



## The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 1 3Q 2017

### Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles

#### SABBATH

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Read first paragraph, “It’s not that hard...” What would you say were the major doctrinal beliefs held by Saul of Tarsus?

- God as Creator?
- Mankind was in sin?
- A Messiah was Promised?
- The Jews were chosen by God as a special people to prepare for the Advent of the Messiah?
- The Sabbath was a special and holy day?
- Diet laws were to be obeyed?
- They were not to marry non-Jews?
- The Sanctuary was important in God’s plan to save humanity?
- And what would Saul believe about law?
  - That God imposed law and broken law required punishment?
  - How would Saul then behave toward those who he saw breaking the law, if Saul wanted to act like the God he worshipped?

What group on earth today sounds like Saul—believes in and worships the Creator, that man is in sin, that a Messiah came, that God has a special end time people who are to prepare the world for the second advent, that the Sabbath is special, that diet is to be modified closer to God’s original design, that the sanctuary is important in God’s plan to save humanity? Would it not be the SDAs?

And what would you say most SDAs believe about God’s law? That it is imposed rules that require the rule giver to inflict punishment for breaking?

And what kind of theology is taught with that kind of law?

Was Saul able to do God’s work, fulfill God’s plan, as long as he operated on the imposed law concept?

What about the SDA church, or any Christian church, can we fulfill God’s plan for us at this time in human history if we are operating on the false law construct?

What method did Saul use in converting people? Coercion, force, intimidation—what method did Christians use in the Dark Ages?

What method do many evangelists use today? Your time is short, you could get hit by a bus and before long you will be tortured in hell if you haven’t accepted Jesus.



Remember I brought this evangelistic tool some use to class a few years back, it looks like a \$1,000,000 dollar note and on the back it reads:

Here Is The Million Dollar Question: Will you go to Heaven when you die? Here's a quick test: have you ever lied, stolen, or used God's name in vain? Jesus said, "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." If you have done these things, **God sees you as a lying, thieving, blasphemous, adulterer at heart, and the Bible warns that one day God will punish you in a terrible place called Hell.** But God is not willing that any should perish. **Sinners broke God's Law and Jesus paid their fine. This means that God can legally dismiss their case.** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Then Jesus rose from the dead, defeating death. Today, repent and trust Jesus, and God will give you eternal life as a free gift. Then read the Bible daily and obey it. God will never fail you.

What method is being employed? What law lens is being used? Can we as a church do God's work when we present Satan's view of God?

What method did Paul use after his conversion? Rom 14:5 "let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind." Present the truth in love and leave others free!

What about God, what does God want from His intelligent creatures? Does God want our genuine love and trust? Can God get our love and trust by using threats of punishment?

Then what happens in the hearts and minds of people when church leaders teach that in the end God will use His power to torture and kill the wicked. That we need to repent or God will be required to kill us?

This idea is based on the false human law construct and undermines love and trust and prevents Christians from completing the mission of preparing the world for Christ's return.

What we should be saying is, "We are dying of a terminal condition and if you don't trust God, He will be unable to heal you—why? Because the healing is the transforming of your character, and the only way for your character to be transformed and you to remain you, is by your voluntary and willful participation.

Yes, God has the POWER to rewrite your mind and impose a perfect character in anyone, but to do so without that person choosing it, would erase that person's identity and simply create a new individual.

You might ask, well why doesn't God do that?



Parents, do any of you have children who have been disobedient, maybe even rebellious—if you had the power to erase their identity and put another person’s identity—another mind, a mind of a different person that would be obedient and loyal—into their body, would you do it? Why not? Because it wouldn’t be your child! And if your goal is to heal and save your child, such an act would destroy them anyway, so there is not point in doing such a thing.

Thus, God presents the truth in love and leaves us all free. But the false law construct has blinded billions into a legal religion with no power to save, and in fact, obstructs people from truly trusting God.

## SUNDAY

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The first paragraph points out that Saul was involved in the stoning of Stephen—holding the coats of those who stoned Stephen.

How did Stephen act during his stoning? “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” Acts 7:60

What do you see manifested in Stephen’s response? Is this the character of a sinful human beings or the character of Jesus? Do you see in Stephen that the survival of the fittest principle has been removed and God’s design of love has been restored! Is this a demonstration of Bible perfection? Not perfect behavior, but perfect trust in God such that we love others more than self?

When perfection comes up, those in the legal model immediately get anxiety, focus on deeds, behavior, and teach theologies that no one is perfect and no one can be perfect that we live in sin, and keep on sinning, but under the umbrella of God’s grace, meaning Jesus paid for all our sins. But, in reality, Bible perfection is not primarily about behavior or deeds, it is about the heart, the heart attitude of trust in God and love for others. Thus even when the deeds are not great, the person is recognized as righteous, any examples?

