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THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS - Burwood - 1984

THE HOPE OF THE RIGHTEOUS BY FAITH

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Study #1 In defense of the gospel

Reading: Galatians 1&2

My very dearly beloved brethren and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, b&s, Galatians, of course, is an abbreviation of the book of Romans, if you like, it's a miniature Romans, and you'll appreciate by that statement, that it has, of course, some very lofty and sometimes difficult things to understand. For that reason, b&s, we have chosen this weekend, not to come over here to try and deal with the book of Galatians in every jot and tittle, but if we can, to seize upon some of the more lofty of things, that are in this epistle, things which we can relate to ourselves, in this day and generation.

Now it's not easy, b&s, to relate scripture always, and especially the great problem, of course, which Paul had to address himself to in the book of Galatians, the problem of Judaism. That's a title, b&s, which simply means, the Jews' religion, as it's described in the book of Galatians here, that very word is used, those two words are used, the Jews' religion, that's what Judaism really is. It's not that religion that they were taught by God, it's that religion that they imposed upon themselves, b&s, which they thought was based upon the Law of God, it was a justification by works. Now as I said, it's not easy for us to relate to that problem today, because we don't understand the intensity of Judaism, and because we haven't got that intensity on a large scale, b&s, we sometimes think, of course, that we're living in an era and we're unrelated to Jews as such, that we haven't got the problem at all, but believe me, we have got that problem in very large measure and unfortunately because we haven't got it intensely centred in a big group of people, we don't always recognize it in ourselves. It's a very real problem!

Now those Galatian ecclesias, of course, that the epistle was addressed to, were those ecclesias that Paul established on his first visit and journey to Asia Minor when he came to Antioch in Pisidia; he came to Lystra, Iconium and Derbe and you'll remember that those visits were recorded in Acts 13 and 14, and they are the Galatian area, b&s. We're not going to spend a long time on the chronology and the history and the background to Galatians which itself is not without problems, because really we want to get down to the nitty-gritty of this epistle. That they were the Galatian ecclesias, and it would seem, b&s, that not long after that they were established, they quickly defected from the faith as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But it was a defection, of course, that was

a dangerous one, because they didn't go back to the world as such, they didn't turn to a pagan religion as such, they, b&s, became allied to a perversion of the truth. Now perversions of the truth

when they are dressed up in clever vocabulary and such like, are not always easy to see! and there have been times in our ecclesial history, and no doubt in your ecclesial history, where we've had to address ourselves to the problem of Judaism, very often which sometimes sincerely sees itself as being right, but when it's all reduced down to its fundamental issues, is but a perversion of what God intended us to believe in the first instance.

That was the problem, and Paul as he says in the first chapter and verse 6, was absolutely amazed: he says, 'I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another', you know, b&s, the word 'another' in verse 6 is the word 'heteros' (2087) which means 'a different gospel'. It's a different gospel, but the word 'another' in verse 7 means something of a 'different numerical value' (243). So what he's saying is this, 'yes it was a different one than I preached but it wasn't an addition so much to the gospel of Christ but a perversion of it; and although it was different, it wasn't an numerical addition of another separate gospel entirely, but it was a perversion dressed up in all the language of the truth. And there were those false brethren as he called them, using all the vocabulary of the truth, and yet they were preaching a different gospel than they had accepted from the beginning.

Now what I'm going to say next, b&s, is probably a bit more important than what I might say a little later on (not that all that we're saying is not important, it's based upon God's Word) but I want you to listen carefully because I want to outline the problem. I want you to see, that whilst we may be here studying Galatians, and thinking about the problem of the Jews' religion, Judaism, I want you to understand, it does relate to ourselves; it is a very real problem and is not always recognizable, and even when it is recognized, it's not always difficult to sometimes counter balance that with what we should be doing with our life in Christ. The problem is, b&s, that Judaism describes a practice of human nature which is as native to the flesh as any other impulses in our body. You know, as you grow older in life and you have to deal with ecclesial problems, you realize from time to time, that though we may give different titles to different problems, human behavioural patterns, has never altered! One grows accustom after awhile, to forget all that you're being told, and to just listen carefully, and you'll see that people behave in a certain way, and they always behave in those behavioural patterns; and psychiatrists, psychologists and doctors may have their titles for them, and from year to year those titles may differ, they may call them by all sorts of medical terms, maniac depressions and all sorts of things, but they are basically human behavioural patterns, b&s, which have never altered from time memorial. Judaism was practiced by Cain, Cain and Abel, the story of Cain and Abel clearly demonstrates, b&s, the principle of Judaism as versus the faith in God. Cain said, 'I will bring what I think is right, and I'm sure that God will be pleased with what I am doing!' And Abel on the other hand threw himself on the mercy of God and said, 'whatever I might think, it's best for me to do

