

Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Background

Paul's Letter to the Galatians

To whom was Paul writing?

- There is some disagreement among scholars on how to answer this question.
- In the history of the church there have been two major views:
 - The Northern Galatian View
 - The Southern Galatian View
- Almost all scholars prior to the 18th century held the Northern Galatian View*
- This view teaches that Paul was writing to churches in the northern area of the Roman province of Galatia – churches that Luke never mentions in the book of Acts.

*F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, p.5

To whom was Paul writing?

- Part of the reason the early church fathers held this view is that in their day, Galatia consisted of **only** the **northern** portion of the original Roman province.
- So they assumed that Paul must have been writing to churches in that region.*

To whom was Paul writing?

- I believe (along with most modern conservative scholars) that Galatians was written to churches that Paul founded on his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14):
 - (Pisidian) Antioch
 - Iconium
 - Lystra
 - Derbe
- These churches are located in the **southern** area of the Roman province of Galatia.

Map 13: PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS



Why Did Paul Write Galatians?

- Paul founded the Galatian churches on his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14)
- Later Paul received news of people (who have come to be known historically as “Judaizers”) who had gone to these churches and were persuading Paul’s converts to accept a different gospel than he had taught them.
- The Judaizers were trying to impose the Law of Moses on the Galatian Christians – insisting, for example, that they needed to be circumcised in order to be saved.
- Luke describes a similar group that went to Antioch:
 - *Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved."* (Act 15:1 NIV)

Why Did Paul Write Galatians?

- In order to overturn Paul's teaching, the Judaizers also sought to undermine Paul's credibility as an apostle.
- Therefore Paul found it necessary to write to the Galatians in order to defend:
 - His credibility as an apostle
 - The gospel that he had taught them

Paul's Greeting to the Galatians

- ¹ Paul, an apostle--sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead--*
- ² and all the brothers with me, To the churches in Galatia:*
- ³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,*
- ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,*
- ⁵ to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

(Gal 1:1-5 NIV)

Paul's Greeting to the Galatians

¹ *Paul, an apostle--sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—*

- *apostle* = an authoritative messenger, in this case:
- Paul did **not** receive this authority:
 - **From** other men
 - **Through** other men (acting as go-betweens)
- But Paul received his apostolic authority **directly** from:
 - The risen Lord, Jesus Christ (whom Paul had encountered on the Damascus road)
 - God the Father who had raised Jesus

Paul's Greeting to the Galatians

² *and all the brothers with me, To the churches in Galatia:*

- *all the brothers with me* – would have probably included:
 - The church at Antioch Syria where I believe Paul wrote this letter
 - Especially Barnabas (mentioned in 2:1,9,13)
- *To the churches in Galatia* – which Paul and Barnabas founded during his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14; compare 1 Cor. 16:1)

Paul's Greeting to the Galatians

- 3 *Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*
- 4 *who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father*
- After giving his standard greeting (*grace and peace*), Paul gives a short summary of the gospel which he had preached to them when he was with them and which they are now in danger of abandoning:
 - Jesus willingly paid the full price for our sins on the cross.
 - Jesus did this for a purpose: to deliver us from the evil world system which we were a part of when we were lost.
 - All this occurred by the sovereign design of God the Father.

Paul's Greeting to the Galatians

⁵ *to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

- Paul's brief restatement of the gospel prompts him to break out in a doxology of praise to God.

Paul's Greeting to the Galatians

- So we see that Paul begins his letter to the Galatians with a greeting that affirms:
 - His direct authority from God as an apostle
 - His gospel which he had preached to them

Paul's Warning to the Galatians

- ⁶ *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel--*
- ⁷ *which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.*
- ⁸ *But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!*
- ⁹ *As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*
- ¹⁰ *Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.*

(Gal 1:6-10 NIV)

Paul's Warning to the Galatians

⁶ *I am astonished...*

- In most of Paul's letters, the greeting is followed by words of **thanksgiving** or praise to God for his readers life or faith:
 - *I thank (my) God* (Rom. 1:8; Phil 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:3)
 - *I (we) always thank God* (1 Cor. 1:4; Col. 1:3; 1 Thes. 1:2)
 - *We ought always to thank God* (2 Thes. 1:3)
 - *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord of our Lord Jesus Christ* (2 Cor. 1:3, Eph 1:3)
- Galatians is the only letter where Paul, on the heels of his greeting, expresses stunned astonishment at his readers.

Paul's Warning to the Galatians

⁶ *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—*

- Paul mentions three things that cause his astonishment:
 - *so quickly* – by my reckoning, probably less than a year
 - They are **moving away** from God, who had produced in them a (seemingly) genuine faith in undeserved sacrifice of Christ on their behalf.
 - They are beginning to believe another gospel – one that Paul had not taught them.

Paul's Warning to the Galatians

⁶ *...you are ... turning to a different gospel–*
⁷ *which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion [ESV – “who trouble you”] and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.*

- There is only one true gospel: we are saved by trusting in the work of Christ alone.
- By adding law-keeping (circumcision) to the gospel, those who were troubling the Galatians had perverted the gospel, so that what they were preaching was no longer the gospel!

Paul's Warning to the Galatians

- 8 *But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!*
- 9 *As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*
- The first thing we see about the gospel is that it is the **content** of the gospel message that matters – **not** the **messenger**.
 - *That which does **not** teach Christ is not apostolic even if Peter and Paul be the teachers. On the other hand, that which **does** teach Christ is apostolic even if Judas, Annas, Pilate, or Herod should propound it. (Martin Luther – Preface to the Epistle of James)*

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- ⁹ *As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*
- Only those trusting in Christ's work **alone** will be saved and go to heaven.
 - Anyone who trusts in anything other than Christ's work **alone**, are trusting in a false gospel and they will spend all of eternity in the Lake of Fire after they die.
 - Even those, like the Judaizers in Galatia, who believe they are saved by believing in Christ **plus** something else (in their case circumcision), are trusting in a false gospel and they will spend all of eternity in the Lake of Fire after they die.

Paul's Warning to the Galatians

¹⁰ *Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.*

- Apparently, in order to undermine Paul's credibility, the Judaizers claimed that he was just a "man pleaser"
- Perhaps they said something like "Among the Jews he preaches circumcision (Gal 5:11; cf. Acts 16:3), because he knows they believe in it. But among the Gentiles, he tells them it's okay not to be circumcised because he knows they would rather avoid it." The Corinthians made a similar complaint against Paul in 2 Cor. 10:1.
- But if Paul were just a man-pleaser, he surely would not have been willing to pronounce eternal condemnation in the previous verse on those who deny the gospel!
- Rather, as Paul says here, he could not be a servant of Christ if he merely tried to please men rather than God.

Paul Received the Gospel Directly from God – Not from Men (1:11-2:14)

- ¹¹ *I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up.*
- ¹² *I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.*
- ¹³ *For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.*
- ¹⁴ *I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*
- ¹⁵ *But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased*
- ¹⁶ *to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man,*
- ¹⁷ *nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.*

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- ¹⁸ *Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days.*
- ¹⁹ *I saw none of the other apostles--only James, the Lord's brother.*
- ²⁰ *I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.*
- ²¹ *Later I went to Syria and Cilicia.*
- ²² *I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.*
- ²³ *They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."*
- ²⁴ *And they praised God because of me.*

Paul Received the Gospel Directly from God – Not from Men (1:11-2:14)

- 2:1 Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also.*
- 2 I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.*
- 3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.*
- 4 This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.*
- 5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.*

Paul Received the Gospel Directly from God – Not from Men (1:11-2:14)

- 6 As for those who seemed to be important--whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance--those men added nothing to my message.*
- 7 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews.*
- 8 For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles.*
- 9 James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.*
- 10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.*

Paul Received the Gospel Directly from God – Not from Men (1:11-2:14)

- 11 When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.*
- 12 Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.*
- 13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.*
- 14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"*

Paul Received the Gospel Directly from God – Not from Men (1:11-2:14)

- Paul received the Gospel directly from God (1:11-12)
- Evidence that Paul did not receive the Gospel from men - even the apostles at the church of Jerusalem:
 - **Immediately after Paul's Conversion (1:13-17)**
 - Paul didn't consult with anyone from Jerusalem
 - Instead Paul began preaching the Gospel immediately
 - **Paul's First Visit to Jerusalem (1:18-24)**
 - Didn't occur until three years after his conversion
 - Paul only briefly met two of the leaders at that time
 - **Paul's Second Visit to Jerusalem (2:1-10)**
 - Didn't occur until 14 years after his conversion
 - Even then Paul set *his* gospel before *them* (not visa versa)
 - **Paul's Public Rebuke Peter When the Gospel was at Stake (2:11-14)**

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- ¹² *I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from [“of” –ESV] Jesus Christ.*
- This kind of direct revelation given to the apostles and prophets (and now preserved for us in the words of Scripture) makes them a part of the foundation that God has laid for the New Testament church:
 - *[God’s church is] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*
(Eph 2:20 NIV)

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Immediately after Paul's Conversion (1:13-17)

- ¹³ *For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.*
- ¹⁴ *I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*
- ¹⁵ *But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased*
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- This fits with what Luke records in Acts 9 where he records Paul's conversion. Though Luke does not mention Arabia, he does describe Paul's preaching the gospel in Damascus:
 - *Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. (Act 9:19-20 NIV)*

Map 13: PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS



MAT 1-2
LUK 1-2

JESUS IS BORN IN BETHLEHEM

5 BC

SAUL IS BORN IN TARSUS

2 AD

SAUL OF TARSUS
PAUL THE APOSTLE

4 GOSPELS

JESUS' MINISTRY

ACTS 8:1-3
9:1-31

JESUS CRUCIFIED, BURIED, AND RAISED

30

SAUL'S CAREER AS A PERSECUTOR

32

SAUL'S CONVERSION AND COMMISSION

SAUL IN DAMASCUS AND ARABIA

35

SAUL'S FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM

SAUL IN TARSUS

11:25-30
12:25

SAUL IN ANTIOCH

44

FAMINE RELIEF VISIT TO JERUSALEM

46

13-14

FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

47

15

JERUSALEM COUNCIL

48

16-18

SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

49

19-21

THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

50

22-23
24-26

ARREST AT JERUSALEM

52

CAESAREAN IMPRISONMENT

53

27

VOYAGE TO ROME

57

28

FIRST ROMAN IMPRISONMENT

58

RELEASE FROM IMPRISONMENT

59

FINAL TRAVELS

61

SECOND ROMAN IMPRISONMENT

61

DEATH BY EXECUTION

64

GALATIANS ?

