

Scripture Studies



by **Waeshael**

I AM NOT UTTERING A FINAL PRONOUNCEMENT NOR EXPRESSING AN ESTABLISHED DOCTRINE, BUT I AM RESEARCHING TO THE LIMIT OF MY ABILITY, I AM DISCUSSING THE MEANING OF THE SCRIPTURES AND I DO NOT CLAIM TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT MEANING WHOLLY OR PERFECTLY, ON MANY POINTS I HAVE A PRELIMINARY IDEA BUT I AM NOT SURE THAT I HAVE REACHED IN EVERY RESPECT PERFECTION OR A COMPLETE SOLUTION. (FROM ORIGEN C. 250)

Monday, October 9, 2017

Paul's letter to the Galatians

by *WAESHAEL during period 2007 - 2017*

When I started this commentary in 2007 I was a beginner teaching a small class of priests, deacons and other teachers at the Bishop of South Carolina's Cathedral Church in Charleston. I wrote the commentary to answer a challenge from a member – a newcomer, who was familiar with the letter, whereas I had barely read it. So, I read it over twice and slept on it. At 2AM I woke up and started writing.

I worked on the commentary during an eighteen hour non-stop session at my computer, and I finished it with a good first understanding of what Paul was trying to explain to his flock.

Now ten years later my understanding is much deeper and I have changed the text to agree with my latest knowledge about The Father, without spoiling the impact that the letter had made ten years ago. It is so easy for me to get sidetracked into talking about deeper insights and so confusing the lay reader. Paul's letters are very difficult to comprehend, and it is very likely that a non-theologian would misunderstand Paul. Of the Sunday school teachers I have listened to, what they understood of the text could be written on a post it note. So here are almost 70 pages of commentary on Paul's letter to the Galatians.

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Warning:

If you read the letter to the Galatians without first reading this understanding of mine, you will be confused by the apparent disagreements in the theology of Galatians with that of Paul's other letters.

Paul's mystical knowledge of the relationship between Christ and *The Father of The Son*¹ was unique amongst the Apostles.

Yet in the letters Paul did not clearly describe what he knew of the mystery of the Trinity. The Bishops disagreed as to what Paul meant by his various statements about Christ. The Church in Jerusalem under James were shocked by some of his teachings.

It seems that Paul was deliberately vague - perhaps for fear of the Nazarites. Perhaps he was forbidden to tell the truth at that time?

From the text we read that Simon Peter has a revelation from *The Father of The Son* about the nature of Jesus, which showed that he understood something about Jesus that the others did not.

Paul had a great respect for Peter. Perhaps Paul and Peter discussed their understandings during the two weeks that they were together in Jerusalem. Perhaps they decided for the sake of the Way movement, that it would be better not to disclose the fact that that Jesus was also God (*as a Trinity*.) Or perhaps Paul had been forbidden by The Christ or *The Father of The Son* to reveal this truth to any follower of Yahweh, because it would be a blasphemy to say that there was any God other than Yahweh, and the speaker might be killed by the Pharisees.

Few 3rd cent Pauline papyri have been found.

We have discovered very few of Paul's letters. (read '[What the Apostles said](#)' for the list of papyri.) We struggle to understand his theology from fragments, and we must not think that the fragments we have will explain what Paul understood from Christ, and we must not take any single fragment and think that this represents Paul's theology.

¹ *The Father of The Son* is a phrase meant to remind readers that this is our Father whom we pray to. This is also Jesus's Father. The God of the Jews Yahweh has no Son. Read on this site '[God from Yahweh to the Trinity](#)'

Galatians may or may not have been written by Paul. Paul may have started it and others completed it. Or it may have been started long after Paul was put to death in Rome. None of the Fathers had commented on Paul before 140 AD. There are no extant Pauline papyri dated earlier than the mid 3rd century. We know that Marcion brought to Rome ten letters supposedly from the Pauline community. He may have composed them from oral traditions. Marcion's contribution to the letters can be pieced together from arguments against his theology by the Bishops (Tertullian, Irenaeus.)

Pauline 'letters' were mostly instructions to the Church on various points of Dogma, composed by Paul, Marcion and the Bishops in Rome.

The Curse of the Law

We can read in the Pauline letters of conflict between a Paul who wants to discard the **L**aw² altogether for converts and a Paul who wants Judeans to obey the **L**aw in the spirit – not in the letter.

If I read this letter to the Galatians as if Paul the Pharisee wrote it (his own identification,) then I read it from the point of view of a man who has sympathy for the plight of the Judeans and who wants the Judeans to be made 'free' in Jesus Christ.

Paul said that the Judeans were under the curse of the **L**aw, which means, I think, that no matter how hard a Judean tried to obey the **L**aw, he could not be made righteous by the **L**aw, because the declaration of righteousness is solely the prerogative of *The Father of The Son*.

Paul's summation at the letter's ending is:

- Judeans you must be Law abiding in order to enter the Kingdom of God (here and now), and
- Judeans you must, trust The Father of The Son to declare you righteous through the faith *The Father of The Son* is offering you in Jesus Christ.

² (capitalized like this means the whole Law, written and Oral given by YHWH to Moses)

Galatians had three authors?

It is thought by theologians of the Dutch Radical School (radical meaning returning to the original teaching of Jesus and Paul,) that Galatians as we now have it, is the work of three authors: Paul, Bishop Marcion, and someone representing the Bishop of Rome.

Paul a short bio.

Paul was very sympathetic with his brethren - Judeans, and the Pharisees - he hoped that he could persuade them to follow his ideas and become holy. We see this in Romans chapters 1 and 2, and we read how Paul until the very end is still trying to convert the Judean leaders in Rome. Paul, as you know, was a Roman citizen related to Herod, was a Benjamite and a Pharisee. Most of his missionary work was with Judeans in their synagogues. He always taught in Judean communities. Only at the very end of his life did he stop trying to convince his brethren. Paul's ministry was directed at those non-observant Jews in the Diaspora (beyond the Holy Land.)

Bishop Marcion

Bishop Marcion wanted to separate his Church from Judaism altogether - as did many Gnostic churches (there were some 60 Gnostic denominations by the mid 2nd. century.) The Churches established by Bishop Marcion outnumbered those of every other denomination during the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

The Church in Rome, a small outpost in the Christian Church during the 1st. century, wanted to exert control over the Bishops of all Christian and gnostic congregations in order to stamp out errors in teaching. It was not until the 4th century that they were able to do this by the support of the Roman Emperor Constantine (His mother was a Briton.) All gnostic churches within the Roman Empire were required to accept control from the Bishops of Constantinople and Rome.

Notations in the text

In this commentary I have identified the verses that some theologians think may be from later emendations by the Church. The "additions" to the text that are thought to have been made by the Catholic Church after A.D. 140 are in purple and curly braces.

The verses of the text that are thought by some theologians to have originated with Bishop Marcion (written A.D. 120 - 140) are in **bold**.

The Church tradition ³ is that Bishop Marcion's text had been extracted from original Pauline letters that were already in the possession of the Roman Church around A.D. 140. But there is no papyri that proves this. All Papyri were written after Bishop Marcion came on the scene.

Towards the end of the second century Bishop Marcion whose father was the Catholic Bishop of Sinope, was declared to be a heretic by the Pope because of his teaching in Rome to the priests. Marcion was kicked out of the Roman Catholic Church and started up his own religion, which was active until the 6th century

Bishop Irenaeus (b. 125? - d. 200?) Lyons, Gaul) was the first to write against Marcion's teaching that the Old Testament was of no consequence to Christians.

J.B. Philip, an Anglican Priest in England and the translator of the New Testament for young people, wrote in 'People and places of the New Testament' here describes the standard position adopted by many theologians to explain the origin of the letters attributed to Paul.

“**T**he first New Testament canon was probably drawn up by Marcion in c 150. He only included Luke's Gospel and ten of Paul's letters, heavily edited to remove Jewish influence. In reaction to Marcion's heresy, and to control the growing number of New Testament apocrypha, an accepted and authoritative canon became necessary. This happened gradually as it came to meet the needs of the universal Church and its members.”

Another comment: (The Ecole Initiative Univ. of Evansville)

“In the middle of the second century, a religious movement swept through the young developing church. It was movement that would have dramatic effects on the way Christians read the Old Testament and the way they perceived Jews and Judaism. Adversus Judæos literature from the time of Marcion (mid-second century) shows the unmistakable marks of this debate, mostly through the refutation its central tenets. An

³ During the majority of the ten centuries since Jesus, there was only ONE Church in the Roman Empire, which I call 'Church.' The word Church was defined by the Roman Catholic Church as a Bishop and his congregations.

understanding of Marcion and his teaching is important in explaining this shift regarding Judaism. As we have seen in the few documents surveyed thus far, there is an ambivalence in the way Christians seemed to affirm the antiquity of Judaism and its authority, while at the same time rejecting many of the cultic injunctions. To modern sensibilities this practice seems unexamined, problematic, and contradictory.

To them it may have seemed perfectly natural, even necessary, to keep the Jewish prayers, the Jewish scriptures, and Jewish practices and teachings. But the question that Marcion raised put an end to this process of slow differentiation. His teaching pushed Christians to decide how they were going to read the Hebrew scripture, what they thought of God, who Jesus was, and if Christians could continue to read the Hebrew scriptures at all. None of Marcion's writings have been preserved. We can faintly reconstruct his teaching from the condemnations and refutations that were offered by some of the most important Christians of the second century (Tertullian, Dionysius of Corinth, Irenaeus, and Justin (lost)). The question of whether Marcion was a gnostic who appropriated Christian material for his particular cosmic collage, or whether he was a Christian who adapted gnostic myths to explain the apparent contradictions mentioned above is open to interpretation. Scholarship tends to view him more as a Christian than a gnostic because of his distance from some gnostic ideas and his knowledge of the Christian scriptures and the fact that he raised such an alarm among Christian thinkers. His teaching hit close to the bone. The question that Marcion asked was: How can one reconcile the difference between the vindictive, capricious, punitive God of the Hebrew Bible with the God of love, forgiveness and grace that one meets in the New Testament, mainly in Paul's letters? (but read the note below on what the Jews understand).⁴

His answer was simple: You can't. Marcion then explained this difference by loosely appropriating the gnostic concept of dueling gods. The God of the Hebrews (Yahweh) is

⁴ The Jewish theologians believed that God was no longer wrathful. From the prophet Isaiah.

