctrine will bring about persecution. Don't you believe this? Yahshua said, *"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be very glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you," Matthew 5:10-12.*

Paul said, *"But you did follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith,*

longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings; what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: and out of them all Yahweh delivered me. Yes, and all that would live holy in the Messiah Yahshua shall suffer persecution," 2 Timothy 3:10-12.

The name Paul in the Hebrew means "a worker, or to be worked over," and Paul was truly a sponge for persecution! He suffered terribly for the doctrine of the Messiah! Few people have ever suffered as he did. If you would like to learn what happened to him, turn to 2 Corinthians 11:23-30.

Yahshua understood what it meant to stand unflinchingly for sound doctrine—and receive great persecution for His conviction. He ultimately experienced the wrath of the religious establishment that did not adhere strictly to the Bible but depended upon religious tradition.

Paul likewise experienced persecution for his stand on the Messianic doctrine, a doctrine that will truly harmonize the sacred Scriptures. Paul preached the atoning death of Yahshua the Messiah that will wash away the sins of those who claim the grace of Yahweh. If we live by faith, Yahweh will forgive our sins when we worship Him and humbly keep His commandments. Therefore, it becomes obvious that faith and circumcision are at opposite poles.

Paul preached the death of the Messiah upon the tree, a perfect sacrifice that will work this atoning miracle. Works of men are then rejected as having the power or the ability to expiate. Our works cannot atone for us.

Here the true message of salvation was brought into direct confrontation with rabbinical Judaism and their carnal interpretation of the law of Yahweh. Those who have received atonement for their sins in the death of the perfect sinless man will seek to live as perfectly as He did. Paul suffered for his conviction and for the message that he preached since it was not a popular doctrine.

We today also suffer for our stand in understanding scriptural doctrine and we say as did Paul in his day, "Yahweh be the judge and decide between what we teach and the ideas of those who oppose sound doctrine."

Freedom From Sin

"You, my friends, were called to be free men; only do not turn your freedom into license for your lower nature, but be servants to one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in a single commandment:

'Love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you go on fighting one another, tooth and nail, all you can expect is mutual destruction." Galatians 5:13-15 (NEB)

Freedom from doing penance or performing some other physical act, does not release us from obeying Yahweh's commandments. Our lower carnal (fleshly) nature would direct us toward anarchy because this is the way of Satan. We have been called to be free men, free from sin and its certain death penalty.

We are free from the constant ritual sacrificial system because we seek to live in harmony with the will of Almighty Yahweh. Therefore, we need no continuing sacrifice, but the shed blood of Yahshua the Messiah is sufficient to pay the price once and for all. We are freed from the tentacles of eternal death, having been placed on the pathway of liberty and everlasting life taking us toward the Kingdom of Yahweh. Meditate carefully on this concept and you will gain a whole dimension of understanding.

Let us analyze the term "whole law" that appears in the **Authorized Version** and in other translations. In verse 3 we find the Greek words **holon ton nomon**. This is to be translated "the whole of the law." As explained previously, this term would signify a return to animal sacrifices if one were to look to circumcision as an atonement for sins, because the sacrifice of the Messiah would consequently be rejected. It also refers to the oral law which we have already seen to be explained by the Rabbis as a superior adjustment to the written Law.

In verse 14 the Greek text reads, **ho gar pas nomos**. Translated this would be, "for every (all) law." You will notice that different words are related to the word law (**nomos**) and thus a different meaning is intended. In verse 3, Paul wishes to indicate all or the entirety of the law of Yahweh, which would designate the sacrificial commandments.

In verse 14 the word **pas** means every law. This includes all of the written law of Yahweh. All of the commandments of Yahweh can be summarized by the word **love** (agape). If we have agape in our hearts we will wish to keep the commandments of Yahweh and we will wish to serve our fellow men.

Yahshua taught exactly the same thing in His ministry.

Turn to Matthew 22:34-40. *"But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him: Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said to him, You shall love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments the whole law hangs, and the prophets."*

We note that Paul was teaching the same message that Yahshua had taught. Summarizing the law of Yahweh in complete brevity can be done by one word—LOVE! The law of Yahweh specifies how we should love our Heavenly Father. Love is indeed THE way of life! When brethren of the Assemblies of Yahweh have a difference of opinion they will always find a solution in a spirit of love for each other and the truth of Yahweh. Brethren will solve problems rather than run away from them because they have the Holy Spirit of Yahweh.

John has shown in his first epistle how we should express our love to Yahweh. His explanation follows in close harmony with what Yahshua the Messiah taught in His earthly ministry and what Paul wrote on several occasions, including this passage in Galatians.

1 John 5:1-3, *"Whoever believes that Yahshua is the Messiah is begotten of Yahweh: and whoever loves him that begat loves him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of Elohim, when we love Yahweh and do his commandments. For this is the love of Yahweh, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."*

To come into contact with Yahweh is to become immersed in His love. It envelops our heart and life until it must reflect outward from us toward our fellow men. We show Yahweh that we love Him because we keep His commandments. We should show our love to our brethren and to our fellow man by doing nothing that would encroach upon their rights as specified in the law of Yahweh. So we find that love is indeed the fulfilling of the law of Yahweh.