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS

1 & 2 CORINTHIANS

ROMANS

PHILEMON, COLOSSIANS
EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS

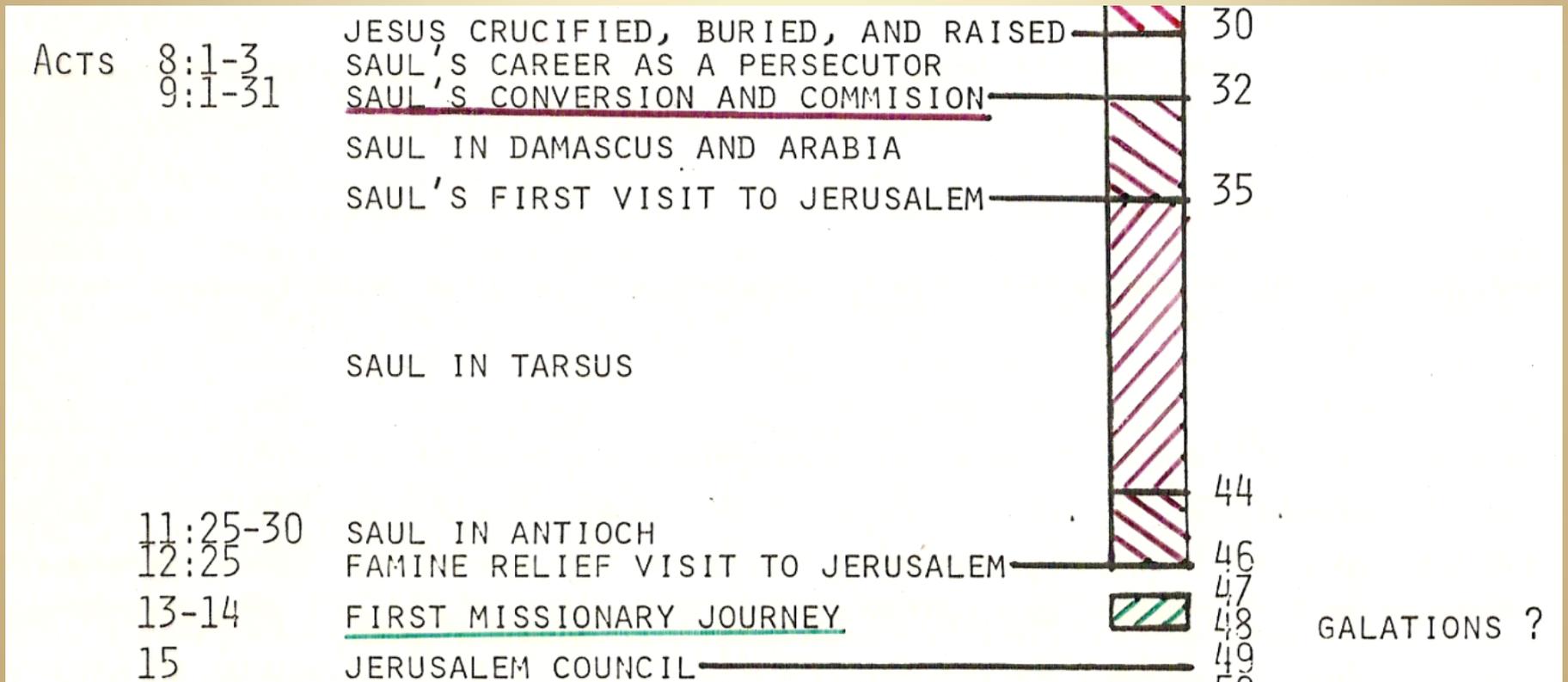
PRISON
EPISTLES

1 TIMOTHY, TITUS

PASTORAL
EPISTLES

2 TIMOTHY

Timeline of Paul's Early Ministry



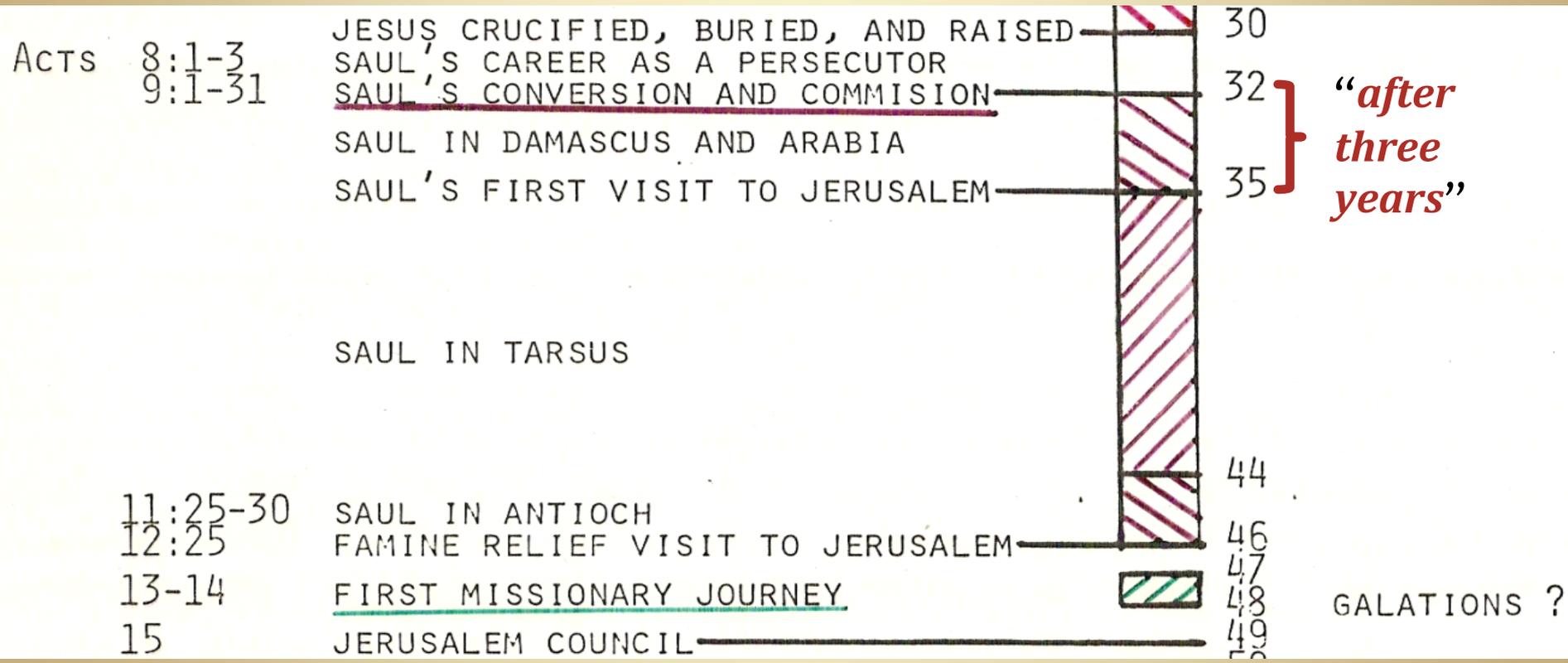
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Paul's First Visit to Jerusalem (1:18-24)

- ¹⁸ *Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days.*
- ¹⁹ *I saw none of the other apostles--only James, the Lord's brother.*
- ²⁰ *I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.*
- This visit is briefly described by Luke in Acts:
 - *When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles... (Act 9:26-27 NIV)*

Timeline of Paul's Early Ministry



Paul's First Visit to Jerusalem (1:18-24)

²¹ *Later I went to Syria and Cilicia.*

²² *I was personally unknown [literally, “unknown by face”] to the churches of Judea that are in Christ.*

²³ *They only heard the report: “The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”*

²⁴ *And they praised God because of me.*

- *Later I went to Syria and Cilicia* – This fits with what Luke records in Acts 9:30 and 11:25-26:
 - *When the brothers learned of this [a plot to kill Saul], they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus [in Cilicia].* (Act 9:30 NIV)
 - *Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch [in Syria].* (Act 11:25-26 NIV)
- *“unknown by face” to the churches of Judea* – probably includes believers scattered from Jerusalem by persecution. Paul is emphasizing his lack of contact with anyone in the church at Jerusalem

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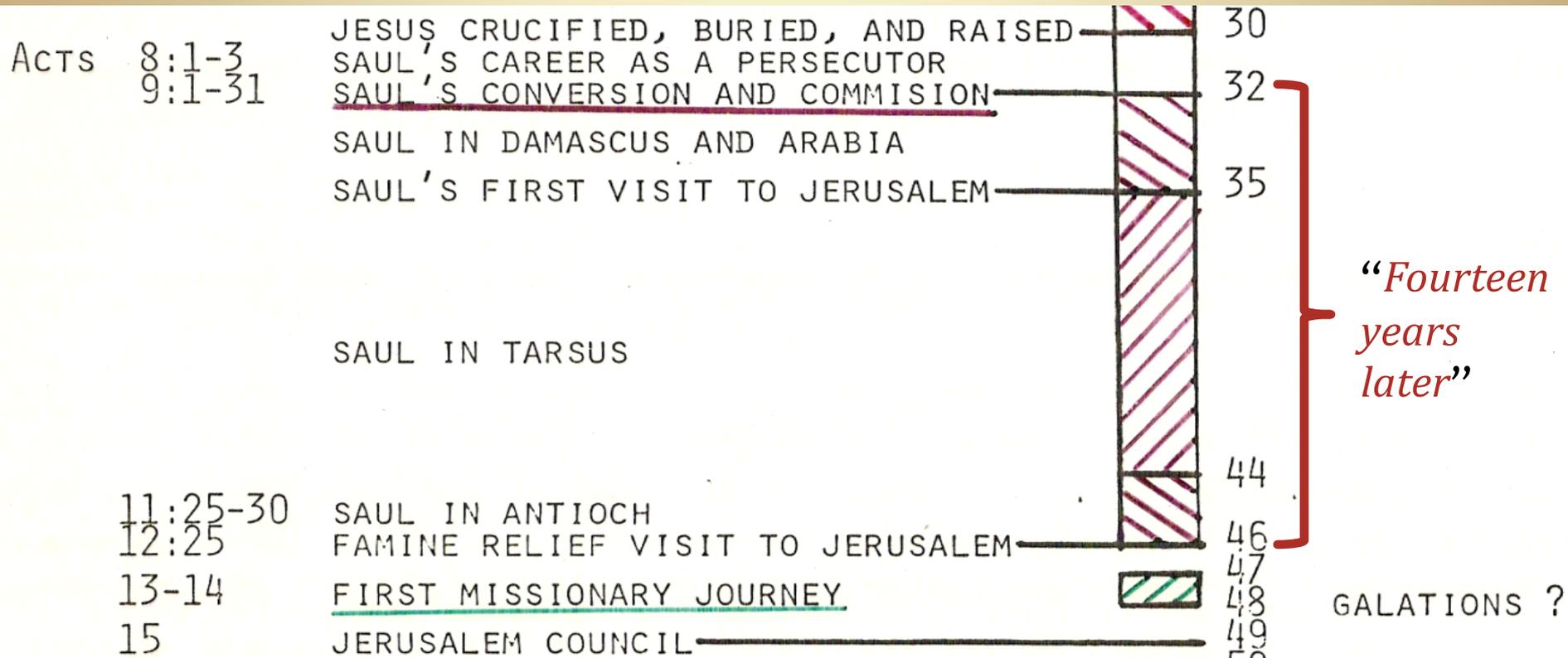
Paul's Second Visit to Jerusalem (2:1-10)

- ^{2:1} *Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also.*
- ² *I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.*
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Lessons to Be Learned in Paul's Confrontation of Peter

- We must never tolerate anything in our church that compromises the gospel.
 - **Galatians 1:9** - *As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*
- We can deny the gospel by our actions as well as by our words
- No one is immune to sin – not even those you greatly respect.
- No one is immune to sin – not even those you might expect to “know better.”
- We must be diligent to guard against sin in our own lives.
- We must be diligent to guard against sin in the church.

Lessons to Be Learned in Paul's Confrontation of Peter

- No one is above reproof or correction.
- No one is above questioning even those with great spiritual wisdom and authority.
 - **Acts 17:11** - *Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*
- Those in positions of teaching, influence, or authority must be especially careful.
 - **James 3:1** - *Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.*
 - **Matthew 18:6** - *But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*

How does the reliability of Paul's Gospel apply to us today?

- 1 Corinthians 15:1 *Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.*
- 2 *By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.*
- 3 *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,*
- 4 *that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,*
- 5 *and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.*
- 6 *After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.*
- 7 *Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,*
- 8 *and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.*
- 9 *For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

How does the reliability of Paul's Gospel apply to us today?

- If Paul is wrong about the Gospel:
 - *If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. (1Co 15:19 NIV)*
- But because Paul is right about the Gospel, we can say along with Paul:
 - *"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1Co 15:55-58)*

Paul's Letter to the Galatians

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 - Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

Paul's Public Rebuke Peter When the Gospel was at Stake (2:11-14)

- ¹¹ *When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.*
- ¹² *Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.*
- ¹³ *The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.*
- ¹⁴ *When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"*

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

- ¹⁵ *"We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners'*
- ¹⁶ *know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.*

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

- ¹⁷ *"If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not!*
- ¹⁸ *If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker.*
- ¹⁹ *For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.*
- ²⁰ *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
- ²¹ *I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"*

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

¹⁵ *We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’*

- *“We who are Jews by birth”* – Believers such as Paul, Peter, and Barnabas who were born as Jews would have had the opportunity from birth to keep the law (were it possible)
- *“not ‘Gentile sinners’”* – In Old Testament times the Jews viewed the Gentiles as sinners (which they were), living outside the law.

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

¹⁶ *[[Jews by birth] know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.*

- *“justified”* – to be accepted by God, made in right standing with God – in other words, to be saved.
- *“faith”* – a wholehearted, life-changing, personal trust and dependence on the finished work of Christ alone in order to have right standing with God
- *“by observing the law no one will be justified”* – Paul quotes a paraphrase of Psalm 143:2

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

¹⁷ *"If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not!"*

- *“we seek to be justified in Christ”* – that is, we are trusting in Christ’s work on our behalf to be saved
- *“it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners”* – because we have given up on trying to keep the law in order to be saved
- *“does that mean that Christ promotes sin?”* – a rhetorical question. Paul’s answer: *“Absolutely not!”*

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

¹⁸ *If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker.*

- Paul is referring here to “rebuilding” and “destroying” the Law:
 - For Paul to “rebuild” the Law, would have to go back to teaching that everyone (including Gentiles) is still under the Law.
 - Paul had “destroyed” the Law when he taught that we are no longer under it – for salvation or even its particular requirements such as the food laws or circumcision.
 - If Paul were now to go back and teach that we are under the Law after all, it would prove that he really had been a lawbreaker when he had stopped keeping the Law!

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

¹⁹ *For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.*

- What does it mean for Paul to “die to the Law”?
 - For Paul, “to die to” something means that he does not have any relationship to it, it has no further claim or control over him

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

¹⁹ *For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.*

- How is it that Paul “died” to the Law “through the Law”? Compare this with what Paul says a few verses later:
 - *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written [in the Law]: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree”. (Gal 3:13 NIV)*
 - By being crucified on our behalf, Christ met the Law’s requirement that we be cursed for our sin .
 - So it is through meeting the Law’s requirement that we are freed from any further obligation to the Law.

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

¹⁹ *For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.*

- Just as we died with Christ, so we are made alive with Christ – free to “live for God” without any encumbrance:

- *The death [Christ] died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. (Rom 6:10-13 NIV)*

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

20a *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*

- Christ was representing us when he was crucified and therefore God views us as having been crucified with Christ.

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

^{20a} *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives [with reference to] ~~in~~ me.*

- There are many passages (for example John 14-16) that teach that Christ lives in us through his Spirit.
- The Greek translated “in me” can also be translated “in reference to me” or “because of me”.
- For example in Gal 1:24 where the same Greek phrase is used, it is translated:
 - “And they praised God because of me”
 - Not : “And they praised God in me”
- So here, “Christ lives with reference to me”. God sees my life as perfect because he sees Christ’s life in place of my life.

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

^{20b} *The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

- Although Paul previously said he “no longer lives” (in one sense), he obviously still does live!
- But the life we live out here “in the flesh” is a living out (by faith) of what Christ has done for us.
- We clearly see here also that Paul was motivated by the love that Christ had for him as demonstrated in the sacrifice that Christ made for him!

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know (2:15–21)

²¹ *I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”*

- Paul seems to be answering an objection made by the Judaizers that by rejecting obedience to the Law as the means by which men get in right standing with God, Paul was ignoring (or “setting aside”) the grace that God had given to the nation of Israel.
- Paul’s response is that he is not setting aside the grace of God – to the contrary: if it were possible to obtain right standing with God apart from grace (though law keeping), then there would have been no need for Christ to die!

