

The Epistle to the Galatians

Grafted In

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keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

Exodus 34:6-7

Prayer Focus

Within the daily prayers for weekdays, is a prayer called, "Vidui" – it is a prayer of confession. At the conclusion of the prayer, is a section from Exodus 34, and it lists the Thirteen Attributes of the Holy One, blessed is He:

And HaShem passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed:

HaShem, HaShem, God, Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to anger, and Abundant in Kindness and Truth. Preserver of kindness for thousands of generations, Forgiver of iniquity, willful sin, and error, and Who cleanses. May You forgive our iniquities and our errors and make us Your heritage. Forgive us, our Father, for we have erred; pardon us, our King, for we have willfully sinned; for You, my Lord, are good and forgiving and abundantly kind to all who call upon You.

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Lesson Ten: Galatians Chapter Four – Two Covenants?

So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental principles of the world.

But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, why do you turn back again to the weak and miserable elemental principles, to which you desire to be in bondage all over again? You observe days, months, seasons, and years. I am afraid for you, that I might have wasted my labor for you.

Galatians 4:3; 9-11

As You Begin

- Find a quiet place and start your study with prayer. Tell God that you want to grow in faith, and that you are complete dependent on Him for that growth.
- Read Galatians chapter four in the Hebrew Names Version found at the end of this workbook.
- Meditate on this passage, remembering that when Paul sent this to Timothy, the only Scripture they had was the TaNaKh¹⁶:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1Timothy 3:16-17

Some Questions to Ask

- Is the “Old Testament” the “kindergarten of faith” – symbolizing where we start, but what we must leave behind in order to grow in faith?
- What does Paul mean when he criticizes some for being “under the law” – does he mean that God’s Words contained in the Torah no longer have any guidance for the believer?
- Are there two covenants of salvation in Scripture – the Sinai Covenant (the “old way”) and the New Covenant (the “new way”)?

Historical Context

¹⁶ TaNaKh = *Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim* [Law, Prophets, Writings, or what some call the “Old Testament”]

Elementary Principles of the World

It is often assumed (incorrectly), that Galatians 4:3; 9 refers to “the law” when it speaks of “elementary principles.” Classical Christianity’s bias against all things Jewish can blind us to the historical use of language and idiom. This is one of those cases.

The Greek word used for “elementary things” in these verses is the word “*stoicheia*.” We know quite a bit about this word even though it is used only a few times in the Apostolic Scriptures. We know about *stoicheia* because it was a word used often in the idolatrous myths and pagan philosophies of the First Century. The word is never used in the Septuagint.¹⁷

On its own, the word simply means “things side by side.” It is used of letters in the alphabet or numbers in sequence. When linked to “of this world” [*tou kosmos*] it is speaking of something specific.

In the world of Greek myths, the world was made of four elements: earth, water, air, and fire. These elements were placed in the Greek pantheon.¹⁸ So ingrained in the culture and science of the day even Jewish philosopher Philo used the *stoicheia* to explain the basic elements of the universe. Paul sees *stoicheia* as a pagan idea, and uses the word here to warn the Galatians against returning to this idolatrous concept.

Under the Law

Paul uses the phrase “under the law” several times in his other epistles. He uses it four times in Galatians. Classical Christian theology uses this phrase to determine that the Torah (or the “Old Law” as it is referred to) is no longer governing in the life of a believer. Viewed in this way, Paul not only annuls the eternal words of God, he seems to say that it is a sin to obey the Torah – and a return to bondage to obey the commandments of God. This is not possible. So what does Paul mean when he uses the phrase?

In First Century Judaism, “under the Torah” [in Greek, “*hupo nomon*”] refers to Jewish identity.

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law...

Galatians 4:4a

...and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law.

1Corinthians 9:20

¹⁷ Septuagint (or “LXX”), the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures.