“In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have compassion on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall My covenant of peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath compassion on thee.”
Isaiah 54:8-10, JPS.

the demiurge (second to the Supreme Being) who created this tainted world and trapped humanity in matter, to wit, our bodies. Jesus is the vision of the God of love, the one sent to free humanity from the snares of this created world. Anything created by Yahweh must go, or for Marcion it must stay. Marcion accepted only the writings of Paul, whom he saw as the sole voice of truth. For his gospel he weeded the Jewish elements out of Luke's account. His answer to a problem that Christians had wondered about was severe and created divisions in the church. Christian writings from Marcion onwards are especially concerned to show the necessity of the Hebrew scriptures and explain the reason for God's apparently punitive aspects.” (The Ecole Initiative Univ. of Evansville)

PAUL

Now, “Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin and the town of Giscalis in Judea. When this was taken by the Romans he removed with his parents to Tarsus in Cicilia. Sent by them to study law he was educated by Gamaliel.”⁵

I tell you this because some people say that Paul was born in Tarsus and had a Greek upbringing, whereas according to Eusebius, the Church Historian in the 4th century Paul’s training was in Torah and Midrash, under Gamaliel in Judah. Paul says in the text that he was a Hebrew, a Benjamite, and he never says that he was a Judean.

Hypothesis

My hypothesis is that although Paul knew that Jesus was ‘God,’ (N.T. Wright agrees) he did not tell “Luke” nor his Hebrew students this truth.

Paul had been introduced to this mystery, perhaps during his conversion, but did not make this explicit in his letters. This may have been because of a belief that such things should not be made public - “do not cast pearls before swine” etc. - or that disclosure might devastate the Hebrew converts to whom the statement that there was more than one God would be a blasphemy. There was of course no understanding of God as a “trinity in unity” at that time.

Another idea is that perhaps Paul had been forbidden by Christ to disclose the truth to the Hebrews until Paul understood the true nature of the relationship between the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit - what we know as Trinity in Unity which idea was not made clear until the 4th century

Perhaps Paul was not forbidden to reveal Jesus as God to his pagan converts, for whom a multiplicity of Gods was no hinderance to their conversion.

The first time that Paul hinted that the *Christ* was divine, was in his letter to the Philippians (traditionally A.D. 55).

Philippians 2:5-8 *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form*

⁵ Lives of Ilustrious Men by Jerome The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers Vol III

of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in the fashion of a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death--even the death of the cross."

the expression "... *thought it not robbery to be equal to God.*" (AV (KJV) Bible) was in the original Greek written like this

" not a usurpation meditated the to be like to God ..."

Paul was giving a glimpse of the truth that Jesus was **sent** to earth and took on a form of a slave ⁶ formed **in the likeness of men**, with human qualities. Theologians struggled with Paul's meaning of the phrase "the form of God".

If we were reading Paul's statement in the 2nd. century, without the benefit of the Church Fathers' interpretations, we probably would not guess that Paul was hinting that "Jesus was God".

The Divine nature of Jesus

The knowledge of the divine nature of Jesus was revealed much later in the written Gospels of Jesus according to Matthew Mark Luke and John. The truth of Jesus's divinity had been revealed during Jesus's lifetime to the disciples Cephas (Simon Peter's Aramaic name), and to Nathanael. Jesus made light of Nathanael's insight (I think, to prevent him from spreading it to the others). While Cephas was told not to reveal it.

⁶ The Greek word is *doulos* which means 'slave' but in 1611 when the King James Version was written, the Bishops did not want to encourage the use of the Bible to support slavery, especially since it had been outlawed in London recently. So, they replaced slave with 'servant' which is unfortunate for our understanding. A servant could not be trusted with his master's personal information - finance etc. because the servant could be hired away, or leave at any time and spill the beans to an enemy. On the other hand a slave could be intimately involved in his master's business (as they often were) without fear that they would betray the master.

The full disclosure to the disciples was made a long time later. First to Paul after A.D. 48 and then to John the evangelist who made it very clear in his Gospel c. A.D. 105.⁷

David Burke said that John's revelation of Jesus as God the Word in the Gospel of John:

“resulted in the expulsion of the Johannine community from the synagogue, and the resulting isolation from Jewish (sic) roots. The community's language became polemical as its members sought to establish a new place for themselves within a society they perceived to be increasingly hostile to them. The writing of the gospel (of John) was prompted by the need to [respond to this expulsion]” (David G. Burke).

The **divinity of Jesus** was eventually revealed to the Bishops during the 2nd century

Quotations from the Church Fathers and others describing their understanding of the divinity of Christ are neatly summarized in: *“A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs”* edited by David Bercot. There are 35 pages of quotations showing a diversity of understanding by the Bishops.

The first official public statement on the nature of Christ was in the Apostles Creed c. A.D. 300. The Apostles creed was not definitive, and did not prevent misunderstanding between the Bishops about the nature of Christ. At the Council of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381) and later Ephesus, the Christology was more detailed.

The Early Church understanding

During the first century, the Judeans who believed in the **Christ** were called Nazarites. Those that lived a communal life in poverty were called “the poor” - later (end of the 1st century) they were called Ebionites.

It seems to me a possibility that the Nazarites, who were the majority in the original Church until perhaps as late as the 2nd century, did not believe that Jesus was anyone other than a **Christ**. Even after the divine nature of Christ had been revealed in the Gospel of John, the Nazarites continued to believe there Jesus was not God. The early Church must have believed this also, as there are is no mention of Jesus as God before A.D. 105.

⁷ This is not John the Apostle.

In the following table you can see the gradual awakening of the Bishops to this understanding beginning A.D. 105.

The Nature of Jesus revealed

Christology Timetable

- 33 Crucifixion: only Peter, by God the Father via the Holy Spirit, knows He is divine for certain.
- c. 48 - Paul at Damascus knows that Jesus is Divine from the risen Jesus.
- 55 - 65 Paul hints that Jesus is God in his teachings to non-Jewish disciples.
- c. 75-100 Gospels Mark, Matthew.
- **c. 105 John's Gospel - Jesus is God the Word incarnate.**
- **c. 105 Bishop Ignatius "I pray for your happiness forever in our God Jesus Christ."**
- 125 Aristides "The Christians trace the beginning of their religion to Jesus the *Christ*. he is called the Son of the Most High God. It is said that God came down from heaven. He assumed flesh and clothed Himself with it from a Hebrew virgin. And the Son of God lived in a daughter of man.
- c. 125 Marcion introduces ten Paulinist epistles, a gospel "Luke" and teaches (from Paul's disciples?) two Gods.
- c. 135 The Bishops responds to Marcion with: Acts, Galatians, II Co., II Th., Pastoral Epistles, Luke revised which confirm one God, but imply Jesus is also God.

150 Bishop Clement "Brethren, it is fitting that you should think of Jesus Christ as of God - as the judge of the living and the dead."

160 Bishop Justin Martyr "We reasonably worship Him, having learned that He is the Son of the true God Himself, and holding Him in the second place. ... Next to God we worship and love the Word who is from the unbegotten and ineffable God."

A.D. 170 Bishop Melito of Sardis "God was put to death, the King of Israel slain!"

A.D. 180 Bishop Iranaeus "Thus He indicates in clear terms that He is God, and that His advent was in Bethlehem ... God then was made man, and the Lord did Himself save us."

A.D. 195 Bishop Clement of Alexandria "He is God in the form of man ... And with the form of God, He is God."

There were many "Christian churches" in the first century. The Churches of Peter, of Paul, of Thomas, of Philip etc. And there was a Church In Jerusalem headed by James the Greater. Before the Temple was destroyed more than fifteen Bishops had been consecrated in Jerusalem, all Judean and all circumcised. James's church was called "the

poor” because they owned nothing besides essentials. Later they were called Ebionites (though they did not call themselves this).

After A.D. 125 we can add Marcion, Valentinus, and other gnostics “churches”.

Each church had its own understanding of the Gospel of Jesus.

Church Dogma

According to some theologians: the catholic Church created a text that was an amalgam of other Christian sects including Hebrew, Gnostic, and Pauline ideas. The Catholic Church was trying to subsume the other sects, by acquiescing to some of their teachings but setting down a Dogma that all must agree to to be considered within the Church. The inclusion of the Septuagint within the Christian Bible was part of the Dogma. The nature of Christ was another.

Galatians may have been written to suit the developing Church dogma.

Acts - which often is at odds with the Epistles - was written after most of the Pauline epistles were produced, in an effort to pull the various “Pauline” letters together, to make them seem to be in agreement theologically.

Galatians, seems to have passages written after Acts (perhaps as late as c. 135) as it includes some incidents that are mentioned in Acts.

For more than 200 years the Church struggled to find a way of including “Jesus as God” into a monotheistic religion. The Nazarites of Jerusalem refused to consider Jesus as God.

The Bishops finally were forced to take a stand in order to prevent schism within the Church.. In A.D. 325 a Council of more than 300 Bishops met at Nicaea, to squelch the errant teachings of some 60 different Christian sects.

The Nicene Creed of A.D. 325

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made [both in heaven and on earth]; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost.



THE CHURCH FATHER'S AT THE FIRST COUNCIL OF NICAEA, HOLDING THE NICENE CREED

This is a different reading than in the Anglican BCP, for the BCP quotes the revised Nicene Creed made later in Constantinople, and even later amended by Western Catholic Bishops, regarding the Holy Ghost.

The official “amplified” Nicene Creed of A.D. 381 at Constantinople

The following is a literal translation of the Greek text of the Constantinopolitan form

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and born of the Father before all ages. Light of light, true God of true God. Begotten not made, consubstantial to the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. And was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary and was made man; was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried; and the third day rose again according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose Kingdom there shall be no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who together with the Father and the Son is to be adored and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets. And one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for) the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.”

And here is the change that the Catholic and Anglican Creed includes:

Anglican version of the Creed:

And I believe in the Holy Ghost,
... Who proceedeth from the Father **and the Son**,

This small change was objected to by the church in the East. Western Catholics were called heretics by the Eastern Orthodox Churches. This small difference in wording split the Church.

The Filioque clause revoked

After 1600 years the Church of England Bishops have agreed to drop the clause “and the son”

In 1988 at the Lambeth conference of Anglican Bishops, the filioque clause (“and the Son”) was revoked.