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Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know 2:15–21

- ¹⁵ *"We who are Jews by birth* [like Peter, Paul and Barnabas] *and not 'Gentile sinners'* [as they are viewed by the Jews, because the Gentiles do not keep the Law]
- ¹⁶ *know that a man is not justified* [or put in right standing with God] *by observing the law, but by faith* [- a wholehearted, life-changing, personal trust and dependence] *in* [the finished work of] *Jesus Christ* [on our behalf]. *So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law,* [and we who are Jews by birth know this is necessary] *because* [our own scriptures teach in Psalm 143:2, for example that] *by observing the law no one will be justified.*

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know 2:15–21

- ¹⁷ *"If, while we seek to be justified in Christ* [by trusting in Christ's work on our behalf], *it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners* [because we have given up on trying to keep the law in order to be saved and have turned to Christ instead], *does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not* [- your conclusion does not follow from your premises]!
- ¹⁸ *If I rebuild what I destroyed* [that is, if I go back to teaching that we need to keep the Law], *I prove that I am a lawbreaker* [because I will be admitting that we should have all been keeping the Law all along].
- ¹⁹ *For through* [Christ meeting the requirements of] *the law I died to the law* [that is, I am released from its legal claim over me] *so that I might* [be free to] *live for God.*

Paul appeals to what those who are “Jews by birth” already know 2:15–21

- ²⁰ *I have been crucified with Christ* [that is, Christ was crucified on my behalf] *and I no longer live* [as God sees it], *but Christ lives* [on behalf of] ~~in~~ *me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
- ²¹ [By looking to Christ for salvation] *I do not set aside the grace of God* [as expressed in the Law given to Israel], *for if righteousness could be gained through* [my keeping] *the law, Christ died for nothing* [that is, Christ’s death would have been unnecessary, if men could have been saved by keeping the Law themselves]!”

Paul Appeals to the Galatians' Personal Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)

- ¹ You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.*
- ² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?*
- ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?*
- ⁴ Have you suffered so much for nothing--if it really was for nothing?*
- ⁵ Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?*

Paul Appeals to the Galatians' Personal Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)

- ¹ *You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.*
- Paul's utter dismay really comes through here – How could they be so illogical, so foolish as to turn away from the liberating Gospel that Paul had so clearly and vividly presented to them – a Gospel whose central tenet is that Jesus was crucified on our behalf in order to set us free from the Law's condemnation?
 - Their behavior is so bizarre that it almost seems like someone has hypnotized them!

Paul Appeals to the Galatians' Personal Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)

² *I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?*

- This is a rhetorical question: obviously they received the Spirit by believing what they heard, that is, the gospel.
- The receiving of the Spirit marked the beginning of their salvation because every believer in this age receives the Spirit at the point of salvation (compare 1 Corinthians 12:13, Eph 1:13).
- In order for Paul's argument to have force, there would have to have been clear evidence that the Galatians had received the Spirit at the time they believed the Gospel.

Paul Appeals to the Galatians' Personal Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)

² *I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?*

- Often in the early church, the giving of the Spirit was evidenced by miraculous signs such as the ability of believers to immediately begin speaking in an unlearned language (referred to as “speaking in tongues”):
 - *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, “Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” (Act 10:44-47 NIV)*

Paul Appeals to the Galatians' Personal Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)

² *I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?*

- Apparently some among the Galatians were able to work miracles by the power of the Spirit because Paul mentions this a few verses later:
 - *[God] supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you...* (Gal 3:5 RSV)
- But remember, even in the early church, **not every** Christian was given the ability to perform miracles:
 - *Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.* (1Co 12:29-31 NIV)

Paul Appeals to the Galatians' Personal Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)

- ² *I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?*
- Later in the Galatian letter, Paul lists other evidences of the Spirit that should be present in the life of **every** genuine Christian:
 - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*
(Gal 5:22-23 NIV)

Paul Appeals to the Galatians' Personal Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)

- ³ *Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort [literally, “the flesh”]?*
- The word translated “*human effort*” in the NIV is the Greek word for “flesh”.
 - There is probably a play on words here, since their human efforts involved a cutting away of “flesh” through circumcision.
 - The Greek word translated “*to attain your goal*” in the NIV is a word that means to “complete, accomplish; finish, or end” (Barclay Newman Greek English Dictionary)

Paul Appeals to the Galatians' Personal Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)

- ³ *Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort [literally, "the flesh"]?*
- Having established that the Galatians' relationship with God **began** when they received the Spirit (through faith), the foolishness of trying to **complete** that relationship through human efforts (to keep the law) becomes obvious.
 - As Paul explains to the Philippians (using very similar Greek words):
 - *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*
(Phi 1:6 ESV)

Paul Appeals to the Galatians' Personal Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)

⁴ Have you suffered [or perhaps “experienced”- RSV] so much for nothing--if it really was for nothing?

- The word translated “suffered” in the NIV could have a more general meaning of “experienced”, in which case it would be a reference the experiences that accompanied their receiving the Spirit.
- Paul here reminds them of what is at stake – their very salvation. To experience what they did “for nothing” would mean that they were not saved after all!
- But Paul holds out hope that is not the case; “if it really was for nothing”

Paul Appeals to the Galatians' Personal Experience of the Gospel (3:1-5)

- 5 *Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?*
- This is basically the same question Paul asked them in verse two, but here he explicitly mentions the miraculous acts produced by the Spirit.
 - Most likely the reason that Paul here emphasizes these dramatic, miraculous evidences of the Spirit is because they are easily observable and therefore anyone who tries to argue with Paul will have a hard time refuting this point.

Two Questions That We Should Be Asking Ourselves

- What is the evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in **our** lives?
- On what basis did **we** receive the Spirit?

What is the evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives?

- Should we even be asking this question?
 - As we have already seen, Paul, while expressing confidence that the Galatians have received a genuine saving work of the Spirit in their lives (3:3,5; 5:10), expresses concern that this may not prove out in the end (1:6-9; 3:4).
 - Though the Galatians have performed miracles, Jesus warns that there will be those on the last day who say to him, “*Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?*” (Mat 7:22 NIV) and yet he will say to them: “*I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!*” (Mat 7:23 NIV)
 - For this reason Paul warns the professing Corinthian believers: “*Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test?*” (2Co 13:5 NIV)
 - Peter after listing a number of evidences of God's divine power in our lives tells us to “*make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2Pe 1:3-11 NIV)

What is the evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives?

- What are some of the evidences given in Scripture that the Spirit is at work in us and that we are genuinely saved?
 - As we have seen in the Galatian letter, the first evidence is faith: a wholehearted, life-changing, personal trust and dependence on the finished work of Christ alone in order to have right standing with God.
 - Paul later in the Galatian letter lists the fruit of the Spirit as: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal 5:22-23)

What is the evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives?

- What are some of the evidences given in Scripture that the Spirit is at work in us and that we are genuinely saved?
 - Jesus lists characteristics of those who are a part of his kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount: poor in spirit, mourn (over sin), meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, etc. (Mat 5:1ff)
 - Peter lists evidences of God's divine power in our lives: faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (2Pe 1:5-7 NIV)
 - The Apostle John throughout 1 John lists the qualities that we should look for in our lives “*so that you may know that you have eternal life*” (1Jo 5:13): Believing the truth about Jesus, living holy lives, loving your fellow believers by meeting their needs.

Two Questions That We Should Be Asking Ourselves

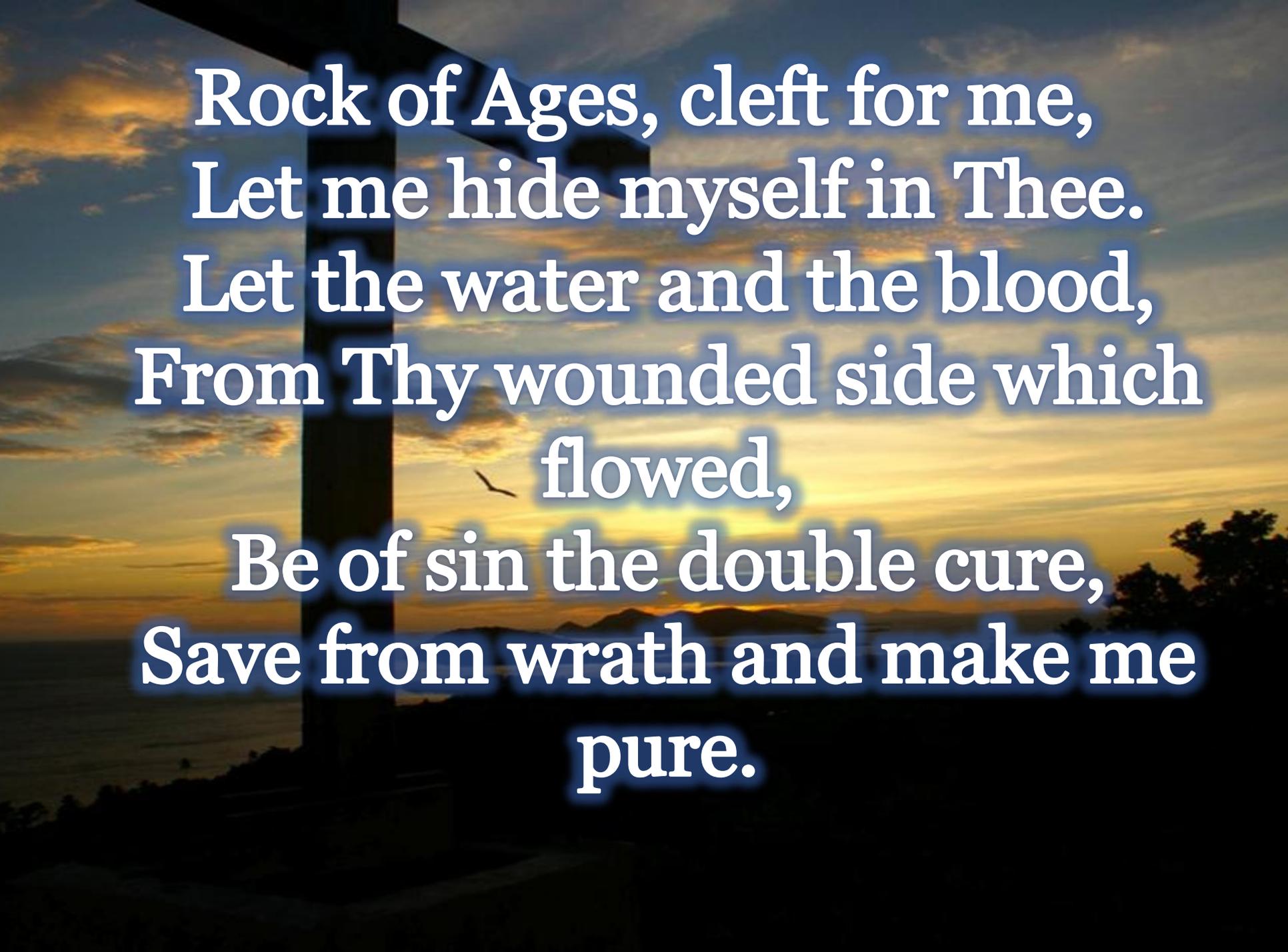
- What is the evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in **our** lives?
- On what basis did **we** receive the Spirit?

On What Basis Did We Receive the Spirit?

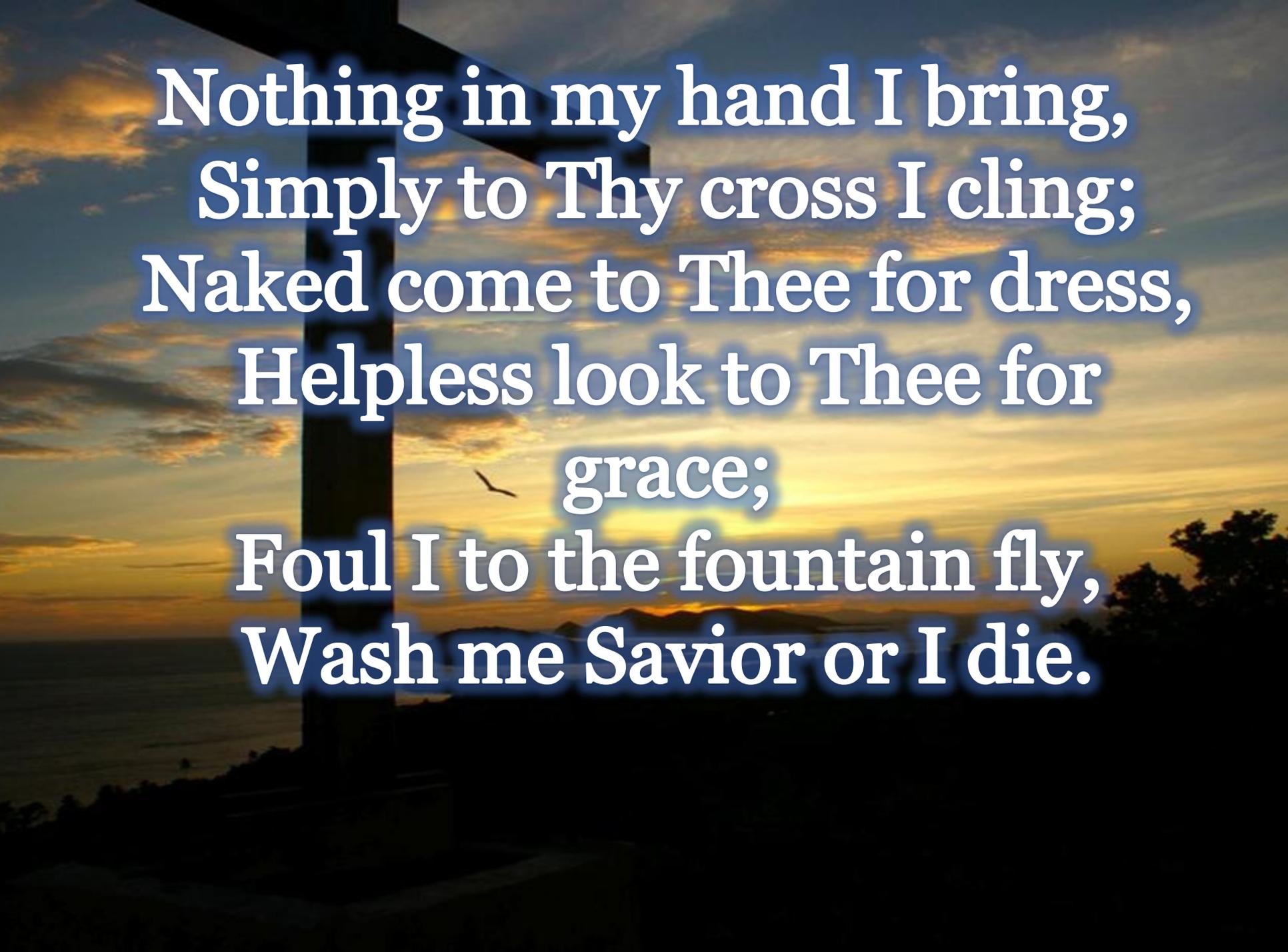
- *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Tit 3:5 NIV)*
- *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph 2:8-10 NIV)*



Rock of Ages

A large wooden cross is the central focus, set against a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow across the clouds. A single bird is captured in flight, silhouetted against the bright light of the setting sun. The overall mood is solemn and contemplative.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which
flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me
pure.

