



Galatians was addressed to the churches of Galatia. “And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:” (Galatians 1:2)

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past  
in the **Jews' religion**, how that beyond measure I  
persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:  
(Galatians 1:13; also v. 14)

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

v. 15, 5:8; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Romans 8:30, 9:11

*Allos* and *heteros* have a difference in meaning. *Allos* expresses a numerical difference and denotes “another of the same sort”; *heteros* expresses a qualitative difference and denotes “another of a different sort.” Christ promised to send “another Comforter” (*allos*, “another like Himself,” not *heteros*), John 14:16. Paul says “I see a different (KJV, “another”) law,” *heteros*, a law different from that of the spirit of life (not *allos*, “a law of the same sort”), Rom. 7:23. After Joseph’s death “another king arose,” *heteros*, one of quite a different character, Acts 7:18. Paul speaks of “a different gospel (*heteros*), which is not another” (*allos*, another like the one he preached), Gal. 1:6–7. See *heteros* (not *allos*) in Matt. 11:3, and Acts 27:1; in Luke 23:32 *heteroi* is used of the two malefactors crucified with Christ. The two words are only apparently interchanged in 1 Cor. 1:16 and 6:1; 12:8–10; 14:17 and 19, e.g., the difference being present, though not so readily discernible. (*Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*)

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach  
any other **gospel unto you than that which we  
have preached** unto you, let him be accursed.  
(Galatians 1:8)

Many believe that Galatians may be the earliest of Paul's letters, written in 49 AD, after the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). As Galatians makes clear, the early church found itself in a fierce battle over the nature of salvation, especially in the case of Gentiles.

According to a group of Jewish believers known as Judaizers, belief in Jesus alone was not good enough for Gentiles. Gentiles also must be circumcised and follow the laws of Moses (Acts 15:1). As Paul founded churches of Gentiles in Galatia, some of these Judaizers would come after him to teach the Gentiles the need for adherence to the ceremonial laws .

The lesson of the book of Galatians for today is the same as it was in the days of Paul—that salvation can be obtained in no other way than by **faith in the merits of Christ** (chs. 2:16; 3:2; 5:1), and that **nothing a man can do** can in the least degree enhance his standing before God or increase his chances of obtaining forgiveness and redemption. Law, whether moral or ceremonial, has no power to set men free from the state of sin in which they find themselves. **This is Paul’s “gospel,” in contrast with the perverted “gospel” of the Judaizers** (Gal. 1:6–12; 2:2, 5, 7, 14).

*(SDA BC, slight edits)*



Even as Abraham **believed** God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. . . . So then they which be of **faith** are blessed with faithful Abraham. (Galatians 3:6, 9)

“In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 22:18. This promise pointed to **Christ**. So Abraham understood it (see Galatians 3:8, 16), and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. **It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness.** (*PP* 370.3)

Through faith in Christ obedience to every principle of the law is made possible (Manuscript 122, 1901). (*6BC* 1077.6)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to **this rule**, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.  
(Galatians 6:15–16)



Galatia was a Roman province within present-day Turkey.



- ❖ Galatians 5:18—But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.
- ❖ Galatians 2:16—Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

## WHAT HAD THE GALATIANS REMOVED TO?

- ❖ Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (Galatians 4:10–11)
- ❖ As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. (Galatians 6:12–13; 2:3)



***Days, and months.*** Paul refers to the seven ceremonial sabbaths and the new moons of the ceremonial system (see Lev. 23; Num. 10:10; 28:11–15). There is no basis in Scripture for believing that the days refer to the seventh-day Sabbath. The observance of the seventh day as a day of rest was begun at creation, and if this observance subjects a man to bondage, then the Creator himself entered into bondage, which, of course, is impossible.

***Times.*** Literally, appointed seasons, here, the annual set festivals of the Jewish religious calendar (Num. 28:2).

***Years.*** The sabbatical year and the year of jubilee (see Ex. 23:10, 11; Lev. 25:8–12). (*SDA BC*, with edits)

# NOT WORKS, BUT . . .

❖ Galatians 2:16, 20; 5:6

The principle that man can save himself by his own works lay at the foundation of every heathen religion; it had now become the principle of the Jewish religion. Satan had implanted this principle. Wherever it is held, men have no barrier against sin. (*DA* 35.2)

Faith in Christ is the only means of justification,  
sanctification, and communion with God.