¹⁸ earth as “Demeter”, water as “Poseidon”, air as “Hera”, fire as “Hephaestus”

In these instances, “under the law” is denoting Jewish identity. Paul uses the phrase in similar fashion in Galatians, where the context is how Gentiles were being told by some that they could attain covenant membership, by “becoming a Jew” through ritual conversion (aka “circumcision”). This context reminds us that one of the steps of ritual conversion: accepting of the “whole Torah,” both written and oral (i.e. the traditions of the Sages).

The steps to for ritual conversion to Judaism as outlined in the Talmud are:

- An injunction to accept the whole Torah, both Written and Oral
- Circumcision
- Immersion

In Galatians, “under the Torah” indicates a means of obtaining covenant membership by “becoming Jewish.” In almost every instance where Paul uses this phrase, it is somehow tied to Jewish identity.

The Allegory, the Idiom “Mountain”

A mountain is something that towers over the land around it. It is established and unshakable. It has served as an idiom throughout the ages. In the modern vernacular it is similar to the phrase, “He was like a *rock* - immoveable!” Among the Rabbis and Sages, “an uprooter of mountains” was an idiom to describe one who could with biblical logic argue well.

This we can illustrate from the case of Rabbah [Rabbah bar Nachmani] and Rabbi Yosef. For Rabbi Yosef was “Sinai” and Rabbah was “an uprooter of mountains.” The time came when they were required [to be head of the Academy]. They sent there [to Palestine] to ask, as between “Sinai” and an “uprooter of mountains,” which should have the preference?

b.Berachot 64a

The Third Century Sages, Rabbah bar Nachmani and Rabbi Yosef were contemporaries. Rabbi Yosef was known for having an encyclopedic knowledge of tradition, where as Rabbah bar Nachmani was known for his ability to argue a case extremely well. It brings to light several interesting usages for the word “mountain” in the Apostolic Scriptures:

So Yeshua answered and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it will be done.

Matthew 21:21

Here, Yeshua expresses a desire that His disciples be faithful “uprooters of mountains.”

For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar — for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children — but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Galatians 4:22-26

In this second instance the idiom fits quite well, where “Sinai” represents the traditional covenantal understanding of First Century Judaism. The Sages considered that all Israel stood at Sinai and accepted the covenant there – on the basis of *their ethnicity alone*. Being Jewish, and having the mark of that “Jewishness” (i.e. circumcision) *is what made them the covenant people of God*. Naturally, they assumed that ritual conversion to Judaism (or “circumcision” – to “become Jewish”) was the only avenue for Gentiles to join the covenant relationship. This is the bondage of “Mount Sinai” – and not the Torah itself that was given at Sinai. It refers to the traditions, not God’s instructions (the Torah).

In this passage, Paul shows himself to be quite an “uprooter of mountains” himself.

What Scripture Says

Paul saw several dangers for the recipients of his epistle to the Galatians. First, there was a danger that they might consider ritual conversion as a valid means to enter into covenant with God. Secondly, that they might return to forms of idolatry, especially those that were present in philosophical Judaism as represented in the teachings of Philo, the Jewish philosopher.

Read the following passages that contain the word “*stoicheia*.” Comment on how they relate to a danger of returning to some forms of idolatry, specifically the philosophical understanding of the elements of the universe:

Galatians 4:3:

Galatians 4:9:

Colossians 2:8-10:

Colossians 2:19-23:

How is it possible that classical Christian theology considers the Torah to be “elementary things of the world” and something that should be left behind? Now read the following passages and comment on the value of the Torah:

Deuteronomy 6:24-25:

Deuteronomy 17:18-19:

Deuteronomy 30:9-16:

Psalms 1:1-2:

Psalms 19:7-11:

Proverbs 3:17-18 (the “she” is the Torah, or “Wisdom” as Solomon calls it):

Proverbs 6:23:

Proverbs 13:14:

John 12:49-50 (does Yeshua give a different “commandment” than the Father?):

Revelation 22:14:

Going back “under the law” is something that everyone who comes from a classical evangelical background has been taught to abhor. Does that mean that we are to be lawless? Certainly that was not what was intended in classical Christian theology. Rather, it is clear from history that the real objection that Christianity has had to being “under the law” is the historic despising of anything seen as “Jewish.” In this line of thinking, “Jewish” is the antithesis of “faith.” Read and comment on the following usages of the phrase “under the law” or “under law”:

1Corinthians 9:19-22:

Galatians 4:4:

Galatians 4:5:

Galatians 4:21:

Galatians 5:18:

Is it possible that Paul has set aside the Law of God, the Torah? If so, then he was a false prophet (Deuteronomy 13:1-5). Read and comment on the high view with which both David and Paul regard the Torah:

Psalms 119:1:

Psalms 119:18:

Psalms 119:77:

Psalms 119:92:

Psalms 119:126:

Romans 3:31:

Romans 6:15 (read the definition of sin in 1John 3:4: sin = *anomia* = “against the Torah”):

Romans 7:12-14:

Romans 7:22:

Is the Torah bondage? May it never be thought of as such! James calls it the royal Torah of liberty. John speaks of obedience to God’s instructions as being vital for our living for Him. Read and comment on the following passages:

James 2:8-12:

1John 2:3-6:

1John 5:2-3:

How many covenants are found in Scripture? In Galatians 4:24, it seems that Paul is saying that the two “covenants” (some would say these are “Sinai Covenant” and the “New Covenant”) are antithetical. Is that possible? Surely Paul said differently. Read the following and comment on the idea of God’s covenants ever being antithetical:

Genesis 17:7:

Exodus 34:1-10:

Galatians 3:15:

Galatians 3:17:

Of course, to those who think the “Sinai” being mentioned in Galatians 4:24 represents the covenant made at Sinai, the questions should be answered, “*Which covenant at Sinai? There are at least two.*” And additionally, “*What about the covenant made on the plains of Moab in Deuteronomy? Is that ‘Sinai’ as well?*” No, the “covenant” mentioned in Galatians 4:24 is not God’s covenant at all – but the mistaken understanding that ethnic status is how one enters the covenant.

Conclusion

In 1Peter 3:15-16 Peter characterizes Paul as, “speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction.” There is a real danger in taking Paul’s words and allowing them to stand all on their own. If we do, we will misunderstand. The Holy Spirit means for us to understand Paul’s words. They were given to us as Scripture. They are profitable. To understand them however, they must be held against the balance of Scripture – and understood within their context. If we are careful to do this, we will work diligently to discover Paul’s meaning rather than allowing his words to undo Scripture as some have done.

Paul himself challenges us to use Scripture as a guide for righteous living.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1Timothy 3:16-17

Let us be diligent to understand Galatians as the Holy Spirit intends – for it is intended as instruction in righteous living...

Prayer Focus

The *Shacharit* [morning] prayer service begins with prayers of praise for God as Creator. In His work of the beginning, we know that angels were created early on. Drawn largely from passages in the Prophets, this prayer reflects upon the angels' response to the Almighty and how they praise Him continually. As Isaiah and Revelation tell us, these holy ones are ever before Throne of the Almighty, singing His praises. May we join them in praise of our Redeemer and King! May we too accept upon ourselves the yoke of heavenly sovereignty daily. ***The Torah is not bondage, it declares our freedom!***

Tit'barach

May You be blessed, our Rock, our King, and Redeemer, Creator of holy ones; may Your Name be praised forever, our King, O fashioner of ministering angels; all of Whose ministering angels stand at the summit of the Universe and proclaim – with awe, together, loudly - the word of the Living God and King of the Universe. They are all beloved; they are all flawless; they are all mighty, they all do the will of their Maker with dread and reverence. And they open their mouth in holiness and purity, in song and hymn - and bless, praise, glorify, revere, sanctify, and declare the Kingship of...

The Name of God, the great, mighty, and awesome King; holy is He. Then they all accept upon themselves the yoke of heavenly sovereignty from one another, and grant permission to one another to sanctify the One Who formed them, with tranquility, with clear articulation, and with sweetness. All of them as one proclaim His holiness and with awe:

"Holy, holy, holy is HaShem, Master of Legions, the whole world is filled with His glory."