A large wooden cross is the central focus, set against a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow across the clouds. A single bird is captured in flight, silhouetted against the bright light of the setting sun. The overall mood is one of peace and spiritual reflection.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked come to Thee for dress,
Helpless look to Thee for
grace;
Foul I to the fountain fly,
Wash me Savior or I die.

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 - Paul appeals to the historical experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

- 6 Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*
- 7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.*
- 8 The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."*
- 9 So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

- ¹⁰ *All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."*
- ¹¹ *Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith."*
- ¹² *The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them."*
- ¹³ *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*
- ¹⁴ *He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

⁶ *Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

- Having reminded the Galatians of their personal experience, where they received the Holy Spirit (and were saved) not by keeping the Law (and getting circumcised), but by believing the Gospel that Paul had preached to them – Paul now points to the experience of Abraham, the first man that God had commanded to be circumcised (**Gen 17:10**).

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

⁶ *Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

- Abraham, according to Genesis, was told by God to leave his homeland and go to another land that God would show him where he and his descendants would be blessed by God. (Genesis 12:1ff)
- Abraham obeyed God and traveled to Canaan where he lived as a nomad for the rest of his life. (Genesis 12:4ff; Hebrews 11:8-9)

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

⁶ *Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

- Shortly after Abraham arrived in Canaan, while he was still childless, God promised him that his offspring would be more numerous than the stars he could see in the night sky. (**Genesis 15:5**)
- Though this must have seemed very unlikely at the time, Abraham believed this incredible promise because of the trustworthiness of the One who made it.
- And so , Genesis 15:6 tells us: “*Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.*”

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

7 Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.

- Undoubtedly, the Judaizers had used the example of Abraham to convince the Galatians that they needed to be circumcised.
- Paul shows that in the account of given of Abraham in Genesis 15:6, that Abraham was **credited** with the righteousness he needed to be in right standing with God by means, **not** of circumcision, but by means of **faith**.
- Therefore Paul wants the Galatians to know that it is the ones who have faith and believe in the promises of God who are **true** children of Abraham (that is, the ones who follow in his footsteps).

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

- 8 *The Scripture [in Gen 12:3 and 18:18] foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through [or with] you.”*
- Paul substitutes “the Scripture” here for “God”, indicating that, in Paul’s mind, the scriptures are the very words of God. (compare **Heb. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:16**)
 - At the time that Abraham was credited with righteousness for his faith and trust in God’s promise to him, God “foresaw” that at a later time he would bless the Gentiles (those who are **not** physical descendants of Abraham) by the same principle.
 - And God announced this to Abraham at the time and it was later recorded for us in scripture (**Gen 12:3; 18:18**).

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

- 9 So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*
- Men and women of faith are not only, figuratively speaking, the sons and daughters of Abraham in that they follow in his footsteps, but they have a share in the blessing promised to Abraham.
 - Paul tells us that the Gentiles who are blessed with Abraham are the ones who, like him, have faith in God's promise.
 - And the blessing they receive is the blessing that Abraham received: justification (being put in right standing with God).

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

¹⁰ *All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written [in Deut 27:26] : "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."*

- In contrast to those who have faith in God and are justified, those who, like the Judaizers, rely on law keeping to put themselves in right standing with God are under a curse.
- Why? Because the Law itself states (**Deut 27:26**) that anyone who does not **continue** to do **everything** written in the Law is under a curse.
- Who can continuously do everything written in the Law? No one (except Jesus).
- Therefore anyone who relies on law keeping to attain right standing with God will be cursed by the very Law they are trying to keep!

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

- ¹¹ *Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because [as it says in Hab. 2:4], “The righteous will live by faith.”*
- To say, as Paul did in the previous verse, that those who seek to be justified by the works of the law are under a curse, makes it clear therefore that no one will be justified (i.e., put in right standing with God or saved) by law keeping.
 - To further support this idea Paul cites another Old Testament text (**Hab. 2:4**) which teaches that those who are in right standing with God have eternal life ***by means of faith.***

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

¹² *The law is not based on faith; on the contrary [as it says in Lev. 18:5], "The man who does these things will live by them."*

- Here Paul contrast the two methods by which men seek to have eternal life:
 - Law Keeping
 - Faith
- In other words a person who seeks eternal life by keeping the law, is not seeking eternal life through faith.
- Paul proves this by citing Lev.18:5 in contrast to Hab.2:4 which he cited in the previous verse.

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

- In Galatians 3:11-12, Paul cites two Old Testament texts in order to contrast the two methods by which men seek to attain eternal life:
 - *The righteous will live by faith (Hab. 2:4)*
 - *The man who does these things will live by them (Lev 18:5)*

Method of Salvation:	Old Testament Scripture Cited by Paul:	Subject	Means	Result
Faith	Hab. 2:4 (cited in Gal. 3:11)	The one who is righteous	by faith	will live
Law Keeping	Lev. 18:5 (cited in Gal. 3:12)	The one who does these things [in the Law]	by them	will live

Note: This method doesn't work, because no one can do it!

Paul Appeals to the Historical Experience of Abraham (3:6-14)

¹³ *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written [in Deut. 21:23] : "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

¹⁴ *He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*

- As we have seen, those who seek to be saved by law keeping must do so perfectly, which no one can do, and therefore they will be cursed by the Law.
- But for those of us who have faith in God's promise as given in the Gospel, God makes **Christ** to be our curse so that we can be saved:
 - *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2Co 5:21 NIV)*

False Gospels in Our Day

The Roman Catholic Gospel

- *“The most Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes and preaches that none of those existing outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews and heretics and schismatics, can have a share in life eternal; but that they will go into the eternal fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless before death they are joined with Her” (Pope Eugene IV, Papal Bull Cantate Domino; cf. Session 11 of the Council of Florence)*
- *“The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us.” (CCC* 1131)*

The Roman Catholic Gospel

- *“The sacraments of Christian initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist - lay the foundations of every Christian life... The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life.” (*CCC 1212)*
- *“Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: ‘Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word.’” (*CCC 1213)*

The “Church of Christ” Gospel

- “In the salvation of man's soul there are 2 necessary parts: God's part and man's part...Though God's part is the big part, man's part is also necessary if man is to reach heaven... Man's part can clearly set forth in the following steps:
 - One must be properly taught, and hear
 - One must believe or have faith
 - One must repent, which means turning from one's former lifestyle and choosing God's
 - One must confess belief that Jesus is the son of God
 - One must be baptized for the remission of sins
 - One must remain faithful unto death”

Gospel's Compared

Gospel	Faith Required?	Other Conditions Required	Result of Believing this Gospel
Paul's Gospel	Yes	None	Eternal Life (Galatians 3:13-14)

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Church of Christ Gospel	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baptism• Remain faithful for the rest of your life	Eternal Punishment (Galatians 1:8-9; 3:10-11)

God's Promises to Abraham were Fulfilled in Christ and are Superior to the Law (3:15-4:7)

- ¹⁵ *Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.*
- ¹⁶ *The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.*
- ¹⁷ *What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.*
- ¹⁸ *For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.*

God's Promises to Abraham were Fulfilled in Christ and are Superior to the Law (3:15-4:7)

- ¹⁹ *What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.*
- ²⁰ *A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.*
- ²¹ *Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.*
- ²² *But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.*

God's Promises to Abraham were Fulfilled in Christ and are Superior to the Law (3:15-4:7)

²³ *Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.*

²⁴ *So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.*

²⁵ *Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.*

²⁶ *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,*

²⁷ *for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

²⁸ *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

²⁹ *If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

God's Promises to Abraham were Fulfilled in Christ and are Superior to the Law (3:15-4:7)

- ¹ What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate.*
- ² He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.*
- ³ So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world.*
- ⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law,*
- ⁵ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.*
- ⁶ Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*
- ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

Paul Defends His Law-Free Gospel (2:15-5:12)

- Those who are “Jews by birth” already know that trying to keep the Law for salvation is futile (2:15–21)
- The Galatians were not saved by keeping the Law but by hearing and believing the Gospel (3:1-5)
- Abraham, the one through whom circumcision was given, was saved by faith not by law-keeping (3:6-14)
- God’s promises to Abraham were fulfilled in Christ and are superior to the Law (3:15-4:7)

God's Promises to Abraham were Fulfilled in Christ and are Superior to the Law (3:15-4:7)

- **Permanent versus Temporary (3:15-18)** – Paul contrasts:
 - The of the promise to Abraham was fulfilled in Christ and is *permanent*
 - The Law pointed forward to Christ and was *temporary*
- **Q & A (3:19-22)** – Paul anticipates and answers two questions raised by his previous statements about the Law
- **Restrictions versus Privileges (3:23-4:7)** – Paul contrasts:
 - The *restrictions* endured by Jews who lived under the Law of Moses
 - The *privileges* that we enjoy since Christ has come

Something to keep in mind before we get started...

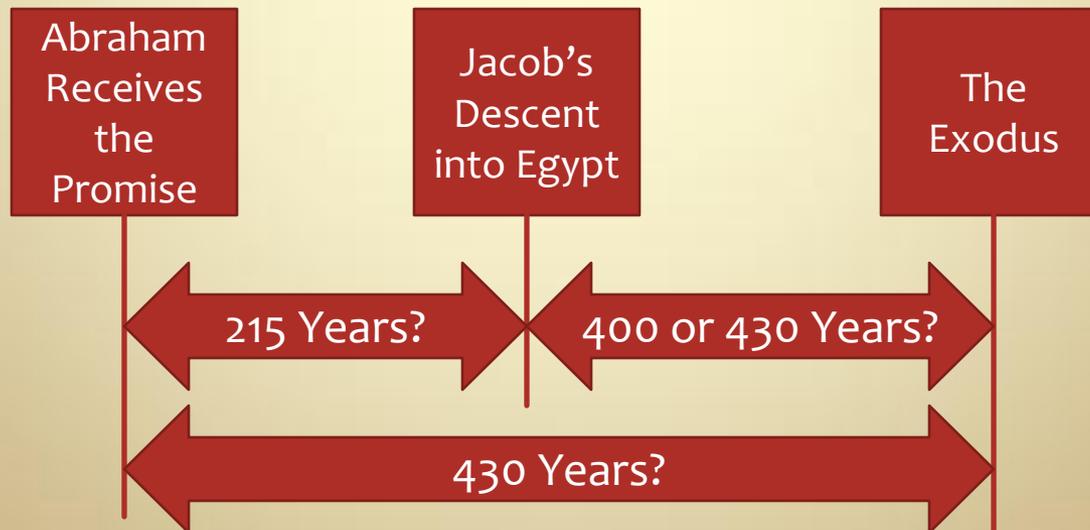
- The Book of Genesis tells us that God made a covenant with Abraham which consisted of a number of promises. (**Genesis 12:1-3; 15:4-21; 17:1-16; 22:17**)
- As we have seen, Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness – so he was saved through faith in God’s promises.
- Paul is going to explain that the promises given to Abraham in this covenant found their ultimate fulfillment in the coming of Abraham’s ultimate “seed” (or offspring) – Jesus Christ.
- People from every nation who follow the example of Abraham and believe in the promise of God given in the gospel, are united with Christ and therefore share in the blessings promised to Abraham.
- Keep in mind as we examine our text that Paul will sometimes use “shorthand” and refer to the above sequence of events by terms such as: *the promise* or *promises spoken to Abraham* or *the covenant*.

Permanent versus Temporary (3:15-18)

- ¹⁵ *Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.*
- ¹⁶ *The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.*
- ¹⁷ *What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.*

430 Years from the Promise to the Law?

- Paul tells us in **Galatians 3:17** that Abraham received a promise concerning his “seed” (as recorded in Genesis 22:18) and that **430** years later the Law was introduced (through Moses).
- Yet Exodus 12:40-41 tells us that the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt for **430** years. This does not allow for the fact that there were approximately 215 years from Abraham’s call to the exodus (cf. Genesis 12:4, Genesis 21:5, Genesis 25:26, Genesis 47:9)
- Furthermore, Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6 both tell us that the Jews were enslaved in Egypt for **400** years.



430 Years from the Promise to the Law?

- Israel was in Egypt for **430** years.
- The figure of **400** years (in Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6) is simply giving that time period in round numbers.
- The “promise” that was given to Abraham was also given to Isaac and Jacob (cf. Genesis 22:18, 26:4, 28:14). Paul is simply giving the minimum time from the last point that God could have repeated the promise to Jacob to the exodus.