“Amongst the Latin-speaking churches of Western Europe, the words “and the Son” (the Filioque clause) were added to the description of the procession of the Holy Spirit, in what many have argued is a

*violation of the Canons of the Third Ecumenical Council. Those words were not included by either the Council of Nicaea or that of Constantinople, and most Eastern Orthodox theologians consider their inclusion to be a heresy. **The Anglican Communion's** current consensus position is "recommending to the provinces of the Anglican Communion that **in future** liturgical revisions the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed **be printed without the Filioque clause.**" (1988 Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops, Resolution 6.5)"*

But in the Episcopal Church in America no changes have yet been made to the prayer books (19 years have passed - not so long considering it has taken 1600 years to agree with the Orthodox Church.)

Schism between West and East

The Bishops voted to accept the definitions of the Nicaea and Constantinople councils. But at Chalcedon irreparable damage was done when the majority of the council voted to define Christ in a new way. The Eastern Bishops walked out, and from that time the Church was officially in schism. (Schism is when the Church revolts from its leader). Here is the offending statement (Anglicans have this creed in the Book of Common Prayer).

The council at Chalcedon 451 - the IVth Ecumenical Council

wrought confusion and caused the spilt between East and West Catholicism by phrasing the statement so that it was possible to believe that the intention was to add a fourth person to the trinity.

“So, following the saintly fathers, we all with one voice teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in human nature, truly God and the same with a rational soul and a body, truly man; consubstantial with the Father as according to divinity, and consubstantial with us according to human nature, like unto us in all things except sin; indeed born of the Father before the ages according to divine nature but in the last days the same born of the virgin Mary, Mother of God according to human nature for us and our deliverance, one and the same Christ only begotten Son, **our Lord acknowledged in two natures** without mingling, without change, indivisibly, undividedly the distinction of the natures nowhere removed on account of the union but rather the peculiarity of each nature being kept, and uniting in one person and substance, not divided or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son only begotten God Word, Lord Jesus Christ, just as from the beginning the prophets taught about Him and the Lord Jesus Himself taught us, and the creed of our fathers has handed down to us.

So, 400 years after Christ's death, His nature was still not fully understood by the Church. How could we expect Paul to have been able to describe Jesus who was also God, to the Galatians?

Caution: When you read Paul, and follow my comments which include ideas from orthodox Christianity that were not then known, you must be aware that Paul and the Galatians did not have this modern understanding.

What “faith” meant to Paul

When we read in the AV (KJV) Bible that “faith” is *attributed* to someone, it refers to a grace that is given to man by *The Father of The Son*, which faith is a helper for man to learn to trust *The Father of The Son*.⁸

Paul in some of his letters implies that the reception of this faith is simultaneous with baptism. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul also means by “faith”, his entire belief system that can be “preached” and is often “persecuted.”

Unless *The Father of The Son* has first given this faith it is not possible for man to trust *The Father of The Son*, nor to believe in *The Father of The Son*. Man does not have the power to create faith within himself. You cannot think and get faith. If you mouth the words “I have faith”, it does not bring faith. To think that you have faith just because you accept something for which you have no proof, is a delusion.

When Paul says “I have faith” he means both that *The Father of The Son* has given him the confidence that whatever *The Father of The Son* asks him to do, he will be able to somehow accomplish it, (or, if it is a promise of things to come, the assurance that *The Father of The Son* will not fail to keep His promise), and he means the total belief system that he has received from *The Father of The Son* which he then teaches to others. You will see how great was this faith that *The Father of The Son* gave to Paul.

The Anglican AV (KJV) Bible supports this doctrine that faith comes from *The Father of The Son*, and is not something that man can acquire without *The Father of The Son's* “*prevenient*” grace (i.e it must come from *The Father of The Son* first).

See here verses from (KJV) Bible AV.

⁸ The phrase The Father of The Son is to remind readers of the relationship with Jesus which clarifies who the God is that Paul talks about. He doesn't mean the God of the Israelites names YHWH (Yahweh.)

Ro 3:22* Even the righteousness of God which is **by faith of Jesus Christ** unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Ga 2:16* Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by **the faith of Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by **the faith of Christ**, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Ga 3:22* But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by **faith of Jesus Christ** might be given to them that believe. Ga 2:16* Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but **by the faith of Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by **the faith of Christ**, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Php 3:9* And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through **the faith of Christ**, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Ro 3:3* For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make **the faith of God** without effect?

Tit 1:1* Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to **the faith of God's elect**, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

The meaning of the word "Law"

Here, in Galatians, the word **L**aw means: the written and oral commandments that God gave to Moses on Sinai (to show that this particular definition is meant, I have capitalized it.)

Law refers to the entire Torah both Oral and written, which are referred to by modern Jews as Talmud.

The **L**aw given to Moses, includes 613 mitzvots - things you must do, like honor thy father and mother; and things you must not do, like murder.

The *legalisms* of the Pharisees were additional laws which helped to keep the Judeans from breaking one of God's **L**aws. For example the law against adultery was surrounded by rules that kept two people from approaching the sin of adultery, by making it illegal to meet together under any circumstance except as part of a group. These legalisms were considered to be as much law as God's **L**aw. The Judeans described these rules as a "hedge" around the **L**aw.

After Pentecost *The Father of The Son* sent the Holy Spirit to remind the disciples and followers of the spirit of the law as taught by Jesus. The Holy Spirit within the believer provided the "hedge" around the law, that the ritualistic rules did for the Judeans. By listening to their 'conscience' Christians would do the right thing.

The Law and origin of Jews

In Judaism's Midrash, Torah is said to have existed in the garden of Eden, as the 'Tree of Life.' Torah was Yahweh's blueprint for His chosen people. According to tradition the **L**aw was given by Yahweh to Moses on Mt. Sinai. It was strictly for descendants of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. Yahweh said many times ' I am the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob.' He never said he was the God of Ishmael, nor of any Gentile Nation. This is important. Jews consider the laws of Talmud to be strictly for Jews. Their God Yahweh belongs only to the 'chosen people.' It is an offense against God Yahweh to suggest He has a Son. God Yahweh made Adam and Eve, the first 'Jews.' This is what Talmud says.

Righteousness for Jews and Christians

Though Paul says you can't be **made** "righteous" by being obedient to the **L**aw - obedience to the Law is an act of righteousness (i.e obedience to the Covenant). It was Paul who introduced this distinction to the Church. He first mentioned it in Philippians

Philippians 3:8, 9 "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I

have suffered the loss of all things and count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith,"

The Father of the Son may declare someone righteous who is 'in Christ.'

When Paul tells his Galatians to put away the **L**aw, he is not inciting them to be lawless: to murder, or to commit adultery. He is telling them to get out from under the curse of the **L**aw - that is, the fear that you can never become righteous because it is impossible to keep all the **L**aw.

Jesus said "come unto me .. for my burden is light..". And this is also what Paul is telling the Galatians. Righteousness is not a reward for keeping the **L**aw perfectly, righteousness is a gift from ***The Father of The Son*** which makes it possible to live in Christ.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul says good things about the **L**aw which was given to those under the Covenant:

Ro 3:3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew? ...

2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

Yahweh gave a "contract" to the Levites and Pharisees to be keepers of his Laws for all Jews. To them He gave the Oral traditions which were not written down. Without the Pharisees no-one would know what the Laws were. All laws were kept in the memories of the Pharisees (previously by the Levites.) These laws were not written down until some 200 - 400 years the Temple had been destroyed and the City closed to any Jew in 135 CE.

Paul, Abram, justification

When Paul argues in Galatians that Abram was justified by faith and not by **L**aw, he is correcting a misunderstanding of the Sadducees whose doctrine was that man could

become righteous only by obeying the **L**aw. For Paul knew that no man could be justified by the **L**aw.

Justification, like the declaration of righteousness, is within the provenance of *The Father of The Son*. Justification by faith means: that by giving faith to man, *God the Holy Spirit* leads man to justification. Justification is connected with Baptism, and is a declaration by *The Father of The Son* that the receiver of the Holy Spirit has been considered righteous by *The Trinity*, and is justified. The justification, however, is conditional upon a man becoming a doer of the Word i.e. by living a life in Christ.

Man will (hopefully) stay in Christ his entire life owing to the faith that he follows which can lead him to “eternal life”. If man perseveres to the end, and stays in “eternal life” he will become ‘blessed of my Father.’ as Jesus said.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye **blessed of my Father**, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (Mt 25:34).

Paul says here:

For we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

It is possible to lose righteousness and the Holy Spirit by denouncing *The Father of The Son* or the Holy Spirit, or by stating that neither of them exists, or that they are incapable of accomplishing something (such as making one perfect).

Being declared righteous by *The Trinity* does not guarantee salvation; but man cannot be saved unless he is so declared righteous. You cannot enter *The Father of The Son's* presence (the Kingdom of God) if you are a sinner.

For the Pagan-Christian and the Hebrew-Christian (the Nazarites of the 1st. Century,) *The Father of The Son* declared them righteous by the presence of the Holy Spirit, which causes man to change his life and behavior to conform with *The Father of The Son's* Will. This change is demonstrated to others by the person teaching the Gospel to others.

The Nazarite way of life

In the early Church there was few ceremonial difference in the behavior of Nazarite-Judeans.

Judeans of different sects (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Nazarites) lived together, attended synagogue together, observed festivals on the same days, and ate together. The biggest differences were that some Nazarites were vegetarians whlived in poverty due to their custom of giving everything to the poor. Also Nazarite eucharist meal was not shared with other sects.

Forgiveness for Hebrews and Others

Now, to consider Paul's advice to the Galatians on whether to seek salvation as a Hebrew or as a non-Hebrew ("gentile" is the word used by the Latin writers).

If the convert chooses to become a Hebrew, through conversion and circumcision then he becomes under the Covenant of Abraham and is obliged to observe Torah. And when he fails to be obedient he can seek forgiveness, using the procedures laid down in Torah for compensation to the injured party, followed by a sacrifice through a Temple offering. His sin would be forgiven and forgotten.

Paul says that a Judean or convert to Judaism is under the "curse of the Law" by which Paul means that: no matter how hard he tries, the **L**aw cannot make him righteous.

This curse could be lifted when a believer realized that *The Father of The Son* can declare a person righteous if the believer begins to follow only the spirit of the Law rather than the letter of the Law. Sadly, most Judeans did not understand this difference - Paul did.