- Rahab
- David
- Samson
- Jephthah

Do you think Stephen’s death had significance beyond Stephen’s own life? How and why?

Heb 2:14,15 says:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—<sup>15</sup> and **free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.**

Do you think Saul had a fear of death? What did he see in Stephen?



If Stephen was consumed by guilt, out of harmony with God, etc. would he have been so kind, gracious and other-centered to his tormenters at his death?

The last paragraph states, “Saul saw that the great prophetic promises of God’s kingdom had not yet been fulfilled (*Daniel 2, Zech. 8:23, Isaiah 40-55*), and he probably believed it was his task to help God bring that day about—which could be done by cleansing Israel of religious corruption, including the idea that this Jesus was the Messiah.”

What method did Saul and the Jewish leaders use to try and eliminate religious corruption?

Why did they use this method?

Every religion that uses force, coercion, threat, inflicted punishment, sanctions, intimidation, etc. to enforce religious dogma exposes itself as a false religion. When acting in such a way it becomes beastly, and thus the beast of revelation coerces—“no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name.” Rev 13:17

What is the mark of the beast? The imposed law method of coercion to force compliance!

How many Christians today would gladly take control of their government and pass laws to enforce what they believe are right moral behaviors? How many Christians will accept a god who comes performing miracles and speaking gentle words, begging sinners to repent and worship him, yet stating, “I only want your love. If you won’t worship me I will be forced by holiness and justice to punish and eventually kill you. So please worship me.” How many will say “This is our God we have waited for him”?

Jesus called His followers to love others—to covert NOT coerce people, why? Because love and trust cannot be obtained by legislation, or coercion.

What happens when people are forced to comply with religious laws that they don’t believe in?

What about:

- Prohibition? which came about by Christian groups recognizing the destructive effect of alcohol; what happened in society—a better society, or did it lead to more corruption, more crime, more violence?
- What about societies where Sharia laws are in force? What happens in places where such laws are passed? Do people become more loving, more kind, more generous, more enlightened, or do people become more fearful, less enlightened and more intolerant?
- What about when abortion was illegal—did it result in no abortions being performed, or did people just get them in back alleys, with unsafe conditions with coat hangers and more people were hurt etc.?



- Are some Christians today trying to pass laws to force others to comply with their belief system?
- Does God work in this way to implement His plan of salvation?

## MONDAY

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The lesson focuses on Saul's conversion when Jesus said to him "it is hard to kick against the goads."

What does this mean?

- To what is Jesus referring?
- Is Jesus commenting on an inflicted punishment upon Saul, or a natural result?
- What type of law is involved?
- Is there a principle here as to why pain happens when we sin?
- What happens if you touch a hot stove? Why?
- Is the pain bad or good? Why?
- What does the pain lead you to do?
- What if you feel no pain when you touch the stove?
- What disease causes one to lose pain sensation? Leprosy, and what happens in leprosy?
- Do you see why leprosy is a metaphor for sin? Sin deadens our consciences and we are less aware of the damage we are inflicted upon ourselves.

What happens inside the person who cheats, steals, commits adultery? Why?

Is this an inflicted punishment or a consequence of violating God's design law? And is the pain, turmoil, bad or a healthy response to influence a person to stop their destructive actions?

In the middle of the lesson it asks, "What role did the grace of God have in this experience? In other words, how much did Saul deserve the goodness that the Lord showed toward him?"

What do these questions imply the lesson believes grace is? Might they define grace, as many people have, as: "unmerited favor"?

If this is the true definition of grace, then, when the Bible says that "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor (grace—same Greek) with God and man" does that mean Jesus' favor with God and man was unmerited?

When you say grace before a meal, do you say, "God while you don't really merit our thanks, we give it anyway"?

Hmmm.... is the traditional definition of grace flawed? Yes—it is very flawed, because it is tainted with the false law construct. People go to the idea with the presumption we are guilty criminals who deserve only to be punished and therefore we don't merit anything good from God.



The focus of their definition is on *us*, but the true focus of grace is about God. God is gracious, regardless of whom God is dealing with—because God never changes, God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. So, God’s grace is not dependent upon us, whether we are good or bad. Was God less gracious in heaven before sin? No, but the full extent of how good and gracious God is was not evident until after sin.

For instance, was God less capable of and willing to healing blindness before sin? No, but His ability to heal blindness was not seen or understood until after sin and there was blindness for Him to heal. But God’s character, methods, grace was no different before and after sin. But our understanding of it has changed.

Further, grace also connotes the idea of God’s work, God’s actions, God’s interventions—and thus God’s grace is God acting, through all time, in all manner, for the good of His creation, providing what is always best for them. This is Grace!