Permanent versus Temporary (3:15-18)

- ¹⁵ *Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.*
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- ¹⁷ *What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.*
- ¹⁸ *For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.*

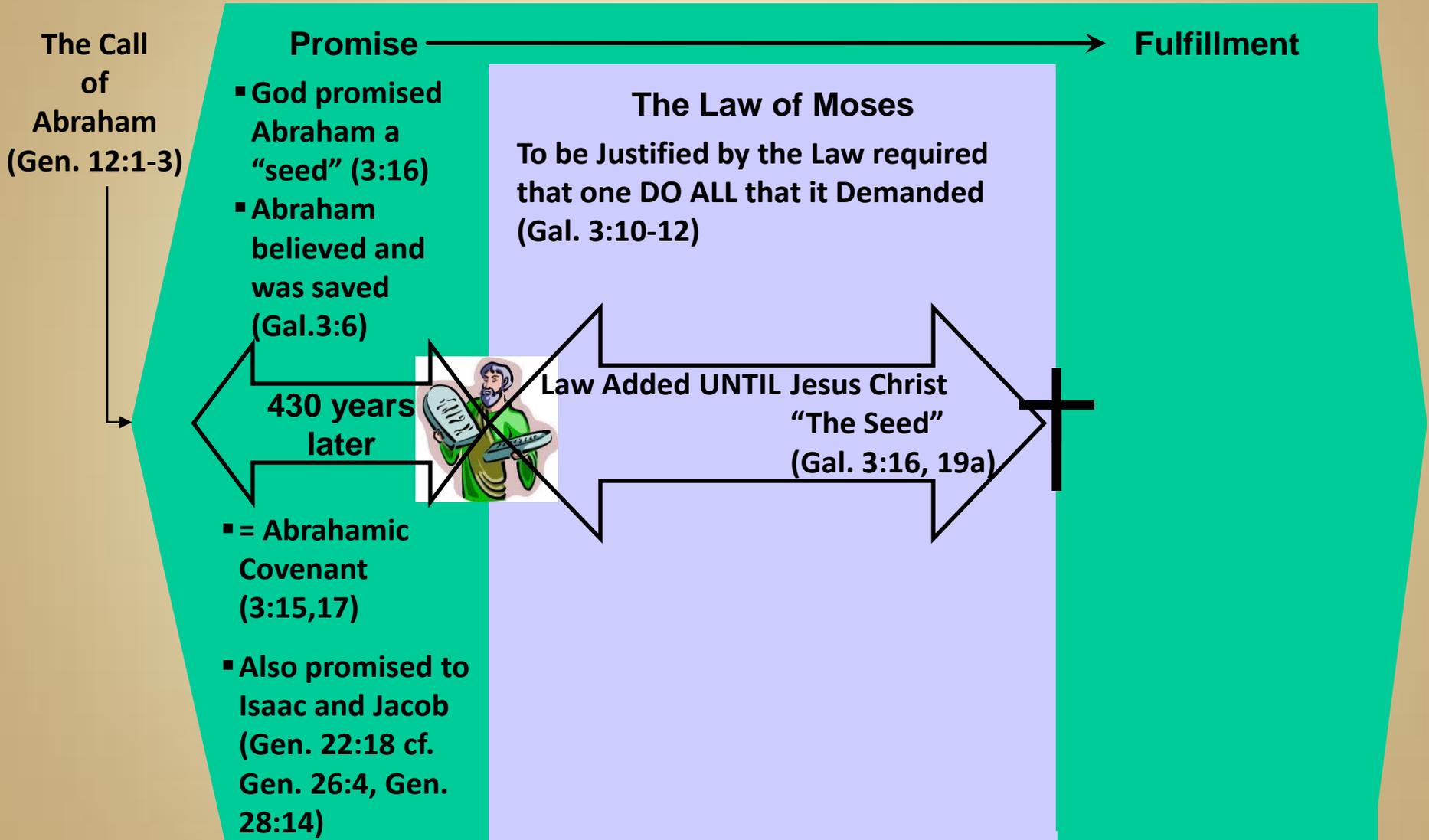
Expanded Paraphrase of 3:18

- *For if the inheritance* [our spiritual inheritance, our salvation] *depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise* [because seeking a spiritual inheritance (salvation) by law-keeping is totally incompatible with seeking a spiritual inheritance by faith in God's promise (like Abraham did) – so if salvation depends on one method it cannot depend on the other]; *but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.* [Had Abraham pursued salvation by law keeping he would not have been saved but instead would have been cursed (see 3:10a). But God showed grace (undeserved favor) to Abraham by giving him a promise which Abraham believed and was saved.]

Permanent versus Temporary (3:15-18)

- ¹⁵ *Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.*
- ¹⁶ *The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.*
- ¹⁷ *What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.*
- ¹⁸ *For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.*
- The promises to Abraham were:
 - Given long before the Law was given (3:17a)
 - Not set aside by the Law (3:15, 17b-18)
 - Fulfilled in the coming of Christ which brought an end to the Law (3:16)

Promise and Law - Galatians 3



God's Promises to Abraham were Fulfilled in Christ and are Superior to the Law (3:15-4:7)

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 - The *privileges* that we enjoy since Christ has come

Q & A (3:19-22)

- **Question # 1 - What, then, was the purpose of the law?** If the Law was only temporary and didn't save – why did God give it?
- **Question # 2 - Is the law opposed to the promises of God?** Since the Law and the Promise are separate and distinct from one another, does this mean that the Law is somehow opposed to or in competition with the promises of God?

Q & A (3:19-22)

- **Question #1: What, then, was the purpose of the law?**
 - *It was added* – 430 years later (see 3:17)
 - [in order to create] *because of transgressions* – once the Law was given, the sins that men committed became the conscious disobedience of definite commands (cf. Rom 5:20)
 - *until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come* – the Law was temporary – to be in effect only until the coming of Christ. By turning sins into transgressions, the Law intensified the awareness of sin, and the need for a Savior.
 - *The law was put into effect through angels* – though Exodus does not mention it, apparently angels had a part in the giving of the Law (cf. Acts 7:53; Heb 2:2)
 - *by a mediator* – a reference to Moses
 - *A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.* – Unlike the Law which required intermediaries (the angels and Moses), the covenant with Abraham was given **directly** by God.

Q & A (3:19-22)

- **Question # 2: Is the law opposed to the promises of God?**
 - *Absolutely not!* – Paul is emphatic. Law and the promises are both from God and therefore are not opposed, but complementary. Each serves a different purpose in the plan of God.
 - *For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.* – But of course it can't as Paul has already shown (3:10-11)
 - *But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.* – the Law (given in Scripture) exposed man's sin and showed man's need for the promised blessing that comes by faith in Jesus Christ.

God's Promises to Abraham were Fulfilled in Christ and are Superior to the Law (3:15-4:7)

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Restrictions versus Privileges (3:23-4:7)

- ²³ *Before this* [gospel age of] *faith came* [in other words, before Jesus came to earth], *we* [Jews] *were held prisoners by the law* [of Moses], *locked up until faith should be revealed.*
- ²⁴ *So the law was put in charge* [“until Christ came” (ESV)] ~~*to lead us to Christ that we might be*~~ [driven to see our need to be] *justified by faith.*

Restrictions versus Privileges (3:23-4:7)

- ²⁵ *Now that [gospel age of] faith has come, we [Jews] are no longer under the supervision of the law.*
- ²⁶ *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,*
- ²⁷ *for all of you who were baptized into [= in reference to] Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*
- ²⁸ *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*
- ²⁹ *If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

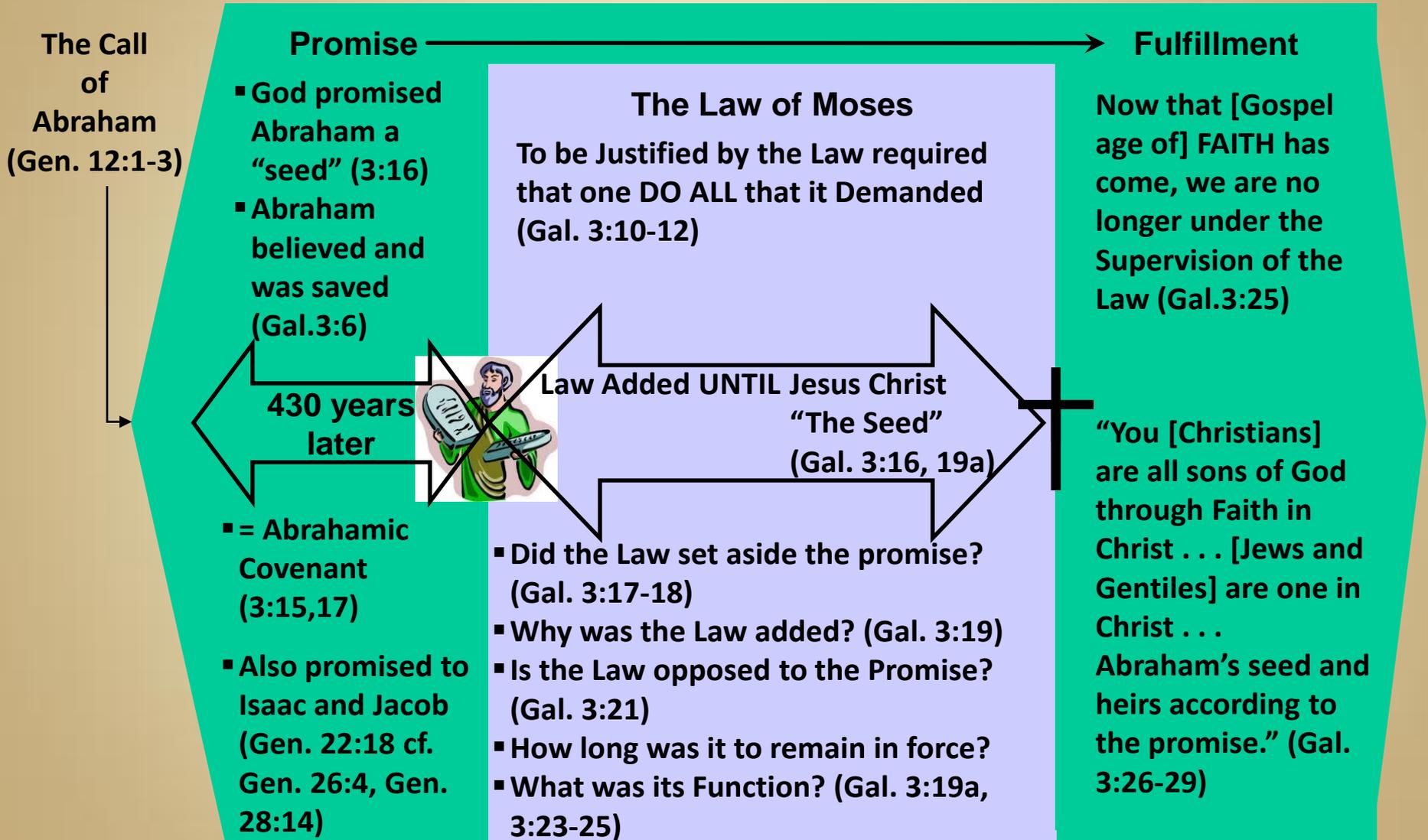
Restrictions versus Privileges (3:23-4:7)

- To further clarify his point, Paul uses an illustration drawn from a common practice in Roman culture:
 - ¹ *What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate.*
 - ² *He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.*
 - ³ *So also, when we [Jews] were children [living under the Law of Moses, before the time appointed by the Father for Christ to come into the world], we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world [living under the restrictions of the Law without being able to enjoy the full privileges of their inheritance].*

Restrictions versus Privileges (3:23-4:7)

- ⁴ *But when the time had fully come, God [the Father] sent his Son [Jesus], born of a woman, born under [the requirements and restrictions of the] law,*
- ⁵ *to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.*
- ⁶ *Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*
- ⁷ *So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

Promise and Law - Galatians 3



Applications

- We are justified by faith in Christ alone
- We are no longer obligated to keep the Law of Moses – our obligation is to obey Christ and the scriptures given by His apostles
- We live in an age of privilege:
 - Every believer has equal access to God regardless of his or her role or status in life.
 - We have the indwelling Spirit who motivates us from within to love and serve God
 - God know longer treats us as children, but as grown ups!

Paul Defends His Law-Free Gospel (2:15-5:12)

- Those who are “Jews by birth” already know that trying to keep the Law for salvation is futile (2:15–21)
- The Galatians were not saved by keeping the Law but by hearing and believing the Gospel (3:1-5)
- Abraham, the one through whom circumcision was given, was saved by faith not by law-keeping (3:6-14)
- God’s promises to Abraham were fulfilled in Christ and are superior to the Law (3:15-4:7)
- By trying to keep the Law the Galatians were going back to the kind of slavery they had experienced as unbelievers (4:8-11)
- Paul pleads with the Galatians not to allow the Judaizers to turn them away from him and the Gospel he has preached to them (4:12-20)

Back to Slavery (4:8-11)

- ⁸ *Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist.*
- ⁹ *So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world?*
- ¹⁰ *You are trying to earn favor with God by observing certain days or months or seasons or years.*
- ¹¹ *I fear for you. Perhaps all my hard work with you was for nothing.*

(New Living Translation)

Back to Slavery (4:8-11)

- ⁸ *Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. (NLT)*
- Before the Galatians heard and believed the gospel that Paul preached to them, they were enslaved to their pagan religions – serving what they thought were gods, but in reality were not gods at all.

Back to Slavery (4:8-11)

9 *So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world? (NLT)*

- Now, because they have believed the Gospel, they know God or – Paul corrects himself – God knows **them**
 - To “know God” does not mean to know information **about** God, but to know God in a **relational** way – to love and experience God (cf. **John 17:3**)
 - Paul then corrects himself, saying “or should I say ... God knows **you**” (again, in a relational way – God loves them) (cf. **Rom 8:29**)
 - Both things are true of genuine believers: they know God and God knows them.
 - Paul corrects himself to show that it is God who **initiates** the relationship with those who then come to love Him.