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Lesson Eleven: Galatians Chapter Five – Walk by the Spirit

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:25

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

As You Begin

- Find a quiet place and start your study with prayer.
- Ask the Father, Who gives to all generously, to fill you with His Holy Spirit, and cause you to walk in a way pleasing to Him.
- Read Galatians chapter five in the Hebrew Names Version found at the end of this workbook.
- Meditate on this passage:

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My Torah in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Jeremiah 31:33

Some Questions to Ask

- Would the Spirit of God ever lead us to disobey God's instructions?
- If the "works of the Flesh" are disobedience, and the Flesh is contrary to the Spirit – what are the works of the Spirit (the "Fruit of the Spirit") – are they obedience?
- Does not being "under the Law" mean I am free to sin?

Historical Context

The Singularity of the Torah

Yes, I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Galatians 5:3; 14

Some commentators find it unique the way that Paul distills the “whole law” into a single unit. However, this is the way that it was treated in the First Century and before. Instead of a collection of commandments, it was seen as a single command.

Another [Baraita] taught: Because he hath despised the word of the Lord — this refers to him who maintains that the Torah is not from Heaven. And even if he asserts that the whole Torah is from Heaven, excepting a particular verse, which [he maintains] was not uttered by God but by Moses himself, he is included in "because he hath despised the word of the Lord."

b.Sanhedrin 99a

Isaiah came and reduced them to six [principles], as it is written, He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, He that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hand from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ear from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from looking upon evil; he shall dwell on high...

Micah came and reduced them to three [principles], as it is written, It hath been told thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord doth require of thee: only to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly before thy God...

Again came Isaiah and reduced them to two [principles], as it is said, Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye justice and do righteousness. Amos came and reduced them to one [principle], as it is said, For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, Seek ye Me and live. To this R. Nahman b. Isaac demurred, saying: [Might it not be taken as,] Seek Me by observing the whole Torah and live? — But it is Habakuk who came and based them all on one [principle], as it is said, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

b.Makkot 24a

Paul would have completely agreed with Hillel who said:

“What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbor: that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof; go and learn it.”

b.Shabbat 31a

But the “whole law” to the Sages did not only apply to the written Torah, but the oral Torah as well. As we have previously seen, the teachings of the Sages were included in the understanding of what the “whole Torah” encompassed. Paul’s point in Galatians 5:3 relates to the proselyte’s commitment to adhere to both the written and the oral Torah.

Scripture itself reduces the commandments to a single unit. Numerous times in the Torah, all of the commandments of God are simply called “the commandment.” Sometimes this is done at the expense of what appears to be proper grammar (at least in English). This is why some English translations do not correctly translate the word *הַמִּצְוָה* (*ha-mitzvah*), “the

commandment”) as singular. This is unfortunate, because it can obscure the fact that the whole Torah is “the Commandment.”

*Now this is **the Commandment**, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.*

Deuteronomy 6:1-2

*For **this Commandment** which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?” Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?” But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.*

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

It is this passage that Paul quotes in Romans 10:5-8. The Apostolic Scriptures also teach the singularity of the Torah.

*[Yeshua] said to them, “All too well you reject **the Commandment** [singular] of God, that you may keep your tradition.”*

Mark 7:9

*That you keep **the Commandment** [singular] without spot, blameless until our Lord Messiah Yeshua's appearing.*

1Timothy 6:14

Walking the Walk

Nearly sixty times in the Apostolic Scriptures, the Greek word περιπατέω [*paripateo* = walk] is used to describe how someone lives their life.

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind.

Ephesians 4:17

This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

2John 6

“Walk” was a common Hebrew idiom for the way of living. The word used in the TaNaKh is **הלך** [*halak*]. To this day, the noun form “*halakah*” is used to refer to specific traditional methods one uses to obey Torah commandments.

To “walk in the Spirit” is not a new idea for Paul. It was something that comes from the Torah first.

You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.

Deuteronomy 13:4

The Persecution of Paul

But I, brothers, if I still proclaim circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been removed.