Yes, it is true we do receive blessings, favors, grace from God that we have not earned, it is not wages, or something we created—so grace and blessings from God can be bestowed without our meriting it because of some good action we have taken. However, grace is not restricted to this definition. Grace is from God and is poured out from Him, upon the righteous and unrighteous. Jesus received God’s grace in His life on earth, as do the holy angels.

The lesson states in the third paragraph, “The only thing Saul deserved was punishment...” What level of moral decision-making is being revealed in this statement? Level 1-4, this is the immaturity that Hebrews chapter 5 says “is not acquainted with righteousness.” This means those who are teaching this legal view are not teaching the truth about righteousness, but are obstructing it.

This idea is that Saul’s problem was Saul’s bad behavior and bad behavior, rule breaking, requires the ruling authority to punish. But this is not the reality of our situation.

What is the true situation of every human being since Adam and Eve sinned?

Ps 51, we are born in sin conceived in iniquity—what does this mean? Are we born sinless, or are we born sinful?

Did any of us choose to be sinful, sinners? Did any of us have the choice to be perfect and sinless like Adam and Eve?

Is it our fault we were born this way? No! Do we have a condition we didn’t choose? Yes, and that condition is one of fear and selfishness—and what will that condition result in, without remedy? Acts of fear and selfishness, which the Bible calls what? Sins—so the sins are they the problem or the symptoms of the problem? Symptoms and do patients need to be punished for having symptoms?



What does Paul, who was born in sin, deserve from a God who is love?

Imagine you have a child who rebelled against all you taught them and went into wild living, and used dirty needles and got HIV infected, and then had a child with another person who was also HIV infected, so that your first grandchild was born HIV infected. Now, answer the following questions:

- What did your grandchild do wrong?
- Would you love or hate your grandchild?
- What if you were the doctor who had a cure for HIV, what would you do with that cure?
- What would your grandchild deserve from you? Would your grandchild deserve your love? Why? Because of something your grandchild has done, or for who your grandchild is?
- Who are we to God? Are we HIS children, and by the fact we are HIS children do we deserve His love—not because of something we have done, but because of who WE ARE?
- One of Satan’s lies is this idea of unmerited favor, which focuses people on their behaviors and blinds them to realizing who they truly are—Children of God!
- Now, back to your grandchild who is HIV infected and you have a cure, what happens if as your grandchild grows up and you offer the free remedy, but they persistently refuse it?

Thus Oswald Chambers wrote in *My Utmost for His Highest*:

**The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man’s sin**, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another **Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away** — an infinitely more profound revelation...

**Sin is something I am born with** and cannot touch— only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. **God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and **yet I refuse to let Him do so.** From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation. **“This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light . . .” (John 3:19)**

## TUESDAY

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read the second paragraph, The appearance of Jesus...” Could Saul of Tarsus have known the truth without this intervention? In other words, was there enough truth revealed in the OT and by the witness of Stephen and the other Apostles that was sufficient to convert Saul? Why then wasn’t Saul converted by the Scriptures, the witness of Stephen and the other Apostles?

Because Saul had such biases he rejected the meaning, and it took a special event to get him to step back and reevaluate.



Notice what the Damascus road did and what it did NOT do.

- Did the Damascus road download into Saul’s brain a new life history?
- Did it give him a sudden new set of memories?
- Did he have new Bible verses memorized in his mind?
- What did it do?
- It gave him reason to step back and say, “Wait a minute, my CONCLUSIONS about all I have studied are wrong. I need to rethink, reevaluate and come to new understanding of all I have previously thought.”
  
- So, did he get a new Bible, or did he use the same OT Scriptures?
- But what was different?
- His mind was now motivated to understand the meaning without the false legal bias he was raised with, to see that God had a plan to heal through Jesus.

What about today—have you met people who simply refuse to rethink and reexamine evidence. They are so convinced they are right they won’t even allow for another possibility?

What will cause them to rethink? A life crisis, some event that doesn’t fit with their understanding, are such events punishments...or therapeutic interventions?

Now, did God force Saul to come to new conclusions? Did God over ride Saul’s autonomy and self-determination.

Some think God by appearing in this way did overwhelm Saul’s self-determination and forced Saul to conversion; that it was denying Saul free will. Any evidence to refute this claim?

- Pharaoh—how many miracles were shown to Pharaoh and did Pharaoh convert?
- What about those who came to arrest Jesus? Jesus’ divinity flashed through and they fell down, just like Saul on the Damascus road, and then they got to see Jesus reach out and put an ear back on—and what did they do? They still arrested Jesus and killed Him.
- So did the use of blinding light to cause Saul to fall down and rethink over ride Saul’s free choice? No!

## WEDNESDAY

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The Gospel Goes to the Gentiles...what is the significance of this? Answer these questions in regard to how God sees humanity:

- Are there different paths to salvation for different groups?
- Does God value one ethnic or racial or national group over another?
- Do some humans have a different sin condition than others?
- Do all human beings have the same sin condition and in need of the same solution?