Back to Slavery (4:8-11)

- 9 *So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world? (NLT)*
- After coming into this kind of relationship with God, why would **anyone** want to go back into the same kind of slavery they were in **before** they heard the gospel?
 - Paul tells the Galatians that by putting themselves under the Law of Moses, they are turning back to the same kind of *weak and useless spiritual principles of this world* that they were under as pagans!
 - Although there were, no doubt, many differences between the pagan religions of the Galatians and the legalistic practices of the Judaizers – in principle they were the same: both were lifeless, performance based religious systems that operated apart from a genuine relationship with and a total dependence on Christ.

Back to Slavery (4:8-11)

¹⁰ *You are [trying to earn favor with God by] observing certain days or months or seasons or years. (NLT)*

- Their involvement in Judaism has gone so far already that they have begun to observe all of the various Jewish feasts and holy days – things which have now been replaced by the thing they pointed forward to: Jesus Christ.
- Perhaps the Galatians' previous pagan practices involved an obligation to observe some kind of pagan religious calendar and Paul is drawing a parallel here.
- Paul is not forbidding them to ever observe any kind of holiday – as a Jew Paul sometimes observed Jewish holidays in an effort to win his fellow Jews (1 Cor. 16:8; Acts 20:16)
- But it was completely out of place to impose a Jewish calendar on Gentiles in a way that implied that they were under obligation to keep the Law – this Paul could not allow.

Back to Slavery (4:8-11)

¹¹ *I fear for you. Perhaps all my hard work with you was for nothing.* (NLT)

- Paul wants to believe the best about the Galatians – he believes there is reason to be “confident” that they will ultimately see the light and reject the false teaching of the Judaizers (Gal. 5:10).
- On the other hand, Paul’s deepest fear is that their willingness to so quickly entertain a false gospel may indicate that their faith is not genuine – in which case they are eternally damned and all of Paul’s efforts in preaching and ministering to them have, in one sense, been wasted!

Paul Defends His Law-Free Gospel

(2:15-5:12)

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Paul Pleads With the Galatians

(4:12-20)

- ¹² *Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to live as I do in freedom from these things, for I have become like you Gentiles-- free from those laws. You did not mistreat me when I first preached to you.*
- ¹³ *Surely you remember that I was sick when I first brought you the Good News.*
- ¹⁴ *But even though my condition tempted you to reject me, you did not despise me or turn me away. No, you took me in and cared for me as though I were an angel from God or even Christ Jesus himself.*
- ¹⁵ *Where is that joyful and grateful spirit you felt then? I am sure you would have taken out your own eyes and given them to me if it had been possible.*
- ¹⁶ *Have I now become your enemy because I am telling you the truth?*

Paul Pleads With the Galatians

(4:12-20)

- ¹⁷ *Those false teachers are so eager to win your favor, but their intentions are not good. They are trying to shut you off from me so that you will pay attention only to them.*
- ¹⁸ *If someone is eager to do good things for you, that's all right; but let them do it all the time, not just when I'm with you.*
- ¹⁹ *Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives.*
- ²⁰ *I wish I were with you right now so I could change my tone. But at this distance I don't know how else to help you.*

(New Living Translation)

Paul Pleads With the Galatians

(4:12-20)

^{12a} *Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to live as I do in freedom from these things, for I have become like you Gentiles-- free from those laws (NLT)*

- Paul reveals his heart as he makes a strong appeal to them: *Dear brothers ... I plead with you*
- Though Paul had been raised a Jew and had once been zealous for the Law (1:14), when he became a Christian, he recognized that he could live as a Gentile since he was no longer under the Law of Moses. (cf. 2:14, 1Co 9:21)
- So what sense does it make for the Galatians, who were Gentiles, to begin living as though they **were** under the Law?

Paul Pleads With the Galatians

(4:12-20)

^{12b} *You did not mistreat me when I first preached to you.*

¹³ *Surely you remember that I was sick when I first brought you the Good News. (NLT)*

or:

¹³ *As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. (NIV)*

- Paul reminds them that it was because of an illness that he first preached the Gospel to them.
- There is much speculation about the illness that Paul mentions here.
- Luke does not mention this illness in his account of Paul establishing the Galatian churches, so we have no other information about it.

Paul Pleads With the Galatians

(4:12-20)

¹⁴ *But even though my condition tempted you to reject me, you did not despise me or turn me away. No, you took me in and cared for me as though I were an angel from God or even Christ Jesus himself.*
(NLT)

- Apparently there was something repulsive about Paul's disease that would have tempted them to turn away from him – but instead of **rejecting** him, Paul reminds them, they **welcomed** him as they would an angelic being or Jesus Christ himself!

Paul Pleads With the Galatians

(4:12-20)

15 *Where is that joyful and grateful spirit you felt then? I am sure you would have taken out your own eyes and given them to me if it had been possible. (NLT)*

- Paul then reminds them of the joy they felt when he had first preached to them (the original Greek can literally mean, “they congratulated themselves”)
- And he asks what happened to the joy they once felt for him, which implies that they no longer had this joy. 😞
- He reminds them (literally, he “solemnly testifies”) that at the time they would have been willing to make any sacrifice for him.

Paul Pleads With the Galatians

(4:12-20)

¹⁶ *Have I now become your enemy because I am telling you the truth?* (NLT)

- But now they regard him as an enemy? Why? Because he told them the truth?
- Unfortunately people often **do** regard us as an enemy when we tell them the truth!

Paul Pleads With the Galatians

(4:12-20)

¹⁷ *Those false teachers are so eager to win your favor, but their intentions are not good. They are trying to shut you off from me so that you will pay attention only to them. (NLT)*

- Paul now points to the real reason for the change in the Galatians' attitude: the influence of the Judaizers.
- He points out that the Judaizers are deliberately trying to alienate the Galatians from Paul, so there will be no one to contradict their false teachings.

Paul Pleads With the Galatians

(4:12-20)

¹⁸ *If someone is eager to do good things for you, that's all right; but let them do it all the time, not just when I'm with you.*
(NLT)

or:

¹⁸ *It is always good to be made much of for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you* (ESV)

- This verse seems to be a response to a defense that Paul anticipates that the Galatians might try to make on behalf of the Judaizers.
- The Galatians might say like this: “Well if we’re going to start testing the motives of people who try to win our favor perhaps we should test **your** motives Paul – after all **you** tried to win our favor when **you** were here!”
- Paul’s response is, in effect, “Sure! Test the motives of **everyone** who tries to win your favor – not just when I am with you and **I** am the one trying to win your favor but also when I am not there and **others** are trying to win your favor.”

Paul Pleads With the Galatians

(4:12-20)

¹⁹ *Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives. (NLT)*

- The final leg of Paul's appeal is to let them know that in spite of all that has happened he still loves them and cares for their spiritual wellbeing.
- The Galatians were Paul's spiritual children and he has already gone through the difficulties of bringing them to Christ when he first preached the Gospel to them.
- Now as Paul sees the Galatians moving **away** from Christ rather than conforming **to** Christ he compares his anguish to that of a woman having to go through childbirth all over again.
- The people we love the most are the ones who can hurt us the most.

Paul Pleads With the Galatians

(4:12-20)

²⁰ *I wish I were with you right now so I could change my tone. But at this distance I don't know how else to help you. (NLT)*

or:

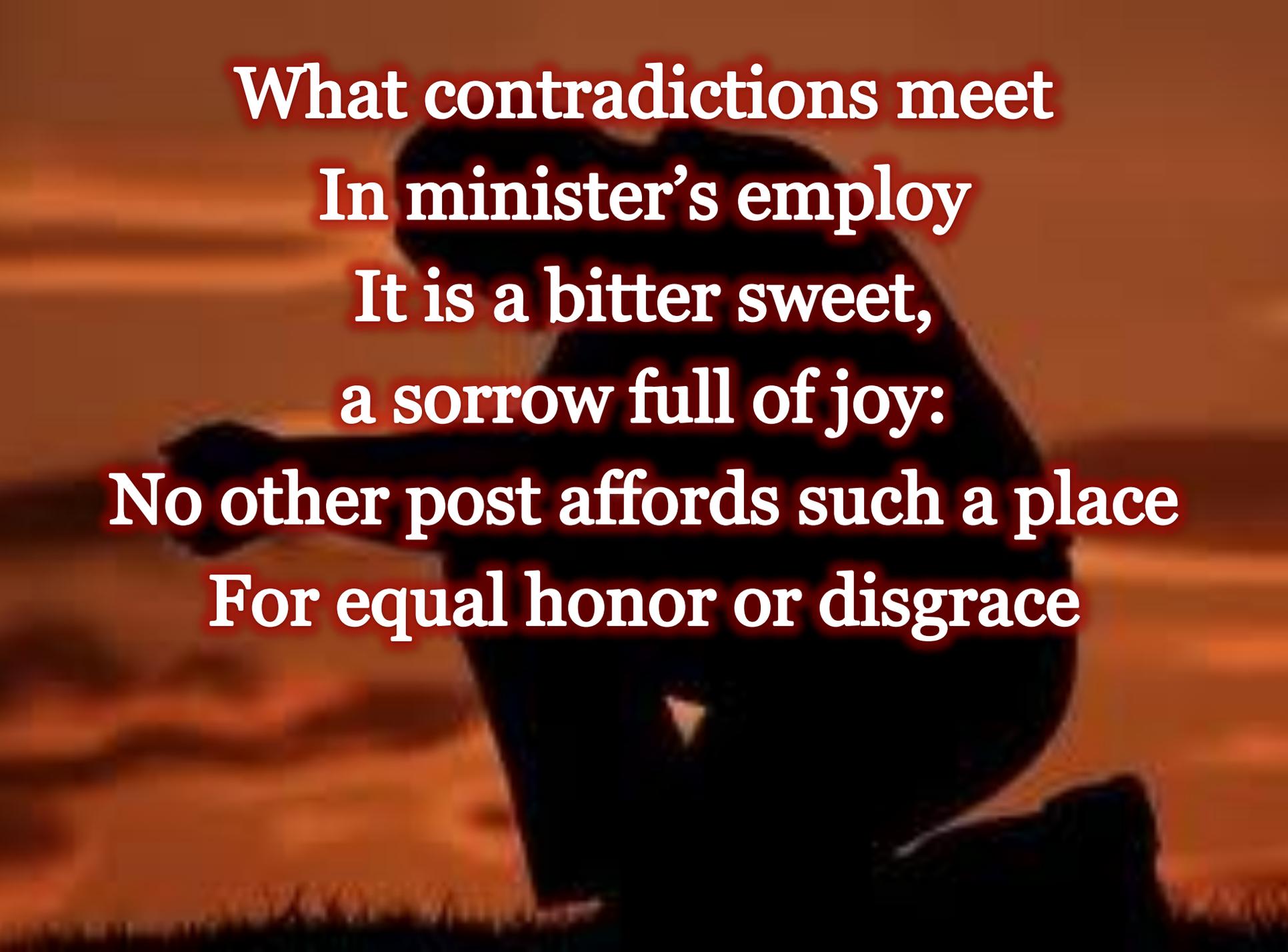
²⁰ *how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you! (NIV)*

- Paul regrets that he cannot be with them face to face and believes that if he could be there he could yet persuade them.
- But at this point he is at a loss as to what to do.

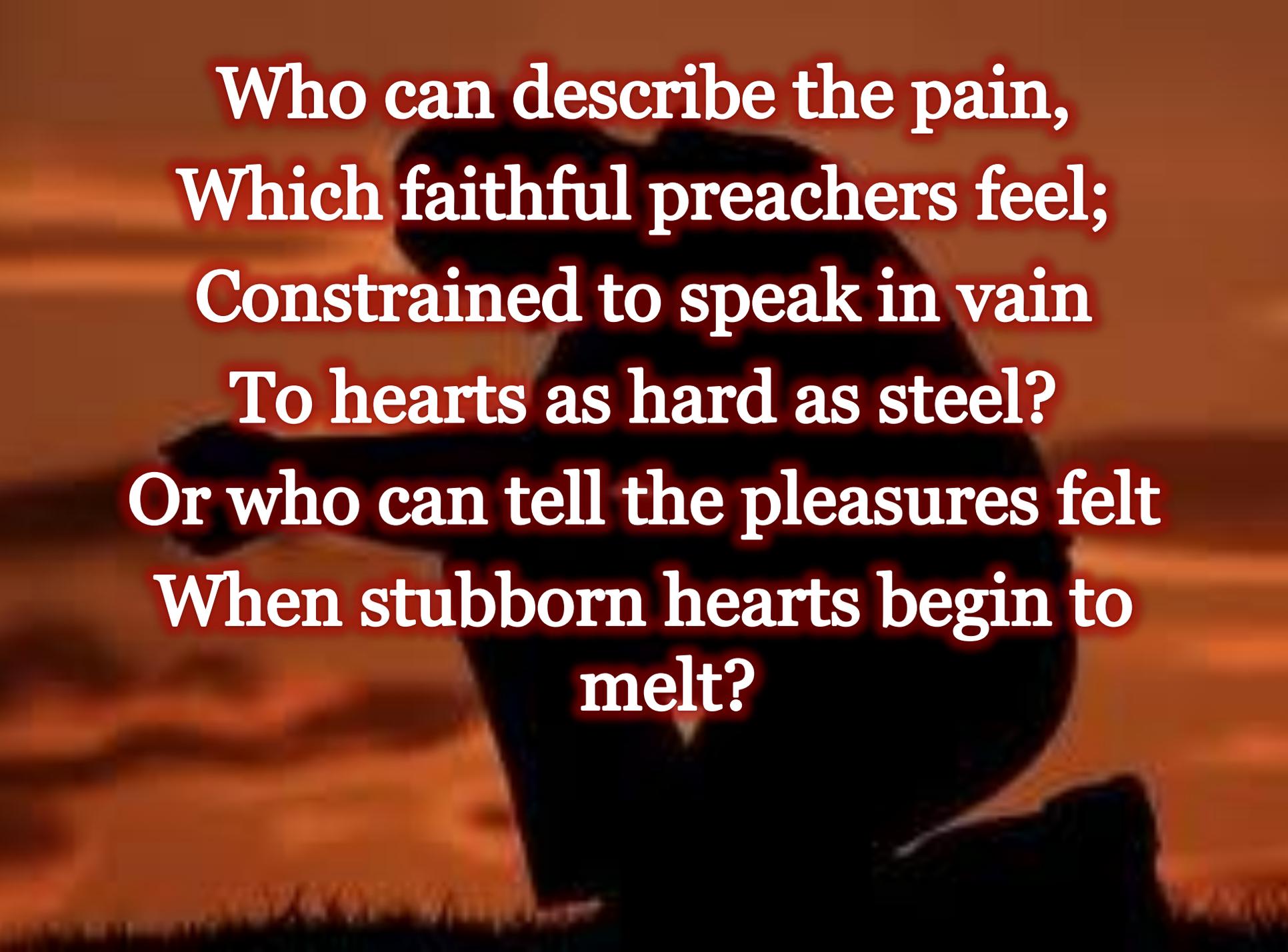
A silhouette of a man kneeling in prayer, with his hands clasped in front of him, set against a warm, orange-hued sunset background. The man is positioned in the center of the frame, and his shadow is cast on the ground in front of him.