what I'm told', and to approach God in the way that He would have me to approach Him, that my faith might be accepted and not my works. So they both came before God, they both brought an offering, but the difference, b&s, was the motive by which it was brought. Judaism is as old as the first story of the bible!

Now Judaism, as I said before, is a term which means 'the Jews' religion', but let's make it very plain, b&s, that though it was the Jews' religion as such, the salvation by works, it is absolutely native to the flesh. Now I want to illustrate that from the book of Galatians chapter 4, you listen carefully to these words, and you will notice here that Paul saw no difference between Judaism and the practice of Gentilism, that is, those that sought justification by works. So in chapter 4 verse 8 and 9 he said, 'Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?' Do you see what he's saying, b&s? He says, you came out of the world where you were in bondage to idolatry, you were slaves to a system, to a system that said, that if I don't worship the idol in the way that I'm suppose to, if I don't bring to the idol my offerings, then I will be punished; but if I do, I will be rewarded. Paul says, you were called out of that situation, now you've come into the truth, now you've been influenced by Judaism, and you want to be in bondage in exactly the same way that you were in bondage to the heathen ideas. Where's the difference, he says? And so all these Judaizers, Jews with genealogies miles long, and dressing their doctrine up in the language of the bible, b&s, where the ministers of nothing more or less than the practice of the heathens - I do, I get! So there's the apostle Paul telling us very plainly therefore, that Judaism isn't something which relates to Jews only though it bears that title, but it's something that's native to the flesh, that's the first thing we've got to learn.

Now what's so terribly wrong about that, b&s, is this, and this is something else the apostle picks up in the epistle; 'if I say, that it is necessary for me to do something in that sense, before God could ever save me, then I am saying that what Jesus Christ has done in some way, is deficient'. See the point? You see, b&s, there is nothing that I can do to detract from the sacrifice of Christ, anymore than I can do to add to the sacrifice of Christ, it's all done! and Judaism, by implication, teaches that somebody else has got to contribute to the work for God can save us! Chapter 2 and verse 21, this is the implication that Paul takes out of practice of Judaism, he says, 'I don't frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain'. Now, he might put it in a different way than I've put it, but it's basically the same in principle; if I draw back and I want to justify myself by works of Law, then the sacrifice of Christ is of no effect. What I'm saying, b&s, is that the attitude is, 'well, I've got to do something that Christ just didn't do for me. There's just something needed that I must contribute before God can save me!' Now that is wrong, because as I said, the sacrifice of Christ was absolutely and totally complete and quite sufficient to save us for all time.

Now that's not difficult to understand, is it? and I don't think, b&s, when we talk about

these things being difficult to grasp we're talking about the intellectual grasp of them, it's the whole psychology of it, how to go about now counter balancing it in our life? because we do know that we have to be obedient to God, that's the problem, and so you see, we have a liberty in Christ; we're no longer slaves to the ideas of Law and 'I do and I get', and of course, constant failure and constant depression and so on, we're no longer slaves to that, we've been freed from that bondage. But the immediate problem we've now got, is what do we do with that freedom? And so in chapter 5 and verse 13 the apostle has this to say: that freedom that we now have, he says, 'For brethren, ye have been called unto freedom, only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.' Of course, b&s, you can see the problem which has arisen now if we say that the Jews' religion is wrong, it's a thing which is native to the flesh, (I do, I get) and we feel we can commend ourselves to God, and in so doing we imply that the Lord Jesus Christ's sacrifice was not quite sufficient. If that is true then the real problem with God is, do we do nothing about our salvation? is it a question of sitting back with a passive faith and saying, well, let God handle the whole matter, anyway; let us eat, drink and be merry and go on our own way, we're free! Is that what we do with our freedom? The apostle says we don't use it as 'an occasion to the flesh', b&s, but by love we become in bondage one to another. So we have a form of bondage, but it's a bondage, b&s, that is generated by love, b&s, and there's the difference.