- If all humans have the same sin condition and need the exact same remedy, and God favors no group over another, then what was the purpose of the Jewish nation? Was God favoring them with salvation and not wanting other non-Jews saved?
- In OT times is there evidence that God wanted all people to be saved?
  - Solomon's Prayer: "When foreigners who live in a distant land hear how great and powerful you are and how you are always ready to act, and then they come to pray at this Temple, <sup>33</sup>listen to their prayers. In heaven, where you live, hear them and do what they ask you to do, so that all the peoples of the world may know you and obey you, as your people Israel do." 2Chron 6:32,33
  - Isa 56:6,7: And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve him, to love the name of the Lord, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—<sup>7</sup> these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."
  - And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. Num 12:1
  - Rahab, Ruth, Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, the widow who sheltered Elijah—all saved, all non-Jews.

Then what was the purpose of the Jewish nation?

- To be actors in a play, a drama, to learn the truth about the problem of sin and God's solution, and to take this truth to the world. They were God's first helpers to teach the entire world of God's plan to save all who let Him.
- But they rejected their mission, so God gave the privilege to the Gentiles to take the healing remedy to the world.

## THURSDAY

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The lesson focuses on the conflict in the church with those who came from Jewish background wanting the new Gentile believers to be circumcised and obey the feast days.

What were the Judaizers focusing upon? Rules, laws, which is what type of law? Imposed law, and what did Paul say about such an approach?

That those who want circumcision should go all the way and castrate themselves and maybe they would stop reproducing people who taught such non-sense—does that sound too strong?

But as for me, my brothers and sisters, if I continue to preach that circumcision is necessary, why am I still being persecuted? If that were true, then my preaching about the cross of Christ would cause no trouble. <sup>12</sup>I wish that the people who are upsetting you **would go all the way; let them go on and castrate themselves!** Gal 5:11,12



What did the first church counsel decide the converts needed to do? Was this imposed rules or promotion of design law?

“Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood” (Acts 15:20). These instructions are not imposed rules but are the wisdom of design law. How?

#### **Food polluted by idols:**

- An idol cannot change the nutritional quality of the food. Therefore, eating foods offered to idols does not pollute the body. Paul makes this clear in Romans 14.
- The issue they were addressing is the design law of worship—by beholding we become changed. As we discussed in chapter 7, this is called modeling. What we believe has power over us: truth heals and sets free, lies damage and enslave. Don’t allow your minds to become contaminated by giving any credence to idols. Thus, don’t eat food polluted by the *idea* that it is a bounty given you by a false god.

#### **Sexual immorality:**

- God designed relationships to operate on love and trust. When sexual intimacy occurs between husband and wife, as God designed, healthy bonding occurs. The brain actually rewires, and reward circuits are heightened for one’s spouse. This is design law—how our biology is actually built to work. Deviating from this design is damaging to the mind, body, and relationships.
- It is a violation of design law, altering brain circuitry, inflaming selfish and fear circuits, thus obstructing healing of mind and character.

#### **Meat from strangled animals or blood:**

- It also violates design law—the laws of health.
- Humans were not designed to eat meat, and the blood carries waste products, stress hormones, and various inflammatory factors. Eating raw meat and drinking blood increases disease risk, and when the body is unhealthy the mind is compromised.

The New Testament church rejected the imposed-law rules and focused instead on living in harmony with God’s design law for life. When we have accepted the lie that God’s law is simply a list of rules, we believe they are subject to change with time and place. Good Christian people fall into the trap of arguing back and forth over trivial points, oblivious to the fact they are all worshiping the same dictator god. We then teach our children ideas of God that drive a wedge between them and God.

#### **FRIDAY**

read and discuss questions



## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**Korean and Polish Translations:** A publisher in Korea has contracted to translate *Could It Be This Simple?* (CIBTS) into Korean, and a publisher in Poland has contracted to translate *The God-Shaped Brain* (GSB) into Polish. We will let you know when these are available.

Currently CIBTS is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German and GSB is available in English and Korean.

**June 23,24, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be doing a seminar for the Samaritan Counseling Service in Sarasota FL. For more information [www.samaritangulfcoast.com](http://www.samaritangulfcoast.com)  
(T) 941-926-2959 (F) 941-929-0849

**July 14,15, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

**August 18,19, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

**Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:**

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

**September 15,16 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Church in the Valley, Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada.

**September 26-Oct 1, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

**October 12-16, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Garden Grove SDA church in Garden Grove, CA. This will be a multi-speaker event focusing on the atonement. For more information contact:

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**October 27, 28, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will speaking at the Arlington SDA church in Arlington, TX. For more information contact: <http://www.arlingtonadventist.com/>