The Minister's Travail

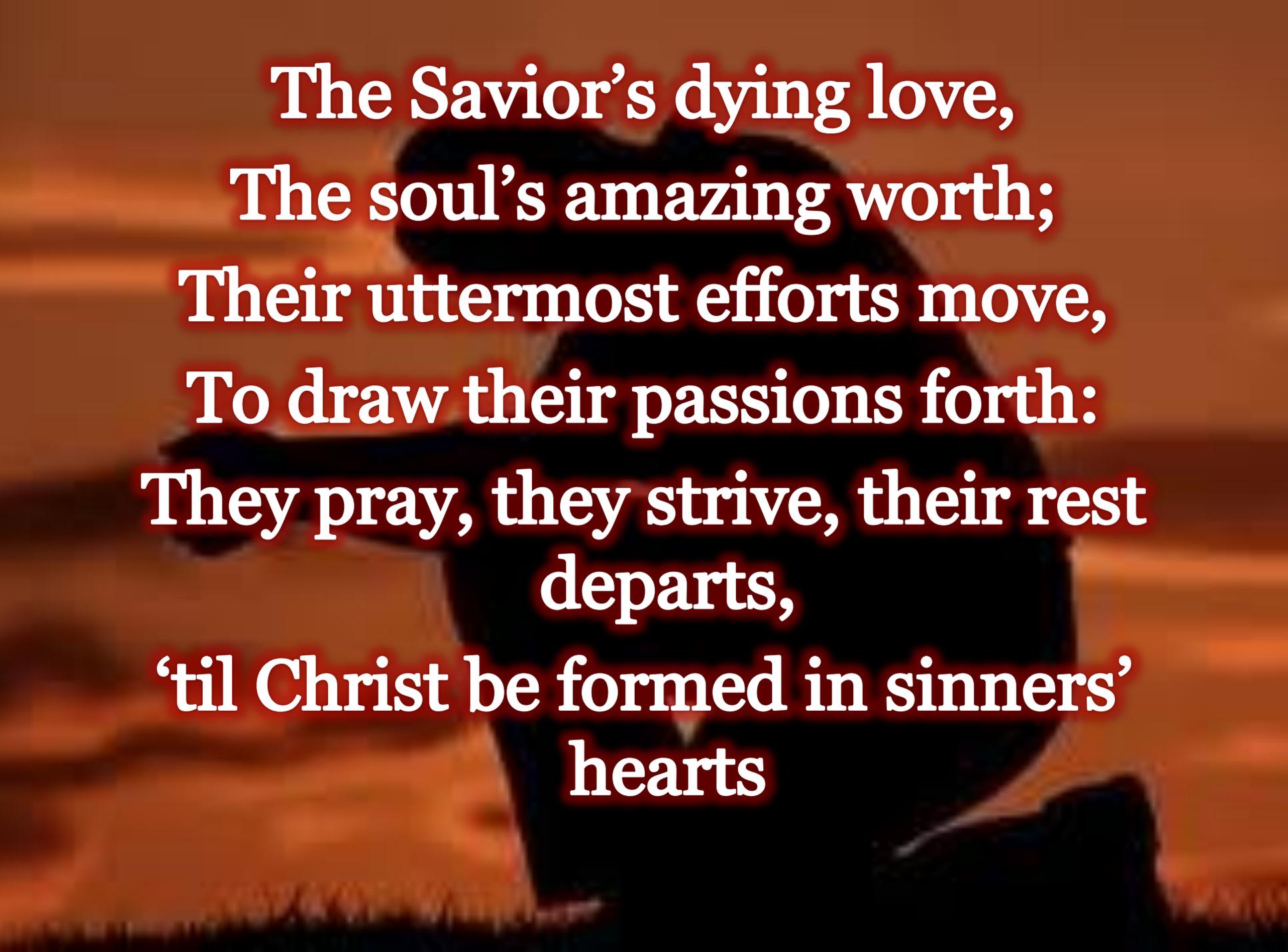
Written by John Newton
Sung by Todd Murray

A silhouette of a person sitting on a rock, looking out over a sunset or sunrise over a field. The person is wearing a long-sleeved shirt and pants. The background is a warm, orange and red sky with a dark horizon line. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font with a red outline.

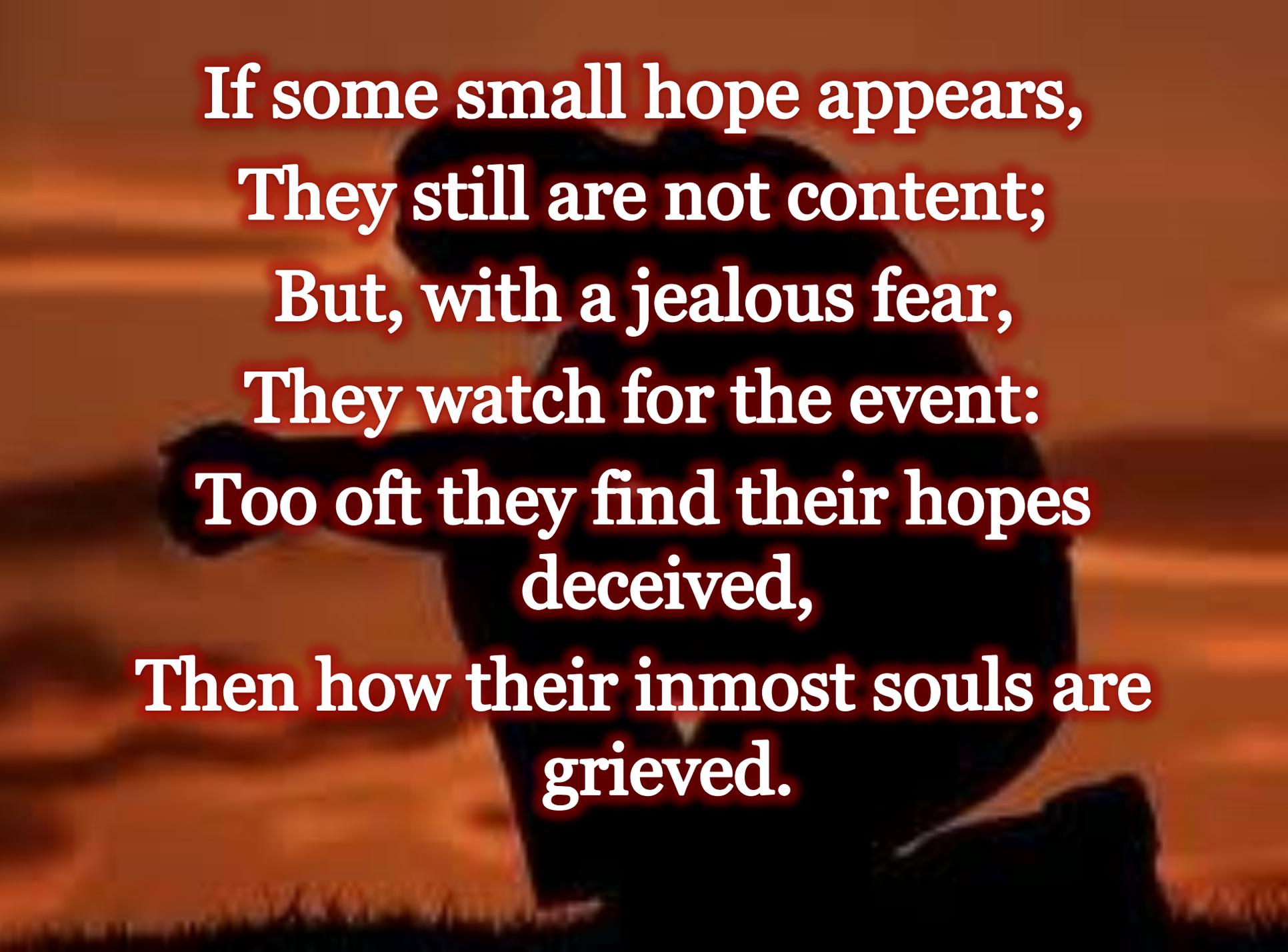
**What contradictions meet
In minister's employ
It is a bitter sweet,
a sorrow full of joy:
No other post affords such a place
For equal honor or disgrace**



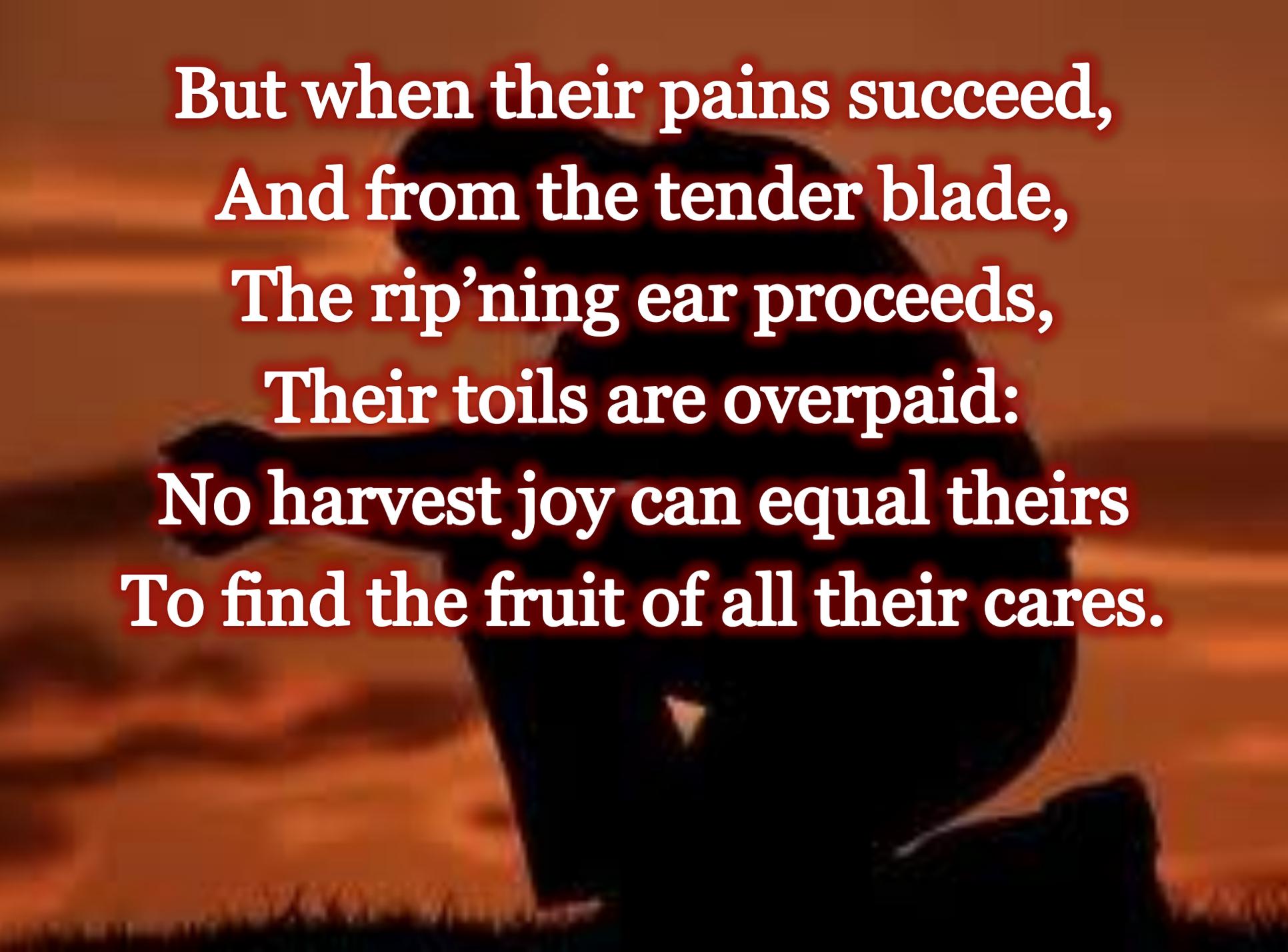
**Who can describe the pain,
Which faithful preachers feel;
Constrained to speak in vain
To hearts as hard as steel?
Or who can tell the pleasures felt
When stubborn hearts begin to
melt?**

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer, with their hands clasped in front of their face. The background is a warm, orange-hued sunset or sunrise over a field of grass. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font with a red outline.