Galatians 5:11

On many levels it is a shame that Paul is viewed by some as one who nullified the “Jewish Law” for Christians. In some circles, he is even praised for being anti-Semitic. Our brother Paul has been falsely accused. What is a shame is that he suffered for the opposite reason – his love for Israel, and his strong support for “the Law.” Paul was diligent to maintain his status in the Jewish community. Many know that Paul was beaten because of his refusal compromise with Jewish authorities regarding Yeshua. Paul tells us:

Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise! For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. To our shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold — I speak foolishly — I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Messiah? — I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

2Corinthians 11:18-24

What may not be known is *why* Paul was beaten. It was because *he chose* to be beaten. Excommunication was an option that Paul never chose. In the Second Temple period, if someone was convicted of a crime that bore the penalty of *karet* [to be cut off], he had two choices:

- To be excommunicated as the penalty
- To be beaten with forty blows (minus one) – and thus pay the penalty in full

Proof of Paul’s love for Israel is found in the fact that five times he went under the blows. The reason why the forty were reduced by one was because of the real possibility of dying – and the one delivering the blows was himself guilty of murder if the recipient died and there was one blow beyond the proscribed forty.

MISHNAH. ALL WHO HAVE INCURRED [THE PENALTY OF] KARETH, ON BEING FLOGGED OBTAIN REMISSION FROM THEIR PUNISHMENT OF KARETH; FOR IT IS SAID, FORTY HE SHALL HAVE HIM BEATEN HE SHALL NOT EXCEED . . . LEST THY BROTHER SHALL BE DISHONoured BEFORE THINE EYES, WHICH SHOWS THAT ON HAVING RECEIVED THE FLOGGING HE IS [CONSIDERED] “THY BROTHER”: THESE ARE THE WORDS OF R. HANANIAH B. GAMALIEL. AND, SAID R. HANANIAH B. GAMALIEL, IF IN ONE TRANSGRESSION A TRANSGRESSOR FORFEITS HIS SOUL, HOW MUCH MORE SHOULD ONE WHO PERFORMS ONE PRECEPT HAVE HIS SOUL GRANTED HIM?

b.Makkot 23a

This passage reveals the deep and abiding love that Paul had for the Jewish community. He surrendered himself to possible death five times, just to keep from being rejected from his brothers and sisters. It is sad that so many of those who quote Paul to condemn Israel, do not know the context of the words of this great and learned man – and his deep love for his fellow Jews. While it is true that he was never received by many leaders in his day and the generations that followed, yet if they had been able to see his teaching as godly reproof, they would have understood him better.

R. Eleazar b. Azariah said: I wonder if there is one in this generation who knows how to reprove! R. Johanan b. Nuri said: I call heaven and earth to witness for myself that often was Akiba punished through me because I used to complain against him before our Rabban, Gamaliel Beribbi, and all the more he showered love upon me, to make true what has been said: Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee; reprove a wise man and he will love thee.

b.Arachin 16b

Paul brought reproof to much of the leadership of Judaism in his day. Paul felt so strongly that ritual conversion to Judaism was wrong – and yet as strongly he loved Israel – and for those reasons he was persecuted.

What Scripture Says

The Spirit vs. the Flesh

Some people, when they read Galatians five, they contrast “the Law” with the Spirit. Sadly, that is not at all what is being contrasted.

Walk In the Spirit

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Galatians 5:16

Ironically, some have assumed enmity between the commandments of God and the Spirit of God. How could that ever be true? The enmity is between God's commandments (which His Spirit empowers us to "live out"), and the lust of the flesh. How does "living out" the commandments of God act against the lust of the flesh? Read and comment on the following passages. Try to focus on what should be done, or not done.

Romans 6:12-14:

Romans 7:10-13:

Ephesians 4:21-24

2Timothy 2:22

Titus 2:11-14

1Peter 1:13-16:

Conclusion

*Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new Spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.***

Ezekiel 36:25-27

It is a confused and inconsistent theology that in its attempts to nullify all the things that it sees as “Jewish,” places the very Spirit of God in opposition to His commandments. A sad part is that with such obfuscation, the message of Galatians chapter five can be missed. The Holy Spirit is the gift of enablement. It is the gift that gives power and life to the commandments of God!