Availability of the Holy Spirit

After Jesus left the disciples *The Father of The Son* sent the Holy Spirit to them. Jesus said this 'comforter' was a replacement for Himself which would remind them of everything He had shown them. In the beginning the Holy Spirit descended upon the listeners at Pentecost. Nowadays it arrives through a 'sacrament' in which Ordained Clergy can ask for the grace of the Holy Spirit of Eternal Life to be given to a person.

Or *The Trinity* might give the gift directly, for it is apparent that the Holy Spirit of Eternal Life has been received by people of many Christian religions (even some that don't "qualify" as Christian.)

YHWH blinds Jews

YHWH has deliberately blinded most Jews to the Gospel. Only 'a remnant of Judeans' (many thousands in the early Church) were permitted to receive this Spirit (Ro 11,12).

The competition between the missionaries

In the Pauline letters we see that Paul's missionaries are competing with the missionaries from Jerusalem. Paul's missionaries are preaching Paul's unique gospel which he received directly from *The Father of The Son* and "not from man".

The Judeans, commanded by YAHWEH to spread Torah to all nations, are preaching Torah. They had been blessed. Some two million Hebrews were living in the Roman Empire, twice the number of Hebrews in the Holy Land.

It was not until Roman Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the state religion of the Roman Empire, that the converts to Christianity began to approach the number of converts to Judaism.

Notice I don't use the word Jew - this word is from the middle ages. Hebrew and Judaism are the correct terms

The entrance requirements for non-Hebrews into Jewish communities were not onerous. They were **not** required to be circumcised, but they had to agree to the seven Noachic (or Noahide) laws. The only non-Hebrew who must circumcise was he whose mother was Jewish - like Timothy, who had a Greek father but a Jewish mother, and this only because the mother would be committing a serious sin if she did not circumcise the child.

I remind you that the "Jews" referred to in the epistles who object to Paul's teaching are Peter, James, and John, and their disciples.

Robertson Word Pictures commentary on Galatians, Acts, Romans:

The two ways of getting right with God are here set forth: by faith in Christ Jesus (objective genitive), by the works of the law (by keeping all the law in the most minute fashion, the way of the Pharisees). Paul knew them both (see Ro 7). In his first recorded sermon the same contrast is made that we have here (Ac 13:39) with the same word **δικαιοω**, employed. It is the heart of his message in all his Epistles. The terms faith (**πιστις**), righteousness (**δικαιοσυνη**), law (**νομος**), works (**εργα**) occur more frequently in Galatians and Romans because Paul is dealing directly with the problem in opposition to the Judaizers who contended that Gentiles had to become Jews to be saved. The whole issue is here in an acute form. Save (**εαν μη**). Except. Even we (**και ημεις**). We Jews believed, had to believe, were not saved or justified till we did believe. This very point Peter had made at the Jerusalem Conference (Ac 15:10f). He quotes Ps 143:2. Paul uses **δικαιοσυνη** in two senses (1) Justification, on the basis of what Christ has done and obtained by faith. Thus we are set right with God. Ro 1-5. (2) Sanctification. Actual goodness as the result of living with and for Christ. Ro 6-8. **The same plan exists for Jew and Gentile.**

In A.D. 150, Justin Martyr - a father of the Church - responded to question from a Jew (Trypho) about salvation. These dialogues were preserved in letters (abbreviated in commentaries as "Dial.")

Justin Martyr A.D. 150

There is also a positive aspect of the Law which Justin saw as being connected to Christ.

"Those who regulated their lives by the Law of Moses would also be saved. For what is in the Law for Moses is naturally good, and pious, and **righteous**, and has been prescribed to be done by those who obey it; and what was appointed to be performed by reason of hardness of the people's hearts; these were also recorded and done by those who were under the Law. Since those who did that which is universally, naturally, and eternally good are pleasing to God, they shall be saved through this Christ in the resurrection equally with **those righteous men who were before them, mainly Noah, Enoch, Jacob** and whoever else there might be, along with those who have known this Christ" (Dial. 45.4-5). Jews living after Jesus did not, however, have this luxury in Justin's opinion. This was Justin's way of retaining or reframing those Jewish figures whom he felt were actual Christians. There is nothing inherently wrong with the Law or those who followed it before Jesus, but **since Jesus the Law has become unimportant it can still be followed after conversion.** "And again Trypho ["the Jew" inquired, 'But if someone, knowing that this is so, and after he recognizes that this man is Christ, and has faith in him, wished, however, to observe these institutions [Jewish practices], will he be saved?'

In my opinion, such a one will be saved, if he does not strive in every way to persuade other men [to practice them too]" (Dial. 47.1). The Law, for Justin, had become simply a cultural accouterment with no eternal significance.

So you can see that the issue of Hebrew conversion and Hebrew Law was still a hot topic in the 2nd century.

Paul and his Galatians.

Paul thinks that his zeal for the Christ, is all that prevents the Nazarites (followers of James the brother of Jesus in Jerusalem) from taking over his flock. And Paul thought that they would prevent his "children" receiving righteousness. But of course this is hyperbole on the part of Paul, for we know from the Evangelists that there were many righteous people amongst the Hebrews. And "Paul" wrote:

Romans 3:30 "Seeing it is one God, which shall **justify the circumcision** by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."

It is *The Father of The Son* who will justify the Hebrews because He has promised this to Paul - 'all the Jews will be saved.' The gentiles will be saved through the Faith of Jesus.

Righteous People before the crucifixion

AV(KJV) Mt 9:13* ... for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

AV(KJV) Mt 13:17* For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

AV(KJV) Mt 23:35* That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

AV(KJV) Mr 2:17* When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

AV(KJV) 5 ¶ There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

In Galatians, Paul is arguing against Judaism as a way to salvation. But in Romans 11 and 12, Paul argues that **all** the "Jews" will be saved (after the fullness of the Gentiles is come in).

In Galatians Paul is saying that the observance of the **L**aw prevents righteousness, but in Romans he suggests that righteousness comes from the grace of *The Father of The Son* only, and is independent of any observance of law or custom. (cf. Romans Ch.2 for Paul's defense of the Law).

In Galatians Paul implies that once having received the Holy Spirit, circumcision would *remove* the benefit of the Holy Spirit. Yet later Paul has Timotheus circumcised .

Act 16:1* ¶ Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named

Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:

2* Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3* Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

This ambivalence in theology stems from the different agendas of Paul and Marcion. Though Marcion was an adamant supporter of St. Paul, he disagreed with him on the fundamental importance of The **L**aw. Paul was a Hebrew until his death. Marcion (who was not a Judean) despised the Law and Judaism. He preached that Jesus was not a Hebrew at all, and we see his influence in the Epistles.

Marcion, who was previously a Catholic Bishop (and the son of the Bishop of Sinope - a man well known and well respected), founded the largest Church in the world, much bigger than the Catholic Church. He was extremely influential. All the Church Fathers refer to the impact that his teaching had on the Catholic Church. Although declared a Heretic under Constantine in the 4th. century his teachings persevered into the 10th. century And much of what he taught has been immortalized in the Catholic canon.

The following passage is often quoted to argue (incorrectly) that there was no-one righteous amongst the Hebrews in Jerusalem.

AV(KJV) Ro 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

It is a quotation from David (Psalm 14, 53)

*AV(KJV) 14:1 <<To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.>> The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven **upon the children of men**, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

In the Psalm it is the children of men whom God is judging, not the children of God.

The Judeans “had a better plan” - they said:

The Apostles were teaching something different. They said that it was perfectly possible to be both a circumcised Hebrew and a Nazarite (a follower of **Christ**). The Apostles, some of whom remained in Jerusalem, had received the Holy Spirit and worshipped in the Temple. Also, some ten thousand Hebrews had received the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, and were all obedient to the **L**aw - so far as anyone was obedient to any of the law.

There is no scripture that states it is impossible to obey all of the **L**aw. Paul never said that it was impossible to be obedient to **all** the **L**aw. In fact he said at his trial that he was obedient, that he had never broken any law.

But we know, and Paul knew, that being obedient or not does not determine whether a person will be declared righteous by **The Father of The Son**.

The Apostles' message to the world was that: regardless of the covenant, all Hebrews had an eternal promise from **The Father of The Son**, and through the propitiation of Jesus, and with the gift of the Holy Spirit of Eternal Life (which was given to all Nazarites though the laying on of hands of the Apostles), that they would receive the

Holy Spirit to enable them to fulfill the **L**aw. What could Paul possibly offer that was more complete than this?

Paul preaches freedom

What Paul offered was freedom - Freedom from the curse of the Law. His argument was that through God's grace it was unnecessary to obey the letter of the Law in order to be righteous. And he offered the possibility of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

He taught:

- only *The Father of The Son* declares who is righteous;
- justification come from obeying the sprit of the law from the heart, not because of fear of retribution;
- life everlasting in the world to come is the promise of Jesus Christ for every good man 'blessed of The Father.'

The Final Judgment

AV(KJV) Mt 25:34* Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35* For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36* Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37* Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40* And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of **these my brethren**, ye have done it unto me.

41* Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45* Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

46* And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

But whether man is a “Jew or a Gentile”, his life must be holy in order to be justified. Christ offers eternal life to those blessed of God the Father. (But here Paul’s Galatian converts may not have understood this - at least we know that Paul did not mention it in his argument.

To ensure that his converts found the Apostles' offer less palatable than his own, Paul emphasized the Apostles' mistaken understanding that it was necessary to obey the *letter of the Law* in order to become righteous. This was not only a heavy burden, but obedience to the *letter of the law* would not bring righteousness.

But Paul never suggested that his Judean students abandon the **L**aw. Paul vehemently denied in his legal defense at his trial in Jerusalem that he ever told anyone under the Covenant to abandon any law. Also he said that he as an observant Hebrew observed all the Law.

So what was going on here in Galatians?

Paul is trying to win converts to his gospel. He was willing to be a Hebrew to convert Hebrews, a Greek to convert Hellenized Hebrews, and whatever it took to convert Galatians..

The missions of the Nazarites

Meanwhile, the Apostles had carried the message of Jesus Christ to places Paul was not commissioned to go. The gospel of the Nazarites was taken far East to Northern India, and was spread throughout the Near East; what is now Iraq, and Iran. It was even taken to China. And the Apostles were baptizing, confirming, and teaching people to follow Jesus's training.