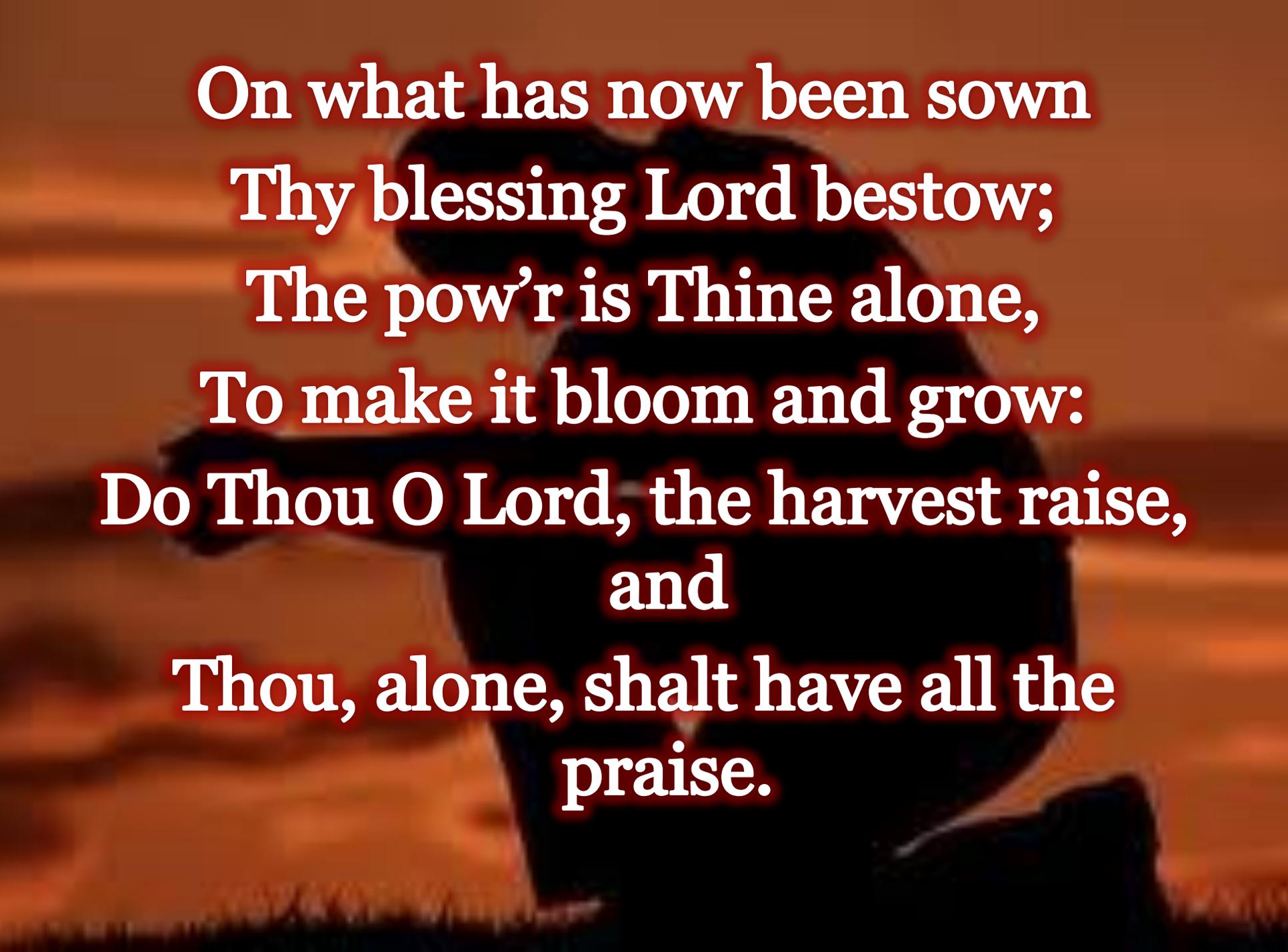
The Savior's dying love,
The soul's amazing worth;
Their uttermost efforts move,
To draw their passions forth:
They pray, they strive, their rest
departs,
'til Christ be formed in sinners'
hearts

A silhouette of a person sitting on a bench, looking out over a sunset or sunrise over a body of water. The background is a warm, orange and red gradient, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The person is in the foreground, and the water is in the background.

**If some small hope appears,
They still are not content;
But, with a jealous fear,
They watch for the event:
Too oft they find their hopes
deceived,
Then how their inmost souls are
grieved.**

A silhouette of a person carrying a large bundle on their back, walking through a field at sunset or sunrise. The background is a warm, orange glow from the low sun, creating a hazy, atmospheric scene. The person is in the center, moving towards the right. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font with a red outline.

**But when their pains succeed,
And from the tender blade,
The rip'ning ear proceeds,
Their toils are overpaid:
No harvest joy can equal theirs
To find the fruit of all their cares.**

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer, with their hands clasped in front of their face. The background is a warm, orange-hued sunset or sunrise over a field. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font with a red outline.

On what has now been sown
Thy blessing Lord bestow;
The pow'r is Thine alone,
To make it bloom and grow:
Do Thou O Lord, the harvest raise,
and
Thou, alone, shalt have all the
praise.

The Two Families of Abraham (4:21-31)

- ²¹ *Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says?*
- ²² *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman.*
- ²³ *His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.*
- ²⁴ *These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.*
- ²⁵ *Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.*

The Two Families of Abraham (4:21-31)

- ²⁶ *But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.*
- ²⁷ *For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband."*
- ²⁸ *Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.*
- ²⁹ *At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.*
- ³⁰ *But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."*
- ³¹ *Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.*

Paul Defends His Law-Free Gospel

(2:15-5:12)

- Those who are “Jews by birth” already know that trying to keep the Law for salvation is futile (2:15–21)
- The Galatians were not saved by keeping the Law but by hearing and believing the Gospel (3:1-5)
- Abraham, the one through whom circumcision was given, was saved by faith not by law-keeping (3:6-14)
- God’s promises to Abraham were fulfilled in Christ and are superior to the Law (3:15-4:7)
- By trying to keep the Law the Galatians were going back to the kind of slavery they had experienced as unbelievers (4:8-11)
- Paul pleads with the Galatians not to allow the Judaizers to turn them away from him and the Gospel he has preached to them (4:12-20)
- There are two Families of Abraham (4:21-31):
 - The natural family who is enslaved to the Law
 - The supernatural family who is free from the Law

The Two Families of Abraham (4:21-31)

- Having made a strong personal appeal to the Galatians, Paul closes this section of the letter with an allegory drawn from Biblical history.
- An allegory is a story, whether historical or fictional, that figuratively illustrates another idea or set of events.
- No doubt, the Judaizers were familiar with using this kind of approach to make a theological point, since the rabbis of Paul's day were fond of using allegories.
- But unlike the rabbis of his day, who frequently drew allegories from a text that had nothing to do with the point they were proving, the point Paul makes with his allegory is very much in line with the principles found in his text.

The Two Families of Abraham (4:21-31)

Outline

- Summary of the Historical Genesis Account (4:21-23)
- The Two Families of Abraham Contrasted (4:24-27)
- Paul's Application to the Galatians (4:28-30)
- A Concluding Statement (4:31)

The Genesis Account (4:21-23)

- ²¹ *Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says?*
- ²² *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman.*
- ²³ *His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.*
- The Galatians were wanting to go along with the Judaizers and put themselves under the Law.
 - So Paul says (paraphrasing): “If you want to be under the Law, maybe it would be a good idea for you to look at what the Law says” – and then Paul proceeds to cite a story from one of the five books of the Law (Genesis) to make his point.

The Genesis Account (4:21-23)

²² *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman.*

²³ *His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.*

- “Abraham had two sons” – referring to his first two sons: Ishmael and Isaac.
- Neither of them is named here (though Isaac is named later – see verse 4:28)

The Genesis Account (4:21-23)

²² *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman.*

²³ *His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.*

- Abraham's two sons were different in **origin**:
 - Ishmael was born of a **slave** woman
 - Isaac was born of a **free** woman
- Abraham's two sons were different in the **circumstances of their birth**:
 - Ishmael was “born in the ordinary way”: there was no miracle involved
 - Isaac was “born as the result of a promise” – that is, the birth God had promised came about through miraculous intervention (cf. **Romans 9:8**)

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

- ²⁴ *These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.*
- ²⁵ *Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.*
- ²⁶ *But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.*

In this section, Paul draws a contrast between:

- Two Women
- Two Covenants
- Two Cities
- Two Sets of Children

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

- ²⁴ *These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.*
- ²⁵ *Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.*
- ²⁶ *But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.*

In this section, Paul draws a contrast between:

- **Two Women:**
 - Hagar
 - Sarah (not named, but implied)

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

- ²⁴ *These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.*
- ²⁵ *Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.*
- ²⁶ *But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.*

In this section, Paul draws a contrast between:

- **Two Covenants:**

- The Old Covenant made at “Mount Sinai” (cf. 2Cor 3:6-14; Hebrews 7-10)
- The New Covenant – not named here, but implied (cf. Jer 31:31; Luke 22:20; 2Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8; 9:15; 12:24)

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

- ²⁴ *These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.*
- ²⁵ *Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.*
- ²⁶ *But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.*

In this section, Paul draws a contrast between:

- **Two Cities:**

- The “present city of Jerusalem” (= the center of Judaism in Paul’s day)
- The “Jerusalem that is above” (= the heavenly Jerusalem, cf. **Heb 12:22; Rev 3:12; 21:2,10**)

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

- ²⁴ *These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.*
- ²⁵ *Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.*
- ²⁶ *But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.*

In this section, Paul draws a contrast between:

- **Two Sets of Children:**

- Those children who are slaves (= the Jews in Paul's day who are enslaved to the Law)
- Those children who are free (= Christians like Paul and the Galatians who are free from the Law)

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

Natural Family - Enslaved to the Law

Supernatural Family - Free from the Law

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

Natural Family - Enslaved to the Law

Supernatural Family - Free from the Law

Hagar the Slave Woman

Sarah the Free Woman (implied)

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

Natural Family - Enslaved to the Law	Supernatural Family - Free from the Law
Hagar the Slave Woman	Sarah the Free Woman (implied)
The Old Covenant (given at Mount Sinai)	The New Covenant (implied)

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

Natural Family - Enslaved to the Law	Supernatural Family - Free from the Law
Hagar the Slave Woman	Sarah the Free Woman (implied)
The Old Covenant (given at Mount Sinai)	The New Covenant (implied)
Earthly Jerusalem	Heavenly Jerusalem

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

Natural Family - Enslaved to the Law	Supernatural Family - Free from the Law
Hagar the Slave Woman	Sarah the Free Woman (implied)
The Old Covenant (given at Mount Sinai)	The New Covenant (implied)
Earthly Jerusalem	Heavenly Jerusalem
Slave Children	Free Children

Galatians 4:24-26 -

^{24a} *These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants.*

^{24b} *One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar.*

²⁵ *Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children.*

²⁶ *But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.*

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

Natural Family - Enslaved to the Law	Supernatural Family - Free from the Law
Hagar the Slave Woman	Sarah the Free Woman
The Old Covenant (given at Mount Sinai)	The New Covenant
Earthly Jerusalem	Heavenly Jerusalem
Slave Children	Free Children

Compare with Hebrews 12:18-24 -

¹⁸ *You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm;*

¹⁹ *to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them,*

²⁰ *because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned."*

²¹ *The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."*

²² *But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,*

²³ *to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,*

²⁴ *to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

²⁷ *For it is written [in Isaiah 54:1]: “Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.”*

- This quotation from Isaiah picks up the idea of motherhood which was introduced in the preceding verse.
- In the original passage, the Jews were about to go into exile at the hands of the Babylonians.
- Isaiah is prophesying concerning the future restoration of the city of Jerusalem that will take place after the Exile.
- The imagery employed is that of a barren wife (Jerusalem) deserted by her husband but eventually (after the Exile) is accepted again by him and becomes fruitful in the bearing of children.

The Two Families Contrasted (4:24-27)

²⁷ *For it is written [in Isaiah 54:1]: “Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.”*

- The barren woman corresponds to Sarah, who had no child until late in her life.
- The woman who has a husband corresponds to Hagar.
- The point of the quotation is that Sarah, though barren most of her life, finally became (through Isaac) the mother of more children than Hagar.
- Applied spiritually, it means that the Christian community (symbolized by Sarah) in Paul’s day was small and did not have the size and strength that Judaism (symbolized by Hagar) had.
- But it was destined for greater fruitfulness and glory.

Application to the Galatians (4:28-30)

- ²⁸ *Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.*
- ²⁹ *At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.*
- ³⁰ *But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."*
- Now we who are “brothers” (Christians) are like Isaac because we have experienced spiritual birth through the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit.

Application to the Galatians (4:28-30)

- 28 *Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.*
- 29 *At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.*
- 30 *But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."*

- And just as Ishmael, the natural born son, persecuted Isaac, the son born of the Spirit – so in Paul's day the natural born sons of Abraham persecuted the spiritual sons of Abraham.
- And in our day those who do not have spiritual life will often persecute and ostracize those who do.

Application to the Galatians (4:28-30)

- ²⁸ *Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.*
- ²⁹ *At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.*
- ³⁰ *But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."*
- And just as Abraham had to reject the slave woman and her son because they had no share in the inheritance with the free woman's son – so the Galatians, who have been freed from the Law by faith in Christ, must reject the Judaizers and all those who remain enslaved to the Law of Moses because they have no share in Christ's inheritance.

A Concluding Statement (4:31)

³¹ *Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.*

- In this final statement, Paul sums up the entire paragraph:
 - We who are the people of faith do not belong to a family that is in bondage to the Law
 - We belong to a family that is free from that Law and the burden and condemnation that it brings.

The Two Families of Abraham (4:21-31)

Applications

- We no longer need to burden ourselves with the tedious regulations of the Old Covenant.
- As members of God's spiritual family, we should not be surprised when we are ostracized and persecuted by those in the natural family.
- As long as we stand in the shadow of the cross, we no longer have to tremble at the thought of God's wrath.
- We, like those listed in Hebrews 11, "*are longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called [our] God, for he has prepared a city for [us]*". (Heb 11:16)