Notice how perfectly Paul expresses this in Romans 13:8-10. *"Owe no man anything, save to love one another: for he that loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not covet, and if there is any other*

commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love works no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law."

We might also observe that the only way we can truly complete the purpose for which the law of Yahweh was given is to show love toward Yahweh and toward our fellow men. Love summarizes the law of Yahweh and it completes the intention for which it was given. No internal conflict can ever develop in the Assemblies of Yahweh when love prevails and reigns supreme. It is the force to bind Yahweh's people together in a unified body.

Spirit Motivated People

"That nature sets its desires against the Spirit, while the Spirit fights against it. They are in conflict with one another so that what you will to do you cannot do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law." Galatians 5:17-18 (NEB)

Read again the last sentence of this passage. This is exactly how the Greek text reads (with no article before the word **law**). In the **King James Version** a word has been added that should not be there.

If we are led by the Spirit of Yahweh we are not under law, meaning its penalty. It is the Spirit of Yahweh that is implanted within our hearts and minds at baptism that will make us victorious in battle against our lower carnal nature. When we follow the Spirit of Yahweh to do His commandments, we will not yield to our fleshly nature but we will thereby demonstrate our love to Yahweh. We will serve Almighty Yahweh in reverent worship and not be under, or incur the penalty for, disobedience.

Sacrifice for sin then becomes unnecessary because we will try to live a sinless life. Our hearts will be circumcised (Deuteronomy 30:6-8) to love and serve Yahweh and the blood of Messiah cleanses us from all sin. Almighty Yahweh will then give us His approval just before we enter into the promised land (the coming Kingdom of Yahweh). The circumcision not made with hands, putting off fleshly lusts, is Yahweh's gift through Yahshua the Messiah.

The type of Joshua 5 will be fulfilled in the anti-type, as in 1 Corinthians 15:35-38. Our lower nature, which would seek to do some act of penance rather than live in strict obedience to

the law of Yahweh, can indeed be conquered. The Holy Spirit of Yahweh will do the work in our lives if we will follow its guidance, since it is a spirit of **power**. It requires faith to believe that Yahweh will approve of us if we live a sinless life, without the necessity for doing penance.

"But if you bear the name of a Jew, and rest upon the law, and glory in Yahweh, and know his will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth; you therefore that teach another, do you not teach yourself? You that preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You that say a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You that hate idols, do you rob temples? You who glory in the law, do you through your transgression of the law dishonor Yahweh? For the name of Yahweh is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written. For circumcision is indeed profitable, if you are a doer of the law: but if you are a transgressor of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. If therefore the uncircumcision keep the ordinances of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? And shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge you, who with the letter and circumcision are a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of Yahweh." (Romans 2:17-29)

Reread this passage, noting how Yahweh approves of the uncircumcised, repentant believer who keeps His laws, while rejecting the circumcised person who breaks the law.

The Works of the Flesh

"Anyone can see the kind of behavior that belongs to the lower nature: fornication, impurity, and indecency; idolatry and sorcery; quarrels, a contentious temper, envy, fits of rage, selfish ambitions, dissensions, party intrigues, and jealousies; drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I WARN YOU, AS I WARNED YOU BEFORE, THAT THOSE WHO BEHAVE IN SUCH WAYS WILL NEVER INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF YAHWEH." Galatians 5:19-21, NEB (*Emphasis ours*)

It becomes obvious to those who are living in the spirit which kind of fruit is borne by those in the Messiah's body. We have received the gift of discernment. Whatever emerges

in a person's everyday behavior if he yields to the flesh will be visible to the converted people. Those who have wicked hearts will bear fruit characteristic of an unrepentant, unconverted person.

Fornication means premarital or incestuous sex; impurity and indecency would be indicative of evil thoughts that constantly come to an unconverted person's mind and he allows them to reside in his heart. Idolatry and sorcery would focus on a person's desire to continue in pagan religion rather than serve Almighty Yahweh and be a True Worshiper. One who serves the one and only true Mighty One will wish to avoid any pagan worship. Quarrels and a contentious temper are almost the total converse of peacefulness that comes when the Holy Spirit resides in our hearts, as would be envy, fits of rage, selfish ambitions, dissensions, party intrigues, and jealousies.

If you read over the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians (especially in a modern translation) you will note that true, Holy Spirit-begotten love is totally different from wicked activities of purely fleshly behavior. In the life of the True Worshiper, patience, love, and a meek and quiet spirit will be manifest. In Yahweh's true assembly the Holy Spirit will be active among His ordained elders. Each member is obligated to produce fruits of the Holy Spirit in his personal life.

Paul calls our attention to the inheritance of the True Worshiper in the Kingdom of Yahweh. He explains that those people who are motivated by the flesh **WILL NOT** be permitted into the Kingdom of Yahweh.