Jesus had commissioned the Jerusalem Church - the Apostles - to baptize and teach all the world.

" Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:19-20 KJV)

He had authorized Paul only to go to His brethren in the non-Judean Nations and to their Kings.

"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:" Acts 9:15, KJV.

The word “gentile”¹¹⁶⁰, from L.L. gentilis "foreign, heathen, pagan," from L.gentilis "person belonging to the same family, fellow countryman," from gentilis (adj.) "of the same family or clan," from gens (gen. gentis) "race, clan" (see gentle). Used in Vulgate to translate Gk. ethnikos, from ta ethne "the nations," which translated Heb. ha goyim "the (non-Judean) nations."

Example:

Lu 22:25* And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

Now, there are no Kings in the Roman Empire, only in the Hebrew Nations around Judea, so Gentiles here is Latinized Hebrew “Ha Goyim” which means other Nations of the descendants of Jacob which all had Kings, i.e Hebrews.

See my article on “Gentiles”.

It was the revelation that Jesus was ‘God’ - by John and later the Bishops support for this idea that sounded the death knell for Judean participation. They would not accept Jesus as God, because they had been taught that YHWH was God.

The pagan communities adopted the new God readily, and Christian communities were built on the teachings of the Hebrews. As Jesus had prophesied: ‘salvation is of the Jews.’

The burden of truth

Paul had been taken to the “third heaven” (2 Co 12:2) and received from *The Father of The Son* “unspeakable truths”.

When he was released from “heaven”, Paul spent three years trying to understand his new knowledge. Paul knew truth, but was forbidden to tell “*unspeakable truths*” to the Hebrews, just as Jesus had forbidden Peter to tell the truth about who He really was.

(later ideas)

Matthew 16:16, 17 “And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered and said unto him, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in Heaven.”

Matthew 16:20 “Then He charged His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ.”

The disciples may have heard Simon Peter’s announcement, but without the indwelling Holy Spirit, they had no way to understand the significance of his statement. Only Simon Peter had been “touched” by ***The Father of The Son*** with this knowledge of the true divine nature of Jesus, and with his simple mind, perhaps he had no capability of explaining it.

Even Paul, who was educated in theology, had a similar difficulty.

Paul would use a similar expression to Jesus’s “*flesh and blood had not revealed it*”

... for I neither received it from man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Paul’s gospel was different from that of the Apostles, in that the Apostles did not preach that Jesus was God, only that He was ***Christ***. When Simon Peter (“Cephas” to Paul) and Paul met in Jerusalem in A.D. 48 or so, they spent 15 days together. I think they were mulling over what had been revealed to them both, what it might mean for the sect, and what it meant for Paul’s mission.

The truth of the *Christ's* divinity was hidden in the text - for "YHWH had blinded the Jews" (see Ro. 11.12).

We get glimpses of the truth in Paul's letter to the Philippians.

Philippians 2:5-8 *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in the fashion of a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death--even the death of the cross."*

The early Church Fathers did not understand this to be a clear statement by Paul that Jesus was God because of Paul's phrase *in the form of God* which in the original Greek is even more obscure - here is the English transliteration of the Greek

6 who in a form of God being, not a usurpation meditated the to be like to God but himself emptied, a form of a slave having taken, in a likeness of men having been formed,.*

Even though the Fathers were competent theologians, they would make no official statement before A.D. 150 that Jesus was God. Though some Bishops did privately believe this to be true, as we saw on page 2.

A letter from Paul to the Corinthians (II Corinthians) but perhaps written much later after Paul's death by a disciple, echoed the inspiration of John the Evangelist.

Colossians 1:15, 16 "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him."

Paul's difficulties with the Judeans

I think, and this is just an idea at the moment, that he may have to run into serious difficulties with "his" gospel to the Jews in the Diaspora when he began to preach that there were two Gods, God the Father and God the Son, an idea otherwise not made explicit until the end of the 2nd. c. in the Gospel of John. For Paul had no way to explain to them that Jesus Christ was God, for the idea of the trinity in unity was not defined until the 4th. Century.

My assumption is that when the news reached the Nazarites in Jerusalem - that Paul preached two Gods - it would have sounded the death knell on Paul's mission. The Church in Jerusalem may have decided to put him to trial as soon as he entered the Holy Land (they had no powers outside.) Paul was certainly hounded out of many synagogues, as can be read in his letters and Acts. He could not enter many towns for fear of imprisonment that would bring an end to his mighty mission.

His Roman citizenship was his only guarantee that the Pharisees/Nazarites would not kidnap him.

But when Paul accompanied a relief mission to the starving Brethren in Jerusalem, he was arrested, charged and tried, I think, for teaching that God was incarnate in Jesus (though it does not state this in Luke's text).

The ostensible objection to Paul's teaching which led to his arrest was that he was telling the Jews to abandon the **L**aw, and this he vehemently denied at his trial.

This was the end of Paul's missionary expansion. Though he was able to continue support of his converts, by letter, he could not travel, and was no longer able to influence

the churches in the Diaspora. He was eventually tried in Rome and beheaded for his heretical teaching (“for Christ’s sake” - Jerome).

Paul’s contribution

For many generations the Pauline writings were set aside by the Church Catholic. Some Fathers did not even mention Paul, and one of them called Paul a heretic. If you scan the writings of the Apostolic and ante-Nicene Fathers, very few expound on Paul’s writings. (Paul was an embarrassment, he was the hero of the gnostic sects.)

Today Paul is revered by the Church for his understanding of the mystery of God, and for his recognition that Jesus was The Christ.

His explanation to the Hebrews through circumlocution and argumentation without revealing the truth that Christ was God incarnate, made his writings a philosophical tangle. Who could understand them absent the key idea, which he could not reveal because of his promise to *The Father of The Son*.

We, who know the truth, read his letters in light of this truth and are easily confused, for Paul was writing for those who could not, must not, yet know the truth. So, we read into the text ideas that no convert could not have gleaned from Paul’s gospel. We see the mystery, whereas they only hear Paul’s words about freedom.

Of course if the critics are correct and if Marcion wrote the letter, then what we see is Paul the Apostle’s writings interspersed with Marcion’s ideas of antinomianism, and gnosticism, and the whole text massaged by the Church catholic - no wonder it is confusing, and difficult to follow.

Paul’s other writings

Where are Paul’s writings to pagan communities where he talks about Jesus as God incarnate?

I think that the letters never survived the Church censors who, terrified that they would be accused of polytheism, destroyed any text that even hinted at polytheism. It is only recently that early texts have been discovered (Nag Hammadi “gnostic” scrolls) that describes the struggles the early Church had with finding an explanation for Jesus as God within a Jewish monotheistic tradition.

Paul recovers from his experience

Back in his senses, after his trip to “heaven”, in Damascus Paul punished his body. He refused to eat meat, or drink and he hardly took any rest.

Imagine that you were Paul, with direct commandment from *The Father of The Son* to go into communities that the Apostles shunned, where there was a constant danger. Situations where you were sure to be beaten, stoned, or lashed for what you were doing. Where you would be despised, hated, scorned, and laughed at for your teaching.

Would you have done it? If *The Father of The Son* had ordered you? Yes, of course you would, and you would have been zealous - as *The Father of The Son* knew Paul would be.

Paul broken and still in torment

In Rome A.D. 65, Paul died a broken man, I think. Forbidden by *The Father of The Son* to tell his own brethren the truth about Christ.

The church in Rome, a small outpost of a Christian world centered in Alexandria, survived without Paul.

John's Gospel of the Word made flesh

Then at the end of the 1st. c., in Ephesus, the center of the Nazarite sect, after the sect had been forced to flee Jerusalem ahead of the Roman siege, a righteous man who was known as John the Just, or John the Righteous, a philosopher who could untangle Paul's tangled theology; a mystic with so great a gift of the Spirit that he could also commune with *The Father of The Son*, wrote this:

1:1* In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2* The same was in the beginning with God. 3* All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. 4* In Him was life, and that life was the Light of men. 5* And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

6* There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7* The same came as a witness to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8* He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9* That was

the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10* He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. 11* He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. 12* But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become **the sons of God**, even to those who believe in His name, 13* who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14* **And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only Begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth .**

The Church did not know what to make of John's revelation that there were two Gods. The writing was at first suppressed. But the Bishops thought it to be inspired, and tried to rationalize it.

The end of the Nazarite sect

This doctrine of the Church, that Christ was God, was the beginning of the end for the Nazarites, who had accepted Jesus as Christ, but would not accept him as God.

New sects ignorant of the truth

But this announcement was to ignite new "Christian" movements apart from Judaism. Within fifty years there were some sixty Christian sects who accepted Jesus as God, but could not agree whether Jesus had been God in the flesh.

In the text itself, there had been three stories which gave a glimpse of the truth, Peter, Nathanael, and the man born blind, all of them recognized the Jesus as "the Son of God", though this was also a title applied to many righteous people. But in the text it hinted at a different meaning, though it did not admit Jesus as being *God the Word incarnate*. All statements were, in any case, downplayed by the writers. Peter was ordered not to say such a thing to anyone until after the end. Nathanael's idea was made light of. The man born blind (John's Gospel A.D. 110 +) was the only person in the gospels to see that Jesus was of God and this truth was revealed in John's gospel only. (Jo 9:1).

Paul's long time ambition for the conversion of all his Hebrew brethren was squashed by Yahweh who had other plans for his chosen.

Paul had suffered terribly in life for his crimes, and for his personal ambitions.

The expulsion of the Jews

By the fifth century all the Jews were in exile. Kicked out of Rome, Palestine, the Byzantine Empire, and most of Europe. They were rescued from their status of pariah by Islam.

The Moslems accepted them as “people of the book”, other “descendants of Abraham”, and allowed them to practice their religion without fear. Hebrew communities thrived within Moslem cities, and the Hebrews became the traders between Moslems and Christians, taking over all the trade routes, once exclusively Christian, but no longer welcome in Moslem lands.

The covenant still honored

Yahweh was still honoring the covenant with Israel. Dispersed and under occupation they may be, but still one people under Yahweh.

Israel had been taken from the care of the Saducees (as Jesus foretold) and were now under the protection of Moslems! The “other Nations” of Abraham.

The Rabbis had become the replacement for the Pharisees, and were since 200 A.D. the caretakers of Israel, they were Yahweh’s “obedient” tenants of the vineyard.