And so then we come to the next point! Faith in God's work, b&s, doesn't induce in us a lazy indolent spirit, whereby we leave it all up to God. But it should generate in us, a love for what God has DONE, ACCOMPLISHED, FINISHED, that we would respond to Him in works of righteousness, not to contribute to the sacrifice of Christ, but, b&s, as an expression of our appreciation of what has been TOTALLY ACCOMPLISHED! Now that's the answer to our problem! And so chapter 5 and verses 5 and 6, here it is, this is what the truth should do to us, b&s, this is what should happen, 'For we through Spirit (there's no definite article in that verse in the Greek text, b&s, 'we through Spirit', it's the spiritual understanding of the truth, 'WAIT FOR THE HOPE of righteousness by faith'. Every word in that last sentence, b&s, is pregnant with meaning; if I'm waiting for something, it hasn't arrived! if I'm hoping for something I haven't achieved it, and if that which I'm waiting for and hoping for is righteousness, I will never achieve it except by FAITH, and faith is that quality, b&s, which enables me to appropriate that righteousness to myself which really is not my own, but something I'm waiting for and hoping for! and as I wait and hope for it, believing that it will come, my life should be characterized by a spirit of joyfulness, of free and unfettered service to our god, in a deep and abiding appreciation, that one day, He will justify us to eternal life. And so those works of righteousness spring from the basis of faith, b&s, and so much different from those works which sprang from the basis of the Jews' religion.

Can we give you a little homely illustration, perhaps. You may think this is funny but it's nonetheless, an illustration of the point! There's a brother or a sister perhaps in hospital seriously ill. So the Judaizer says. 'the bible says I've got to visit the sick, so he grabs a

bunch of flowers and goes to the hospital and says, 'there!' offers his words of condolence to the sick, and goes home and said, 'well, the bible says I've got to visit the sick'; there's a bunch of flowers in their hand, I've done what I've been told to do! and he promptly in conversation with other brethren and sisters, brings the conversation around to the sick, and mentions the fact that he's visited the sick, because he wants them to know that he has. Another brother may visit the same person, may take an identical bunch of flowers, but from an onlookers point of view, there are two brethren who have visited the sick, they both brought a bunch of flowers, they're both equal. They're far from equal, b&s, because the second brother never thought for a moment that God said we've got to visit the sick; he spontaneously visited that brother because he loved him! Because he had the same hope welling up in his breast, because he believed that God had visited him in his sickness and had left him more than a bunch of flowers, but a promise of a coronal wreath. And because, b&s, his heart was bursting in gratitude and because he wanted to share with that brother the joys of his hope, he took him a bunch of flowers. Now from an onlookers point of view, they'd both done exactly the same thing but one was practicing the Jews' religion, and the other man, b&s, was demonstrating by his works of faith that he was waiting and hoping for the righteousness of God manifested in Jesus Christ our Lord. That's what he was doing! and that's the problem, b&s!

And so our task is two fold, we have a two fold task. We've got to recognize the native disposition that we have towards Judaism and relate that! We've got to be able to recognize that, and we've got to learn, b&s, we've got to learn of God, because to know God is to love Him and to love Him is to lead to a spontaneous obedience to Him. So we've got to first of all, understand that Judaism is native to our flesh; recognize that, and learn to relate it in circumstances. And then, b&s, to counter balance that native disposition we have to think 'I do, I get', we've got to learn of God, and when we get to know God, we've got to know Him and to love Him and to obey Him. And so Paul told the Galatians, did he not? when you came to know God or RATHER were known of God, and it's far more important, b&s, to be known of God than to know God, but we can't be known of God until we get to know God. But getting to know God can be an academic process and can never lead to the stage when God gets to take cognizance of us! He will take cognizance of us, b&s, when our knowledge of Him causes us to spontaneously react in circumstances of life, to show that we really do love Him and we want to obey Him. You cannot love anyone you don't know! Knowledge is so necessary, but it must lead on, b&s, to an appreciation of the one that you're studying or are coming to know.

