

Lessons from Galatians

Chapter 1

Guarding the Purity of the Gospel

- **Zero tolerance for compromise:** Paul states that even if an angel preaches any other gospel than salvation through Christ, that message is accursed (Galatians 1:8). The remnant must reject modern legalism or humanistic secularism that twists grace.
- **Resisting human traditions:** Just as Judaizers tried to bind believers to external rituals (like circumcision) for salvation, the remnant must ensure their focus stays on Christ's righteousness rather than man-made rules or institutional legalism.

Divine Authority Over Human Approval

- **Apostleship from God, not men:** Paul opens by declaring his commission came directly from Jesus Christ and God the Father, not human sources (Galatians 1:1). The remnant derives its authority and message from Scripture, not popular consensus, political alignment, or cultural trends.
- **Fearless witness:** Paul notes he did not seek to please men, for if he did, he would not be a servant of Christ (Galatians 1:10). The remnant must proclaim unpopular truths without fearing human backlash.

The Power of Transformative Grace

- **A radical turnaround:** Paul's personal testimony of moving from a bitter persecutor to a zealous preacher (Galatians 1:13–23) shows that God's grace changes hearts entirely. The remnant is called to manifest a faith that works actively through love, demonstrating a clear, visible transformation brought by Christ.
- **Time alone with God:** Paul spent time in Arabia to commune directly with God after his conversion rather than relying immediately on human counsel (Galatians 1:16–17). The remnant must maintain deep, personal devotional communion with God to withstand final crises.

Chapter 2

Standing Firm Against False Brethren

- **Spotting legalism:** Paul resisted spies who tried to bring believers into bondage (Galatians 2:4). The remnant must reject any teaching that human effort or legalistic rule-keeping earns salvation.
- **Refusing compromise:** Paul did not yield for an hour (Galatians 2:5). The end-time church must remain uncompromising when core truths are attacked.

Resisting Hypocrisy and Peer Pressure

- **Confronting error publicly:** Paul rebuked Peter face-to-face in Antioch because Peter feared the circumcision party and acted hypocritically (Galatians 2:11–14). Even respected leaders can fall to social pressure.

- **Defending unity in truth:** Barnabas was carried away by the dissimulation (Galatians 2:13). The remnant learns that loyalty to Christ supersedes human status or group conformity.

The Core Truth of Justification by Faith

- **No salvation by works:** Galatians 2:16 (KJV) states that a person is justified by the "faith of Jesus Christ" and not by the "works of the law". SDA teaching views this as the heart of the Third Angel's Message.
- **The role of the law:** The law defines sin, but righteousness comes solely through Christ's grace, not human legal performance.

Crucified and Living in Christ

- **Spiritual transformation:** Paul declares, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). True obedience is the natural fruit of Christ living inside the believer.
- **Grace is not nullified:** Trying to gain merit through legalism makes the death of Christ useless (Galatians 2:21).

Chapter 3

Justification by Faith vs. Legalism

- **The Error of Relying on the Flesh:** Paul rebukes the Galatians for trying to be "made perfect by the flesh" after beginning in the Spirit (Galatians 3:3 KJV). For the modern remnant, this is a warning against trusting in institutional lineage, moral self-sufficiency, or strict outward compliance to win God's favor.
- **The Experience of Abraham:** Paul highlights that Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Galatians 3:6 KJV). The remnant learns that their foundational identity matches Abraham's—they are justified by looking to the promised "Seed," who is Christ (Galatians 3:16 KJV).

The True Purpose of the Law

- **The Schoolmaster/Tutor:** Galatians 3:24 (KJV) explains, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." SDA theology maintains a clear distinction here: the moral law (the Ten Commandments) defines sin and exposes human helplessness, driving the believer to the cross for pardon and transformation, rather than acting as a mechanical method to earn eternal life.
- **Redemption from the Curse:** Christ "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13 KJV). The remnant recognizes that obedience is the natural fruit and evidence of a heart changed by grace, not the legal price of admission into heaven.

Unity and Identity in Christ

- **One in Christ Jesus:** Galatians 3:28 (KJV) states there is "neither Jew nor Greek... bond nor free... male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Ellen G. White

and SDA commentators emphasize that the remnant must transcend societal, racial, and cultural divisions, standing equal at the foot of the cross.

- **Heirs of the Promise:** The chapter concludes with verse 29 (KJV): "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The ultimate lesson for the remnant is that spiritual pedigree means nothing without a living, transforming connection to Jesus.