Non-Semitic people, as we know, did their best to eliminate the Hebrews as a Nation after the fifth century, by expelling them from every European country apart from Poland. Even England deported “Jews” (the word “jews did not exist until the middle ages, In the New Testament prior to the Middle ages, they were called Judeans and Hebrews). The Christian hatred of the Hebrews led to great persecution, which culminated in the German atrocities in the 20th. century Millions of Hebrews were killed by Christian Nations. Many Christian Nations have officially apologized for their treatment of the Hebrews. since the time of Christ. Obviously God did not put His vineyard Israel into the care of the Christians, as some have suggested.

The Churches choose Gospels

The Catholic Church in the West, uncomfortable with the mysticism of John, therefore venerated the Gospel of Matthew, (written to counter gnostic ideas) and placed it first in their Vulgate Bible. In many churches the gospel of Matthew was the only gospel

read. Mark's gospel became secondary. John's gospel was relegated to the last position in the text.

Mystical John

But in the Eastern Church, the gospel of John became the touchstone to a new mystical understanding of all the texts. It spawned a different "philosophy" that eventually gave succor to the schism of Eastern and Western Catholicism.

Luther and Galatians

Rome taught obedience to the spirit of the law, but it was law as modified by the Church. It was obeyed, in spirit, by the whole world of Christianity until the 17th century.

Then a German monk enamored of an ideas of freedom from the Law espoused in Paul's/Marcion's letter to Galatians "reformed" the text. Within a hundred years, the dream of unity: of all Christians with "like mind", breaking bread together, and worshipping *The Father of The Son*, was shattered into a thousand pieces. The Western Church fragmented, and created groups which disagreed on fundamental beliefs. They refused the hand of fellowship to one another.

The Eastern Orthodox Church, though in schism with the Western Catholic Church over who was the Head of the Church in the 6th. century, still shared the same beliefs. Differences in Doctrine were very slight and caused by misunderstandings by the Bishops of a few statements made at Chalcedon in the 6th century (mostly due to the translation of new Latin words into Greek for which no direct equivalent existed)

Protestant Churches including the Anglican Church are considered heretical by both Rome (Pope confirmed such in 2007) and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Freedom from the law at what cost?

Freedom from the law (ignorance of the law) has had terrible consequences on the way of life of Christian communities.

Ignorance and disobedience to law has created a disparate people who swear they "love" Jesus, and yet despise their neighbors who don't.

Jesus said "love your enemy". Be a "peacemaker".

Jesus said:

Mt. 5: 17* ¶ *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. 18* For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19* Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20* For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*”

Paul was trying to unify the children of Abraham. Paul knew the truth. Paul spoke with *The Father of The Son*. Paul wanted people to do *The Father of The Son's* Will. He just did not know how to explain it to them.

It would take greater minds than Paul's to explain it to the world, and centuries would pass before anyone could say:

“I am sure this is what *The Father of The Son* wants of us.”

If you read Galatians without first having read this previous understanding, you will be confused by the apparent disagreements with his other letters.

One thing we can be sure of: Paul wanted to unify the Church.

His saying was

“to the Jews first and then the Greeks”.

It was never one, without the other.

[Marcion had other ideas - he wanted nothing to do with the Jews.]

Notes:

Bold text = text supposedly originating with Marcion; plain *italic* Paul's own text; plain *italic* in {} braces the additions by the Church. Critics say that none of the text of Galatians is from Paul the Apostle, but his ideas were absorbed into Marcion's doctrine, so we could say that the bold text represents Paul's ideas in Marcion form.

The Text itself

Galatians 1:1-6:18 "Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead)

Paul is laying claim that he has "been commissioned" by both Jesus the *Christ* and God the Father, since the time Jesus was risen. He implies later on, that he was taught by someone who was not a man in the flesh, and so he must have been a resurrected being, or a spirit in a body, and by implication, the risen *Christ*.

... from our Lord Jesus Christ, {who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father, 5 to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.}

{ } Text not included in Marcion's version of this letter.

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him, that called you into the grace of Christ,

"*I Marvel*" is sarcasm. Paul addresses all of them, which suggests that they have forgotten something fundamental that the spirit has taught them about the *Christ*.

for another gospel. For this is not another; but there are some who trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.

Who is it that brings a gospel to them that is *not another gospel* but somewhat different in regards to the grace of the **Christ**?

This is no attack from some splinter group. They are missionaries of The Nazarite sect of the Jews under James. The sect of the twelve Apostles, the Seventy, etc., who have known Jesus, and have received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

For the previous 14+ years they have administered the Church of Christ. If anyone knows the true gospel it should be these people.

“... As might be expected, the Apostle Paul was especially hateful to them. They repudiated his official character, they reviled him personally. ... they resented him as a teacher directly opposed to SS. Peter, James and John ; they repudiated his apostolic authority because (as they affirmed) he had not been “called of Jesus Christ himself” nor trained in the Church of Jerusalem.”⁹

Paul knows what they are saying against him, for he has been arguing against them in every synagogue he visits. But he doesn't say in this letter what is the cause of the argument.

But should we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

An “angel from heaven” is an Aramaic expression that means, a teacher of the gospel. Paul is giving his disciples authority to curse any teacher who tries to make any changes to Paul's gospel.

*1:9 * As we said before, so say I now again: If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed!*

Paul gives them his blessing to also curse anyone, teacher or not.

For do I now persuade men, or God?

Or do I seek to please men?

These are two of the criticisms laid against Paul by the Jerusalem Church.

⁹ p 284/5 A Dictionary of Christian Biography Editors Wace and Piercy - content by Anglican Priests, Bishops pub Hendrickson 1994

For if I yet sought to please men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Paul's' gospel is not meant to be pleasing to men, but to God.

1:11 * But I certify to you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man;

The following text through 1:23 is a significant statement on Paulinism (apparently accepted and left intact by Marcion).

Paul was not taught by the Church, nor commissioned by the Church - (he is a "loose canon" as far as the Jerusalem Church is concerned).

for I neither received it from man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Again Paul stresses his instructions were from the *Christ* by revelation.

1:13 * For ye have heard of my participation in times past in the Jews' religion, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and wasted it. I profited in the Jews' religion beyond many of my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

Paul is making it clear that he knows the law better than most. By insinuation, much better than the fishermen (sons of Zebedee) and tax collectors in the Jerusalem Church. He implies that whatever they have said, he, Paul knows that they are mistaken, because he is the expert.

1:15 * But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen,

Whoa! Not only is Paul the best lawyer, but God had chosen him from birth for this mission to the Galatians, to reveal the Son of God to them, and not just the teachings of the earthly *Christ*, - which is old news - but up to the minute revelations of the risen *Christ*, the Son of God. (Son of God was a common expression and was applied to righteous people, and it did not suggest to the Galatians that the Son of God actually was God -

*“It in no way suggests that the person concerned is part of the very being of God himself.” N.T. Wright *What Saint Paul Really Said*.*

Though, I think, Paul understood **Christ** was God. N.T. Wright agrees :

*“Paul, in short, seems to have held what generations of exegetes have imagined to be an impossibility, a thoroughly incarnational theology ...” (p. 71 *ibid*).*

I conferred not immediately with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me,

Paul conferred with **The Father of The Son**. He didn't tell the Apostles of his new commission, and he didn't seek their approval for his mission.

but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus.

This Damascus was probably not Damascus the city in Syria, which was some 150 miles NorthEast of Jerusalem. *Damascus* was also the name of an area adjacent to the Sea of Galilee, where the Essenes lived in desert fortresses.

{Then after three years

What did he do during this time? There is conjecture that he studied the gospel with followers of Jesus, who were in the area, for there was a large community of Essenes also in the area and they had a great library, with a scriptorium, for studying.

1:18(b) * I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

How did Paul know to go to Cephas? Why did the text call him Petros (the Catholics' "St. Peter") and not Cephas? James was the head of the Church in Jerusalem, but Cephas was the spiritual head, and he had been with the Lord. For fifteen days Paul and Cephas may have mulled over the knowledge that Jesus was God incarnate. This truth of the divinity of Jesus was their common bond.

Irenaeus writes:

“With regard to those who allege that Paul alone knew the truth, and that to him the mystery was manifested by revelation, let Paul himself convict them, when he says, that one and the same God wrought in Peter for the apostolate of the circumcision, and in himself for the Gentiles. Peter, therefore, was an apostle of that very God whose was also Paul; and Him whom Peter preached as God among those of the circumcision, and likewise the Son of God, did Paul [declare] also among the Gentiles. For our Lord never came to save Paul alone, nor is God so limited in means, that He should have but one apostle who knew the dispensation of His Son (Adv. haer. 3.13.1).”

Paul apparently never told of his inspiration (God may have told him to keep it to himself), for it would have destroyed the Nazarite movement.

Later “Peter” would be quoted as saying:

2 Peter 3:16 “as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things. Therein are some things hard to understand, which those who are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

(continuing with Galatians)

But I saw none of the other apostles save James, the Lord's brother.

Paul met with James out of courtesy. Here James seems to be almost an after thought. James had not been a disciple of Jesus, he may not have even realized the true nature of Jesus, but Paul certainly did, and of course so did Peter, who was the first to be inspired by God with the truth that Jesus was Divine.

1:20 * Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.) Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ; but they had heard only that, “He who persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.”

24 * And they glorified God in me. (11-24 not by Marcion)

The Judean/Nazarite churches had already been established in Syria and Cecilia (by Philip, for one), and they knew Paul by reputation from his preaching in the Damascus area around Galilee.

Then fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

Why did they go? There was some persecution of their converts by the Jerusalem Church, just as there is now with the Galatians, so Paul is confirming the authority of his mission, and wants them to understand that the pillars of the Church in Jerusalem had once fully approved of his mission.

And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

Paul revealed privately to those with sufficient spiritual understanding, for he would be wasting his breath to talk to those who didn't understand about the *Christ's* divine nature, all that he had learned from his encounter with God, and what God had commanded him to do, but he did not reveal that *Christ* was God incarnate, as he may have been commanded not to tell the Hebrews.

But neither was Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, compelled to be circumcised;

So, implies Paul, if the Church in Jerusalem did not demand circumcision of Titus, who was a Greek convert to Paul's gospel, then why should the Church emissaries demand it? Surely they must have misunderstood their leaders.

and that because false brethren were brought in by stealth,

who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus,

who sneaked into the meetings to hear what our position was on certain topics such as circumcision of non - Jews.

that they might bring us into bondage.