(*15LtMs*, Lt 29, 1900, par. 12)

Which things are an allegory: for these are the **two covenants**; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.  
(Galatians 4:24)

# THE COVENANTS

The Hebrew word translated as covenant is *berit*. It occurs nearly three hundred times in the Old Testament and refers to a binding contract, agreement, or treaty.

As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal [the moral law], the other provisional and temporary [the ceremonial law], so there are two covenants. The **covenant of grace** was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this covenant offered pardon and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. (*PP* 370.2)



And I will put enmity between thee and the woman,  
and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy  
head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3:15)

The message proclaimed by the angel flying in the midst of heaven is the everlasting gospel, **the same gospel that was declared in Eden** when God said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15). Here was **the first promise of a Saviour** who would stand on the field of battle to contest the power of Satan and prevail against him. (*2SM* 106.2)

When **Adam**, according to God's special directions, made an offering for sin, it was to him a most painful ceremony.

His hand must be raised to take life, which God alone could give, and make an offering for sin. It was the first time he had witnessed death. As he looked upon the bleeding victim, writhing in the agonies of death, he was to look forward by faith to the Son of God, whom the victim prefigured, who was to die mans sacrifice.

This ceremonial offering, ordained of God, was to be a perpetual reminder to Adam of his guilt, and also a penitential acknowledgment of his sin. (*ISP* 53.1, .2)

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: (Genesis 4:4)

These brothers were tested, as Adam had been tested before them, to prove whether they would believe and obey the word of God. They were acquainted with the provision made for the salvation of man, and understood the system of offerings which God had ordained. They knew that in these offerings they were to express faith in the Saviour whom the offerings typified, and at the same time to acknowledge their total dependence on Him for pardon; and they knew that by thus conforming to the divine plan for their redemption, they were giving proof of their obedience to the will of God. Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin; and they were to show their **faith in the blood of Christ as the promised atonement by offering the firstlings of the flock** in sacrifice. Besides this, the **first fruits** of the earth were to be presented before the Lord as **a thank offering**. (*PP* 71.2)

This **same covenant** was renewed to Abraham in the promise, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it (see Galatians 3:8, 16), and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God’s law. The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, “I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.” Genesis 17:1. The testimony of God concerning His faithful servant was, “Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.” Genesis 26:5. And the Lord declared to him, “I will establish My **covenant** between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an **everlasting covenant**, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.” Genesis 17:7. (*PP* 370.3)

Though this covenant was **made with Adam and renewed to Abraham**, it could not be ratified until the death of Christ.

It had existed by the promise of God since the first intimation of redemption had been given; **it had been accepted by faith**; yet when ratified by Christ, it is called a *new* covenant. The law of God was the basis of this covenant, which was simply an arrangement for bringing men again into harmony with the divine will, placing them where they could obey God's law. (*PP* 370.4)

Another compact—called in Scripture the “old” covenant—was formed between God and Israel at Sinai, and was then ratified by the blood of a sacrifice. The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the “second,” or “new,” covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant. That the new covenant was valid in the days of Abraham is evident from the fact that it was then confirmed both by the promise and by the oath of God—the “two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.” Hebrews 6:18. (*PP* 371.1)



But if the Abrahamic covenant contained the promise of redemption, why was another covenant formed at Sinai? In their bondage the people had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant. In delivering them from Egypt, God sought to reveal to them His power and His mercy, that they might be led to love and trust Him. He brought them down to the Red Sea—where, pursued by the Egyptians, escape seemed impossible—that they might realize their utter helplessness, their need of divine aid; and then He wrought deliverance for them. Thus they were filled with love and gratitude to God and with confidence in His power to help them. He had bound them to Himself as their deliverer from temporal bondage. (*PP* 371.2)

But there was a still greater truth to be impressed upon their minds. Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had no true conception of the **holiness** of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God's law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught. (*PP* 371.3)

God brought them to Sinai; He manifested His glory; He gave them His law, with the promise of great blessings on condition of obedience: “If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ... ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” Exodus 19:5, 6.