Kingdom means government. It means organization. It represents the antithesis of confusion. This fact is clear from what Yahshua taught His disciples to use as a model for their prayers. Matthew 6:10 reads, "*Your kingdom come. Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.*"

Do we truly comprehend the deep meaning underlying this petition? We are asking our Heavenly Father to send His government to this earth so that His will may direct the affairs of this earth just as His will is supreme in the Heavens. The orbits of the heavenly bodies reveal Yahweh's order, the organization of His government. In His true assembly such organization also exists.

The Hebrew word **Shalom** (Peace) means to be complete, to be unfragmented or unified. Consequently, it becomes clear to

us why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:33, "*For Yahweh is not an Elohim of confusion, but of peace, AS IN ALL THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE SAINTS.*"

The government of Yahweh will produce peace. When His people humbly submit to the government of Yahweh embodied in His commandments, total unity, total peace, and absolute harmony in the assembly will result. Conversely, the works of the flesh will produce disintegration, fragmentation, discord, and this kind of spirit is from Satan—not from Yahweh!

Satan influences the weak, fleshly human nature of the human being. The Holy Spirit of Yahweh promotes the Kingdom of Yahweh government, causing it to prevail—within the life of the True Worshiper, in the assemblies of the saints of Yahweh.

Where Yahweh's government is ruling there will be no room for works of the flesh. Just remember, the Kingdom of Yahweh is to be found in a family relationship, all of His creation working together in *unity* toward one goal and purpose. The effects of the government of Yahweh will be manifest to all. They will be desired by all those who eagerly look for the millennial reign of the Messiah upon this earth to restore this earth to the potential for which it was originally created.

The Fruit of the Spirit

"But the harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law dealing with such things as these. And those who belong to Yahshua Messiah have [impaled] the lower nature with its passions and desires. If the Spirit is the source of our life, let the Spirit also direct our course.

We must not be conceited, challenging one another to rivalry, jealous of one another." Galatians 5:22-26 (NEB)

Do you recall Yahshua's discourse about the good and bad fruit that a tree will bear? In Matthew 7:15-20, "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree always brings forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you shall know them.*"

We have already seen the warning Paul gave to those people who engage in behavior that is indicative of a carnal unrepentant attitude. They will not inherit the Kingdom of Yahweh. They will be excluded from the plan of salvation that Yahweh has designed. They will be cut down and wither, to be burned in the lake of fire.

On the other hand, those who strive for the spirit-filled life will bear much fruit. They will be like a tree planted by rivers of running water, Psalm 1:3. We are fruit inspectors; others will know us by fruit that we bear. We will show the fruit of love if Yahweh's Kingdom government has first place within our lives.

To bear this kind of fruit will require first taking some drastic action to correct our personal lives. It demands that we MORTIFY, IMPALE, PUT TO DEATH, our old natures. Undoubtedly, pruning is quite painful to the tree. It is painful for the heart to be circumcised. It is also painful for a human being to make deep-seated changes in his life, to cut himself off from Satan's wicked world and to have his heart and mind converted into the spiritual likeness of Yahshua the Messiah.

In the end, good fruit will result and a new creation will appear, a creation of Yahweh that will personify true happiness and joy. We submit ourselves completely to the will of Yahweh and to the guidance of His Spirit. We no longer capitulate to the degenerating passions and lusts that characterized our unconverted life. The Spirit will guide us day by day, living over again the sinless life of the Messiah in our lives so that we can merit His sacrifice for us.

Paul shows clearly that NO LAW is needed to regulate AGAINST any one of the good works produced by the Holy Spirit. Have you noticed how Paul brings the law of Yahweh squarely into this section dealing with the harvest of the Spirit? The law of Yahweh legislates AGAINST what evil men will do. If no evil deed is committed the law has been observed, kept unbroken. The individual lives above the law! The law of Yahweh directs the True Worshiper toward good conduct through the love it expresses. Law does not regulate good conduct, is Paul's argument.

Conversely, there is a law that legislates against improper behavior. This law still legislates against the deeds of the flesh and it will condemn the sinner. One who lives according to

the principles of the law of Yahweh will stand innocent in the day of judgment, but the law breaker will be punished. Yahweh will protect in times of trouble, Psalm 91:14-16. The True Worshiper, who is innocent of wrong living, will be spared from the Great Tribulation, Revelation 3:10. He will be included in the Kingdom of Yahweh to inherit the promises made to righteous Abraham as a son of Yahweh.

The book of Galatians therefore maintains the concept of obedience to the law of Yahweh. It stands for righteous living as the visible sign declaring that one is a True Worshiper. Rather than doing away with Yahweh's law, this dynamic letter to True Worshipers lends complete support to the way of life found in the commandments of Yahweh.

Obedience will lead the individual back to the marvelous beauty of the Garden of Eden age that was lost by a sinful Adam and Eve. It is the only way to heal the breach of separation between Yahweh and His people, Isaiah 59:2. What is your decision?