That they could have arrested us.

Apparently they were satisfied as Paul and Titus were not arrested, but could this mean that though Titus was not compelled to be circumcised, he was actually circumcised? The meaning is deliberately obscure.

To them we gave place by submission not even for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.

It seemed such a minor issue to us then that we managed to get rid of the issues within an hour and concentrate on the major issues which was to bring the gospel to you.

2:6 * But of those who seemed to be something (whosoever they were, it maketh no difference to me: God accepteth no man's person) --those who seemed to be somewhat in consultation added nothing to me;

7 * but contrariwise, when they saw that the Gospel to the Uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel to the Circumcision was unto Peter

8 * {(for He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the Circumcision, that Same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles),}

9 * and when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen and they unto the Circumcision.

Verses 7 and 8 are thought to be revisions to the text added later, after the Roman Church was formed, with the intent of attaching some of Paul's glory to Peter. The argument stems from the unusual use of Petros, which was unfamiliar to Paul.¹⁰

Paul continues: But those who seemed to be in positions of authority were able to tell me nothing I didn't already know. In fact when they saw the Holy Spirit at work in Titus and heard his testimony about what we had accomplished amongst the heathen, and

¹⁰ BARNIKOL: PAUL AND PETER 287

I. The Textual Problems of the Pauline Epistles:

Kefas or Petros? <http://www.depts.drew.edu/jhc/Barnikol.pdf>

when James Cephas and John recognized the grace that was in me, they shook hands and offered whatever help we needed to take the gospel to the heathen.

2:10 * {Only they would that we should remember the poor, the same as I also was eager to do.}

But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed.

When Peter came to our Church in Antioch (this may not have been Cephas, but one of the seventy named Petros, who “came from James” for Paul had a high regard for Cephas whom he considered to be ranked higher than the Apostles), we had an argument for whereas he had been sharing our house with the poor and eating with them, he gradually stopped doing it and in the end he lived separately, and not only he but the others too, including Barnabas.

For before certain ones came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they had come, he withdrew and separated himself from them, fearing those who were of the Circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, so much that Barnabas also was carried away by their dissimulation.

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all,

That is I made a public exhibition of Peter in front of the visitors.

“If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles and not as do the Jews,

the manner of the gentiles - observing the Noahide laws but not observing Torah while living with them. Kosher food, purification rituals, apparel.

why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Why do you then force them to observe your Jewish customs so that they can fellowship with you and share the Agape? Or possibly: why make the gentiles observe your watered down version of Judaism, it would have no merit for them.

2:15 * {We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,} knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

That is: we who by nature have accepted the validity of the law, through the covenant, know now that a man is not justified by the works of the law.

From the faith that *Christ* has given us, we have believed in Jesus the *Christ*. And we hope that we might also be (eventually) justified by the *Christ*. Justification is not by the works of the law; for no flesh shall be justified by the works of the law (for it is the spirit which is justified, and that only by God).

Here Paul implies Ps 143:2(b) “*for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*”

but Paul leaves out “in thy sight” which is an important qualifier.

2:17 * {But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore the minister of sin? God forbid! }

That is: while we are living the life of a Nazarite, if we are accused of breaking the law, which is a sin, is our life with Christ then the cause of this sin? Of course not.

For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

My fleshly life

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

The Law has taught me what is sin and by being obedient to it I have made myself dead to sin, so that I may be made alive by *Christ* that is within me. This life I now have is directed by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not return to the law in order to be made righteous, for this would frustrate the grace of God, which is His declaration that I am righteous.

3:1 * " O foolish Galatians! Who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been clearly set forth, crucified among you?

Paul is accusing the Judeans of bewitching his flock

This only would I learn of you: Did ye receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

The Galatians being pagans, - ignorant of the law - know only what the Judeans have preached to them, and that had not been a source of the spirit. The Spirit came to them only while listening to Paul preaching.

Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Paul has taught them that it is the spirit working within them that brings their spirit to perfection. It is obedience to the "spirit of the law" that they will be saved. How could obedience to the "letter of the law" accomplish the same thing, it not being spiritual itself?

*3:4 * Have ye suffered so many things in vain--if it be yet in vain? He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit and worketh miracles among you, doeth He it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

Can you perform miracles by the law? Or do you perform them by listening to *Christ*?

3:6 * {Even as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness." Know ye therefore that those who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

Now those of you who have heard that you must be adopted into Judaism in order to share in the promise made to Abraham, I tell you if you have the faith which comes from *Christ*, you are already children of Abraham.

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached beforehand the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed."

Including the heathens.

So then, those who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.}

Of faith meaning those who have been justified by *The Father of The Son*, who have been blessed by the Gospel, not justified from obedience to the law (which had not be given to Abraham at that time, though Torah existed in ideas of God - Torah being eternal).

3:10 * For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written: "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

That is: those who are required to obey the **L**aw must continue to obey all things written in the book of law, and such a commandment is a heavy burden "a curse", but it does not mean that man is cursed by Yahweh when he fails to do everything in law, for Yahweh promises to be merciful to his children, and will forgive transgressions.

3:11 * {But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident,}

Paul knows, as we do now, that justification comes only from *The Father of The Son*.

for "the just shall live by faith." And the law is not of faith,

The faith is, of course, the faith that *The Father of The Son* has given to his flock

but "The man who doeth them shall live in them."

Which is what Jesus told the rich man who said he was obedient to the law.

Luke 10:27, 28 "And he answering said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and

with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.” And He said unto him, “Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live.”

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,

That is: He has lifted this heavy burden from us - the fear that breaking the **L**aw will cause us to become unrighteous - because we now know from **Christ** that righteousness is a grace from **The Father of The Son**. It never was possible to become righteous from the **L**aw, we were misled by the Saducees.

being made a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree”), that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Christ was crucified for us so that all could receive the Holy Spirit, so that the gentiles could share in the blessings of Abraham.

3:15 * {Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: A covenant, though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no man annulleth or addeth thereto.

I am not saying that the covenant has been changed in any way by **Christ**. A covenant once agreed to cannot be annulled by man, nor added to.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, “and to seeds,” as though many; but as though one: “and to thy Seed,” who is Christ.

Here Paul is trying to tell a truth about **Christ**, without confessing that **Christ** is God. So he says **Christ** was the seed of David, and of Abraham and so **Christ** was the recipient of the promise made by Yahweh. [here I think the Greek translators have misunderstood what Paul meant.]

And this I say, that the Covenant which was confirmed earlier by God in Christ cannot be annulled by the law, which came four hundred and

thirty years after, so as to make the promise of no effect.

God's covenant with *Christ* cannot be changed by the law which was given to Moses much later.

For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

The promise has not been fulfilled, and yet we have the law now, so the law cannot be the vehicle to fulfill the promise, the law cannot be what brings us the inheritance in the promise.

For what then serveth the law?

What is the purpose of giving us the **L**aw if it was not able to fulfill the promise that God made to Abraham?

It was added because of transgressions until the Seed should come to whom the promise was made;

It was given to help us stop committing sin by identifying what was sin, without it we would not know what was sin and we would be sinners indeed. The promise made to Abraham was that *Christ* would come and would make Caanan sin free.

and it was ordained by angels through the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid!

Did God then not want us to have the Law? Did he want the promised *Christ* to replace the law? God forbid!

For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should then have come by the law.

For the **L**aw is good,

Romans 7:12 "Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."

1 Timothy 1:8 "But we know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully,"

and if anything Yahweh had given us prior to *Christ* could have given us righteousness, the law would be it.

But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

But as scripture says, all are under the curse of original sin (though this term was not coined until much later). But a promise was made to Abraham that we would have this curse lifted by his seed, which is *Christ*, if only we believe that the promise has been fulfilled in the *Christ*. And this belief must come through the faith *The Father of The Son* has given us, and not through belief in any spiritual efficacy of the law.

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, being shut apart from the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

But *The Father of The Son* did not offer us this faith earlier, because until Jesus came the Father was unknown to Israel. We were kept under the law of Moses so that we would learn what was sin, and what we had to do to keep sin from our lives.

Therefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The law taught us how to make our bodies dead to sin, so that we could be made alive in *Christ*.

3: 25 * But after faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. } 3:15-25 not in Marcion

When faith does come to each of you, you will believe in *Christ*, and the law will have done its job, and you will have "graduated" and will be under the law of faith.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.

Those of you that have received the Holy Spirit, and have changed your life to live as *Christ*, are children of *The Father of The Son*.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

The differences in appearance or situation are only characteristics of the flesh. In *Christ* we are all one spirit.

3:29 * {And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. }

So those of you in *Christ*, who are not Jews, can be confident that you are heirs to the promise made to Abraham. [this was added by the Bishops.]

4:1 * {Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth in nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all. But he is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father. } *Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.*

Before *Christ* is come to each of you individually, you Hebrews are still under the tutors of the law, you are yet in bondage to the law. You must remain like this until the Father thinks it is time for you to be in *Christ*.

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

Finally the Father saw that the time was right, and His Son was born to a woman, and put under the law [circumcision on the eighth day]

to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba, Father."
{Therefore thou art no more a servant but a son,}

The indwelling Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of the promise, and you have become sons of God.

and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

And not only sons but an heir to eternal life in God through *Christ*.

*4:8 * However that be, then when ye knew not God, ye did service unto those which by nature are not gods. But now after ye have known God, or rather are known by God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements unto which ye desire again to be in bondage?*

Now that you know that you are God's heir, and considered by God to be a son, how can you even think of giving this up, and submitting to demands of your weak and beggarly flesh?

*4:10 * Ye observe days and months and times and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.*

Your lives are run by the clock, your worship is on a schedule - from a calendar. You are not listening to your spirit. Have you learnt nothing from me, Did I fail you? This is a worry to me, that I did not accomplish what God expects.

Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am, for I am as ye are. Ye have not injured me at all.

Brethren you can still turn around. I understand you. We are the same. Don't think that I am angry with you.

Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first.

You know how weak I was at first

And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

But this didn't stop you from loving me, you treated me with respect even as you would have treated *Christ* Jesus.

Where is then the blessedness ye spoke of?

(There must have been a previous letter to Paul.)

For I bear you record that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me.

You loved me once.

Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? They zealously seek after you, but for no good; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might seek after them. But it is good to be zealously sought after, always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

(This is a reference to the requests for approval from Paul of the changes they want to make - in the previous letter to Paul).

My little children,

You are not yet graduates from my school!

over whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I stand in doubt of you.

Now, if you don't yet understand me, if I have not been able to make myself clear to you, listen to me again. I speak to those who do not yet believe in **Christ**. Here is another argument.

Tell me, ye who desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

You, who would be students of the law, perhaps a Pharisee like I am, tell me what is the meaning of this reading.

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, but he of the freewoman was by promise.

You remember this scripture?

These things are an allegory, for these are the two covenants: The one is from Mount Sinai, which engendereth bondage; this is Hagar. {For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and answereth to Jerusalem as it is now, and is in bondage with her children.}

Hagar was the slave who was the mother of Ishmael, and Isaac was the son of Sarah, Abrams wife. Now Hagar is a metaphor for the Law given from Mount Sinai, given to

Moses, and although the Law was given in Arabia, Jerusalem is now under its spell, and we are all slaves to this law.

But the Jerusalem which is above is free, and is the mother of us all.

This is the heavenly Jerusalem of which Paul says “our citizenship is in heaven”. It is free - means we are not in bondage to any law within it. But we are not yet in it.

4:27 * {For it is written: “Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she who hath a husband.” }

This is a reference to Sarah, who is a metaphor for the New Jerusalem in heaven, who is both the mother of Isaac, (he of the promise), and the mother of all who believe in the promise (the *Christ*).

{Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.}

So, as Isaac was the heir of the promise, we are also to be the inheritors of the promise.

{But as then, he that was born according to the flesh persecuted him that was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.}

The Judeans are persecuting the Pauline disciples. And it is surely not about eating Kosher and being circumcised for we know from Acts that the Judeans relaxed these requirements for converts.

{Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” }

He means cast the Judeans out of their Galatian church, and out of their thoughts, for Judeans cannot be heirs of the promise within their company. As long as the Judeans remain slaves to the **L**aw, they are just polluting the atmosphere of the church.

So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us

free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Stick with *Christ*, and don't get involved with the Judeans, who are slaves to the **L**aw.

Behold, I, Paul, say unto you that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

Paul is making a personal statement - this is not a teaching of the Lord.

Paul knows that if anyone becomes a Jew of the flesh, that he will be forced to abandon Paul's teaching. Paul believes that in that event, all that he has promised them will become null and void. (you can see why the Church in Jerusalem charged him with the crime of converting people away from Judaism, of asking them to not observe the law, for it seems to be Paul's firm conviction that being obedient to the Law prevents the benefit of the Holy Spirit. Yet we know that this argument flies in the face of the experience of the Apostles, who are both Judeans, and Nazarites who had received the Holy Spirit of promise on the Day of Pentecost - does Paul not know this has happened? Or is he willing to distort the truth in order to persuade the Galatians?

Perhaps this is why Paul prefaces these arguments by "I, Paul say unto you" - i.e. *The Father of The Son* has not said this.

For I testify again to every man who is circumcised, that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

He is obligated by the Covenant to keep the whole **L**aw.

Christ then becomes of no effect unto you, whosoever of you claim justification by the law;

Yes, he is telling a truth. If someone believes that justification comes **not** from *The Father of The Son*, but from the law through observance of the commandments in the law, then it means he does not believe the Gospel.

ye are fallen from grace.

{For we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. }

We who have the spirit within us by the faith we have been given by *The Father of The Son*.

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.

So here Paul is saying that whether or not a person is circumcised has no bearing on whether a person will be declared righteous by *The Father of The Son*. It is the faith that *The Father of The Son* gives through his love - the Holy Spirit is the manifestation of God's love - that can declare a person righteous.

Ye were running well; who hindered you, that ye should not obey the truth?

Paul well knows who it is - Jesus's Apostle from Jerusalem.

This persuasion cometh not from Him that calleth you.

Paul is saying that their teaching is not from *Christ*. And he is right for *The Father of The Son* did not say that obedience to the Law could make anyone righteous, though there are many Jews whom Jesus has declared righteous who also obey the Law

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

"Be careful of the leaven of the Pharisees" Jesus said,

and He might have explained "For they are hypocrites. If once you begin to believe them, you will probably not seek righteousness from *The Father of The Son* - beware!"

I have confidence in you through the Lord that ye will be not otherwise minded;

Paul breathes a sigh of relief here. He is sure his argument will persuade them

but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

As if he didn't know!

And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why then do I yet suffer persecution?

This is in reference to the letter they sent to him, where they wrote that they understood Paul to favor circumcision - for, "did he not circumcise Timothy?" (Acts 16 1:3 written much later, but obviously a known event at this time).

Timothy's Mother was Jewish and she should, under the Law, have her child circumcised, even though Timothy was a Nazarite, who himself did not need to be

circumcised. She would commit sin if she did not comply with the Law (she was not a Nazarite and was therefor still under the Law).

Paul also needed Timothy to fraternize with the Judeans, who would not accept him into their midst unless he was “kosher” and circumcised.

Paul for these two reasons, I think, had Timothy circumcised. For Paul was a Jew to the Jews, and a Gentile to the Gentiles.

Paul again is dissembling, for his persecution was because of his faith (his gospel), and not owing to any position that he held on circumcision. Though it seems that he no longer advises circumcision.

Then would the offense of the cross cease.

Hardly! Even if he preached circumcision, his gospel was sufficiently distasteful to the Judeans to warrant his arrest in Judea. Beyond the Holy Land a person was outside their jurisdiction, and the Judean law could not be enforced, that is why Paul is still free to preach. When he returned to the Holy Land he was arrested immediately.

I would that they were even cut off which trouble you!

Paul is making a pun.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty;
only use not liberty for an occasion of the
flesh,

In other words, even though Jews have freedom from the curse of the law, they must still be lawful citizens.

but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

This means to do unto others as you would they do unto you - which is to help you to love ***The Father of The Son*** with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. So you help them to do this also.

5:15 * But if ye bite and devour one another,
take heed that ye not be consumed one by another.

If a little arguments occurs between you, it can lead major dissent, and you may become caught up in something that leads to destruction of your soul.

This I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

This is my personal advice to you, live your daily life in tune with the Holy Spirit, and you will be protected from temptation to sin.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;

For your instincts to sin are fueled by the prohibitions of the Law. What you should not have, you want the most. And this energy is fighting the power of the Holy Spirit which is trying to build fortitude in you, against those instincts to sin.

and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

This war between your instincts and the Holy Spirit prevent you from doing what you know you ought to do, for it is taking all of your energy.

But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

But if you let the Holy Spirit lead you, and not struggle with trying to obey the Law, the Law will no longer fuel the fight, and you will be at peace.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, and they are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, quarreling, rivalry, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like.

(These are all prohibited by the Law.)

About these things I tell you again, as I have also told you in times past: that those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Paul is quick to say that breaking these laws, will not be excused in their new freedom.

5:22 * But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:

But even though Jews must still comply with the Law - though they are no longer under the curse of the Law - the benefits of a life in the Holy Spirit are many, and they are free to enjoy them, as there is no law against them.

against such there is no law.

*5:24 * And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.*

But the desire for the lusts of the body, (adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, quarreling, rivalry, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like), and the desire for worldly things, are all completely eliminated for those who belong to *Christ*.

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

We should not only live our lives in the Holy Spirit, but present ourselves to others as one who belongs to *Christ*.

Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another and envying one another.

Don't be puffed up with your new life, testing one another's faith, or envying another's gifts.

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

If a brother slips, and is about to commit a sin, those of you who know the gospel should help him to restore his faith, but do it gently. For the same may happen to you one day.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Share your difficulties, help each other to overcome them, for that is also "loving one another".

For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

But if you, who are still little children in the faith, think that you don't need help from anyone, you are mistaken.

But let every man put to the proof his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.

To each is given a job to do, for the Lord, and it is up to him to carry the load that goes with the job, and when he accomplished the work that the Lord has given him, he can rejoice in that he has proven to himself that the Lord, alone, will always provide the strength and knowledge to accomplish his end.

Let him that is taught in the Word share with him that teacheth, in all good things.

Students, share with your teachers the good things that result from putting the teachings to use.

Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Paul is now wrapping up his admonitions to the Galatians, and is again warning them against straying from his gospel. He tells them "You cannot alter the natural consequences of your actions for this is a law of God. If you pick up one end of the stick the other is sure to follow."

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

If you focus your mind on the desires of your body, you will be far from the Holy Spirit, and you will not be saved, but if your mind is always thinking of the Holy Spirit you will gain eternal life.

And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Don't give up loving God and loving your neighbor, for if you persevere you will obtain eternal life.

As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto those who are of the household of faith.

When the opportunity presents itself, do good to all men but especially to the brethren.

6:11 * Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

Paul is telling them they are important to him.

As many as desire to make a fair showing in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

They are trying to get you over to their team, so that the opposition is made smaller, for they are worried that we may be right, and they might suffer because of it.

For not even they themselves who are circumcised keep the law,

For they realize that they cannot keep all of the Law, and there may be some advantage to our freedom.

but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

But if they can convince you to be circumcised, they will have another trophy for their collection, they care not for your Spirit.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

I do not glory that you are with me, I glory only in what the Lord Jesus, the ***Christ*** has done for me and you on the cross, by whom also, the attractions of the world have been made of no significance, and I am sacrificed for the benefit of the world.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

For in our new lives in ***Christ*** Jesus, we are spiritual, and whether we are circumcised or not is of no matter.

{And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.}

For those of you who can follow this path, I give you the blessings of peace and mercy, and also the same blessings for the Israel of God.

Paul means not only those who are Israelites by Law, but those also of the promise.

From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear
in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Paul is referring to those Apostles in the Church in Jerusalem, who have not suffered for the gospel as he has. For he was beaten and stoned, lashed and imprisoned for the Lord, whereas they have stayed comfortably at home in the Holy Land. What right have they to criticize him.

Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be
with your spirit. Amen."

A final reminder to them about to whom they owe their allegiance.

END

Commentary by Waeshael April 3 - Jun 19, 2007, Johns Island SC.

Revised with the proper names of God Oct 8 2017

21548 words.

Thanks be to God for this interpretation.

Matthew 7:7, 8 "“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

Amori Christi et Ecclesiae
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