Prayer Focus

Ahavah Rabbah [Abundant Love] is a part of the *Shacharit* [morning] prayer service. One of the blessings of the Shema (prayed immediately before reciting the Shema) is *Ahavah Rabbah*.

Ahavah Rabbah

With an abundant love You have loved us, HaShem our G-d; with exceedingly great pity have You pitied us. Our Father, our King, for the sake of our forefathers, who trusted in You and whom You taught the decrees of life, may You be equally gracious to us and teach us. Our Father, the merciful Father, Who acts mercifully, have mercy upon us, instill in our hearts to understand and elucidate, to listen, learn, teach, safeguard, perform, and fulfill all the words of Your Torah's teaching with love.

Enlighten our eyes in Your Torah, attach our hearts to Your commandments, and unify our hearts to love and fear Your Name, and may we not fee inner shame for all eternity. Because we have trusted in Your great and awesome holy Name, may we exult and rejoice in Your salvation.

Bring us in peacefulness from the four corners of the earth and lead us with upright pride to our land. For You effect salvations, O G-d; You have chosen us from among every people and tongue. And You have brought us close to Your great Name forever in truth, to offer praiseful thanks to You, and proclaim Your Oneness with love.

Blessed are You, HaShem, Who chooses His people Israel with Love (Amein).

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Lesson Twelve: Galatians Chapter Six – Do Not Grow Weary

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

1Corinthians 15:58

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:9-10

Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

James 3:18

As You Begin

- Find a quiet place and start your study with prayer.
- Are you dry and dusty from living life in this world? Ask the Father, Who gives to all freely, for strength to continue to live a life that pleases Him.
- Read Galatians chapter six in the Hebrew Names Version found at the end of this workbook.
- Meditate on this passage:

For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.” Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Romans 11:24-29

Some Questions to Ask

- As a Gentile follower of Messiah Yeshua, am I a part of Israel? Am I Jewish?
- Am I a part of the covenant community – the People of God?
- What is my duty with regard to greater Israel – am I to treat them as my brothers and sisters – or are they merely targets for “evangelization” like any other pagan?
- Am I ever permitted to “give up” on Israel or Jewish people?

Historical Context

Following the destruction of the Holy Temple in 70 CE, the Roman Emperor Vespasian enacted a tax called “*Fiscus Judaicus*.” This tax was levied on all Jews ostensibly to repay the cost of the Jewish Revolt (67-73 CE). Even those who lived like Jews were included in this huge financial burden. More and more, within the followers of Yeshua, the Gentiles were being given reasons not to identify with their Jewish brothers and sisters. By early in the Second Century, Gentiles within the followers of Yeshua outnumbered the Jews. With cultural and financial troubles they began to feel detached from the descents of Jacob. Added to that, there had been real persecution from some of the leadership within greater Judaism.

Gentiles began to look for theological ways to distance themselves from Israel. As a result, the Second Century saw the rise of the theological system called “Supercessionism” or as it is more commonly referred to as “Replacement Theology.” This theological system taught that the “church” has replaced Israel in regard to the promises and covenants of God. Elaborate explanations of “Old Testament” texts are created – often resorting to allegory when the plain reading of the text confirmed the eternal covenant between God and Israel.

Supercessionism provided the theological reason not only to distance “the church” from Jews, but ultimately for persecuting Jews as “Christ killers” and “disloyal slaves to Jewish law.” The pogroms that began in earnest during the Crusades were justified as a way of subduing Jews and Judaism to the superiority of “Christianity.” Countless Jews have been tortured and killed under the guise of service to the “cross” and “Christianity.”

Even the Protestant Reformation did not bring to light the error of Supercessionism. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin were decidedly anti-Semitic, not only in their theology, but in their words and deeds. Martin Luther’s own words added fuel to the fire of the Jew-hatred. Eventually, errant theology is born out in terrible deeds. Imagine the words of Martin Luther as they undoubtedly echoed in the minds of those in Germany in the 1930s. From his tract, “*The Jews and Their Lies*” he wrote:

What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews?