The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.” Exodus 24:7. (*PP* 371.4)

They had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Now by faith and love they were bound to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin. Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant. (*PP* 371.4)

The terms of the “old covenant” were, Obey and live: “If a man do, he shall even live in them” (Ezekiel 20:11; Leviticus 18:5); but “cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.” Deuteronomy 27:26. The “new covenant” was established upon “better promises”—the promise of **forgiveness** of sins and of the grace of God to **renew the heart** and bring it into harmony with the principles of God’s law. “This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, *I will put my law* in their inward parts, *and write it in their hearts....* I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more.” Jeremiah 31:33, 34. (PP 372.1)

The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth “the fruits of the Spirit.” Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked. Through the prophet He declared of Himself, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. And when among men He said, “The Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.” John 8:29. (*PP* 372.2)

The apostle Paul clearly presents the relation between faith and the law under the new covenant. He says: “*Being justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh”—it could not justify man, because in his sinful nature he could not keep the law—“God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that *the righteousness of the law* might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 5:1; 3:31; 8:3, 4. (PP 373.1)

Paul is saying that as long as a man is under law he remains also under the dominion of sin, for law cannot save one from either the condemnation or the power of sin. But those who are under grace receive not only release from condemnation (Rom. 8:1) but also power to overcome (ch. 6:4). Thus sin no longer will have dominion over them. (*SDA BC*)

*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:1)

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: (John 1:12)



❖ ***The works of the law:*** Literally “works of law” meaning any law in general. Paul is referring to the Jewish concept that a man could save himself by meticulously keeping “the law,” which consisted of moral, ceremonial, and civil precepts. In Galatians, Paul is concerned with the moral and ceremonial law, not civil. The Jews erred in: (1) believing that salvation could be attained by their works and that a surplus of good deeds would cancel out evil deeds, (2) adding many man-made requirements known as traditions, and (3) continuing the ceremonial law beyond the cross, after type had met antitype. The word *law* used by Paul in Galatians, includes both the Decalogue and the ceremonial law, but Paul uses them to point out the bigger problem of the Jewish belief in **righteousness by works**, which was based upon keeping both the moral and ceremonial laws. (*SDA BC* with edits)

Paul is referring to law as a principle. His point is that Christians are not under law as a way of salvation, but under grace. Law cannot save a sinner, nor can law put an end to sin or its dominion. Law reveals sin (Romans 3:20), and because of the sinfulness of man, law, as it were, causes transgression to increase (Romans 5:20). Law cannot forgive sin, nor can law provide any power to overcome it. The sinner who seeks to be saved under law will find only condemnation and deeper enslavement to sin. Wherever the principle is held that man can save himself by his own works, there is no effective barrier against sin. (*SDA BC*)

- ❖ Knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the law**, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:16)
- ❖ I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* **by the law**, then Christ is dead in vain. (Galatians 2:21)
- ❖ This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit **by the works of the law**, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:2-3)
- ❖ Galatians 3:5-14: He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the **works of the law**, or by the hearing of faith? (Galatians 3:5)

❖ **Faith of Jesus Christ:** Justification comes as a free gift of God through Jesus Christ. Works have no part in this transaction. On God's part it is a gift made possible through Jesus Christ. On man's part it requires complete faith and trust in God that he is willing to justify the sinner. Faith is the means by which man receives justification.

Galatians 5:16–25

Galatians 2:20

Romans 8:9–17

- ❖ To suffer with him means to suffer for his sake and for the gospel.
- ❖ 1 Peter 4:12–13—Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.
- ❖ If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters. (1 Peter 4:14–15)

THE ALLEGORY OF  
THE TWO SONS

And all the people answered together, and said, **All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.** And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord. (Exodus 19:8)

And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, **All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.** (Exodus 24:3)

And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, **All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.** And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words. (Exodus 24:7-8)



Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God.  
(John 3:3)

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth:  
so is every one that is **born of the Spirit**. (John 3:8)

But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was*  
***born after the Spirit***, even so *it is* now. (Galatians 4:29)

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the **Spirit of God dwell in you**. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Romans 8:9)

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and **renewing of the Holy Ghost**; (Titus 3:5)

A **new heart** also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And **I will put my spirit within you**, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*. (Ezekiel 36:26–27)