Chapter 4

Freedom from Legalistic Bondage

- **No Slaves, But Sons:** Paul explains that an heir who remains a child is no different from a servant. The remnant must realize that keeping rules to earn salvation is spiritual slavery.
- **The Fullness of Time:** God sent forth His Son, made of a woman and under the law, to redeem those under the law at the exact right moment in history.
- **The Indwelling Spirit:** Sonship is sealed when God sends the Spirit of His Son into the heart, making believers cry "Abba, Father" rather than cowering in fear under a record of condemnation.

Warning Against Reverting to Formalism

- **The Danger of Regressing:** Paul rebukes the believers for turning back to "weak and beggarly elements" and observing days, months, and times in an effort to secure their own standing.
- **SDA Context on the Law:** Seventh-day Adventist standard commentaries note that Paul's critique targets the legalistic misuse of the ceremonial system and man-made restrictions, not the eternal moral law or the seventh-day Sabbath. Turning the Sabbath or commandments into a checklist to earn merit reduces a child of God back to a slave.

The Allegory of the Two Covenants

- **Hagar and Sarah:** In Galatians 4:22–31, Paul uses Hagar (representing legal bondage/Mount Sinai) and Sarah (representing the free covenant/the Jerusalem which is above) to show that human effort cannot mix with divine promise.
- **The Remnant Identity:** The remnant are children of the promise. Their mission is not to preach a cold, legalistic obedience as a way to win favor, but to lift up the faith of Jesus, where obedience is the natural fruit of an adopted son or daughter transformed by grace.

Chapter 5

The Danger of Legalism

- **The Yoke of Bondage (Gal. 5:1):** Paul warns against returning to human rules or ritualistic ceremonies (like circumcision) as a method to earn salvation.
- **Severed from Christ (Gal. 5:4):** SDA commentary stresses that relying on legalism or human works for justification cuts off the vital, living connection with Jesus.

- **The Principle of the Whole Law (Gal. 5:3):** Trying to use legal compliance to merit favor places a person under obligation to keep the entire moral and spiritual standard perfectly by their own strength—an impossible feat for fallen humanity.

Faith Working by Love

- **Righteousness by Faith (Gal. 5:5–6):** True Adventist identity looks past external rituals; the focus is a heart transformed by a living faith that "worketh by love".
- **The Law and Love:** In SDA understanding, the fruit of the Spirit listed in this chapter (love, joy, peace, temperance) represents the exact principles of God's Ten Commandment law reproduced inside the believer's character by the Holy Spirit.

Walking in the Spirit vs. The Flesh

- **The Internal Conflict (Gal. 5:16–17):** The sinful nature (flesh) and the Holy Spirit oppose each other. The remnant cannot achieve victory through human willpower alone.
- **The Fruit vs. The Works (Gal. 5:19–23):** Human effort yields the destructive "works of the flesh," while daily surrender to Christ naturally yields the peaceful "fruit of the Spirit".
- **Crucifying the Flesh (Gal. 5:24–25):** Living by the Spirit means keeping in step with Him daily, putting selfish desires to death, and reflecting the pure character of Christ to a dark world.

Chapter 6

Restoring the Fallen with Meekness

- **Gentle restoration:** "Restore such an one in the spirit of meekness" (Gal. 6:1). The remnant does not crush the broken. Instead, mature believers guide straying members back with Christ-like compassion.
- **Humble self-watch:** "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). Recognizing our own human frailty stops spiritual pride from creeping into the church.

Bearing Burdens and Personal Accountability

- **Fulfilling Christ's law:** "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Adventists view this active, self-sacrificing love as the true expression of God's moral law in action, moving past empty legalism.
- **Individual responsibility:** "For every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:5). While we support each other, every believer stands accountable before God for their own personal choices of character.

The Cosmic Principle of Sowing and Reaping

- **The spiritual harvest:** "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap... he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8). The remnant understands that daily lifestyle choices—what we watch, think, and feed our minds—shape our eternal destiny.

- **Perseverance:** "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season, we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Patience is vital for a remnant facing end-time trials and delays.

Boasting Only in the Cross

- **Rejecting legalism:** Paul warns against those who "desire to make a fair shew in the flesh" (Gal. 6:12)—referring to the legalists who relied on external rituals for salvation rather than heart transformation.
- **The new creation:** "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15). The true remnant identifies not by human pride or pedigree, but by complete surrender to the finished, atoning work of Jesus on the cross.