First to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them. This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christian.

Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed. For they pursue in them the same aims as in their synagogues. Instead they might be lodged under a roof or in a barn, like the gypsies.

Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them.

Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach henceforth on pain of loss of life and limb.

Fifth, I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews. For they have no business in the countryside, since they are not lords, officials, tradesmen, or the like.

Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping. The reason for such a measure is that, as said above, they have no other means of earning a livelihood than usury, and by it they have stolen and robbed from us all they possess.

Seventh, I commend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow, as was imposed on the children of Adam. For it is not fitting that they should let us accursed Goyim toil in the sweat of our faces while they, the holy people, idle away their time behind the stove, feasting and farting, and on top of all, boasting blasphemously of their lordship over the Christians by means of our sweat. No, one should toss out these lazy rogues by the seat of their pants.

But what will happen even if we do burn down the Jews' synagogues and forbid them publicly to praise God, to pray, to teach, to utter God's name? They will still keep doing it in secret. If we know that they are doing this in secret, it is the same as if they were doing it publicly. For our knowledge of their secret doings and our toleration of them implies that they are not secret after all and thus our conscience is encumbered with it before God.¹⁹

Martin Luther

Martin Luther's little book, "*The Jews and Their Lies*" was published and distributed by the Nazis in the 1930s.

Supercessionism was the dominant theological construct from the Second Century until the late Nineteenth Century, when Dispensational Theology appeared on the scene within Protestant denominations. Supercessionism had answered the question "Is God finished with Israel?" with a decided "yes." Dispensationalism answered the same question with "yes, for the time being." Dispensationalism sprang from the difficulties that Supercessionism had in explaining away the future restoration of Israel as found in the Prophets (Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, etc.). Dispensationalism wanted to treat those passages as literal. However well-intentioned, as a theological system it still could not deal with what

¹⁹ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Volume 47: The Christian in Society IV*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971). pp 268-293

Supercessionism had done in “theologizing” the “Old Testament” – there were still those “Jewish things” to deal with. With Dispensationalism, the overt ugliness and anti-Semitism of Supercessionism was replaced with a kinder gentler theology that still considers the commandments of the Almighty to be “Jewish Law.” Nearly all of Christian theology falls into one of these two camps: Supercessionism and Dispensationalism.

For the most part, Dispensationalism over the past hundred years has provided a stable ground for nurturing an interest in (and even a love for) Israel and the Jewish people. However, it did that at the expense of a principle biblical concept: **God has only one People.** All of the promises made were to one family: The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David.

So the ancient Sages of Israel weren’t so far off – if Gentiles wanted to be a part of the covenant, they needed to be a part of the family of Jacob – they needed to become a part of Israel. But as Paul warns, it was not by “becoming Jews.”

There was another way: **to be adopted.** And this was Paul’s reason for writing the Epistle to the Galatians.

What Scripture Says

Paul’s picture of the believer being “grafted into” Israel is an enduring one. The picture of Israel as the cultivated Olive Tree is beautifully expressed. David described himself and those who are of faith as a “green olive tree.”

But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.

Psalms 52:4

Read Romans 11:17-24. Paul drew his analogy of Israel as the Olive Tree undoubtedly from Jeremiah 11:16-17. Complete the chart that follows (not all ideas are expressed in both passages, but include them regardless):

The Olive Tree	
Jeremiah 11:16-17	Romans 11:17-24
Israel and Judah: “Green Olive Tree” Kindled a fire and branches broken	Israel: olive tree; Gentiles: “wild olive tree” Some branches cut off

Now read and comment on Paul's statement in Romans 11:1-2:

Considering that Paul drew his Romans 11 "Olive Tree" analogy from Jeremiah 11, where could he have gotten the *positive restoration* of the Olive Tree?

Read Ezekiel 37:1-28 and in the chart that follows, list the things that God will do in restoring Israel.

The Restoration of Israel: Ezekiel 37

Bones are the whole house of Israel... [I] will bring you into the Land of Israel
You shall know that I am the LORD

In Paul's epistle to the Ephesians he openly explains what had previously been only hinted at. In Ephesians chapters two and three, Paul reveals the "mystery of the Gospel" – where he explains God's plan from the beginning was to graft Gentiles *into* Israel.

Read Ephesians 2:1-3:12 and answer the following:

In 2:1-9, the way we are "saved" is outlined. How are we "saved?"

In 2:10: for what purpose were we "saved?"

In 2:11: Who is directly addressed?

In 2:1-3 and 2:11-12 how are those to whom he is writing described?

2:13-17 repeats the way these are "saved" – how are they "saved?"²⁰

In 2:18-22, Paul uses three analogies for the covenant community. How many "countries" or "families" or "temples" are named?

²⁰ In verse 15, if your translation uses something akin to "the law of commandments contained in ordinances" it is a poor translation, The word "ordinances" is the Greek word "*dogma*" which always refers to man-made commandments, not God's.

In 3:1-5, Paul tells the reader that he is now going to reveal a mystery. In verse 6 and following, what is the mystery, now revealed?

Now is the time to write down in your own words what you have learned. We have asked many questions. Among them, we have asked, *“Does all Israel have a part in the World to Come;”* *“Are followers of Messiah members of the family of Israel?”* and *“Who is Israel?”* We have discussed many possible answers to those questions. We have seen what Scripture says while we have attempted to maintain the historical context. What does it all mean? *What does it all mean to you?*

Conclusion

Paul was fearful for the believers in Galatia. He was fearful that they would forget how they had come to faith, how they had become covenant members. He was fearful that they would think that something else was needed for their full membership in the family of God. He was fearful that they would succumb to man-made rituals at the expense of the plain teaching and the commandments of God. Is it any different today?

Are there some who think that they can become covenant members by departing Judaism and claiming that they are “Christians” now?

Are there some who think that they can become covenant members by departing “Christianity” and undergoing ritual conversion to “Judaism?”

Are there some who think that they can become covenant members by “walking an aisle” or “raising their hand?”

Are there some who think that God has different standards for His people, depending upon whether they are Jew or Gentile?

Are there some who think that there are “two peoples or God” – the “church” and Israel?

Do you think that being Gentile or Jewish is what matters?

Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.

1Corinthians 7:19

What can be added to the work of Messiah?

Nothing.

Prayer Focus

Aleinu

It is our duty to praise the Master of all, to ascribe greatness to the Molder of primeval creation, for He has not made us like the nations of the lands and has not emplaced us like the families of the earth; for He has not assigned our portion like theirs nor our lot like all their multitudes (for they bow to vanity and emptiness and pray to a god which helps not). But we bend our knees, bow, and acknowledge our thanks before the King Who reigns over kings, the Holy One, Blessed is He. He stretches out heaven and establishes earth's foundation, the seat of His homage is in the heavens above and His powerful Presence is in the loftiest heights He is our God and there is none other. True is our King, there is nothing beside Him, as it is written in His Torah: “You are to know this day and take to your heart that HaShem is the only God – in heaven above and on the earth below – there is none other.”

Therefore we put our hope in You, HaShem our God, that we may soon see Your mighty splendor, to remove detestable idolatry from the earth, and false gods will be utterly cut off, to perfect the universe through the Almighty's sovereignty. Then all humanity will call upon Your Name, to turn all the earth's wicked toward You. All the world's inhabitants will recognize and know that to You every knee should bend, every tongue should swear. Before You, HaShem, our God, they will bend every knee and cast themselves down and to the glory of Your Name they will render homage, and they will all accept upon themselves the yoke of Your Kingship that You may reign over them soon and eternally. For the Kingdom is Yours and You will reign over all eternity in glory as it is written in Your Torah: HaShem shall reign for all eternity. And it is said: HaShem will be King over all the world – on that day HaShem will be One and His Name will be One.

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