Now let me say this as a way of concluding our introductory remarks on the principle, that the breeding ground for Judaism, of course, is always ecclesial problems. Now, b&s, you know it's almost instinctive with me, that as soon as an ecclesial problem arises, though that problem may be a problem of certain liberal spirits, and the problem is brought to you and they say 'Look, a brother or sister or group of brethren or group of sisters are doing this or that and they're leading the ecclesia back to the world, and

here is the problem'. I instinctively think to myself, yes, I know that might be the immediate problem, but there's always going to be one to follow that! and it will be the problem of Judaism; where those who think like the Jews' religion will take the other extreme position, and instead of brethren and sisters going about to try and address themselves to that problem that they might salvage those people for the truth, they will write down a list of laws, and when you transgress one or two of them, they'll cut your head off and think they've done God a service. Ecclesial problems are always almost without exception, a breeding place for the Jews' religion. It's a very wonderful brother and a wonderful sister, who can learn, b&s, the balance of the divine nature, and learn to apply that in such a way, that when the problem is solved then people are saved and God's righteousness is still held aloft and remains in tact for all to see! I don't know if we've always done that ever, to the absolute perfection to that balance, but that's what we try, b&s, to do; so never let us think therefore, when we're talking about Galatians and Judaism, we're talking about some remote problem that's got nothing to do with Christadelphians today, it's got everything to do with us today.

You know, you hear brethren talking about people apostatizing for the truth, they relate this circumstance or that, but you know, b&s, if you sat down with a pencil and paper and you had on this side a list of all the problems that the apostle Paul had with those who were the liberals, and on the other side you had a list of all the problems that Paul had with those who were the Judaistic extremists, this one, b&s, would outstrip that one by miles, and the same, of course, in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. No way in the wide world would people go around saying the Pharisees were liberal! they were anything but liberal according to the externals, and yet the Lord Jesus Christ saw them, b&s, as the greatest single problem of His day. It didn't stop with Him, but carried over into the life of the apostles; and wherever Paul left his mark, and he had left that city, in moved the Judaizers behind him, to wreck havoc, b&s, on the bases of his teaching. And that's what made it so difficult for the apostle; and it is difficult, b&s, it's difficult to go back to an ecclesia and say that brother is wrong. 'Oh, but look, John, he does this, he does that, he stands for this principle, he's a strong brother, he's a rock of Gibraltar!'; of course, he is! but he's wrong. And you know, b&s, when Paul wrote to the Philippians about these people, do you know what he had to say? He said, 'I'll tell you even weeping, they are the enemies of the cross of Christ'. He was reduced to tears to point out the nature of these people to the Philippians who among other things, had this to their credit, that among all of the ecclesias that Paul ever established, they had the most discriminating judgment of any ecclesia in the world; but they couldn't recognize a Judaizer. It takes a penetrating insight, b&s, to recognize a Judaizer; Paul called their leader and he's talking of the singular person in 2 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 14, 'the angel of light'. That's how he appeared to everyone else, the angel of light , and that's how he appeared to the ecclesial world; but his real title, b&s, was THE SATAN. He was an adversary of all that God ever taught! Now that's the background of the epistle, very broadly and very briefly. We won't worry ourselves with years and dates and times, b&s, that irrelevant in our situation today; let's never forget the problem, however, the problem of 'I do, I get', dressing itself up in such a way that everyone is duped by it, and

we get an ecclesia, b&s, which grows in self righteousness, to the condemnation of everyone else, and that is , of course, an ecclesial disaster.

Now there are other massive principles in this epistle. I'd like to invite your attention to Acts 13, to one thing that happened here, b&s, that I find extremely interesting when the apostle was in Galatia and in the region of the Galatian ecclesias; there, of course, was a controversy between the Jews in verse 45, 'But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, 'It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you (that is the Jews) but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. FOR so hath the Lord commanded us, saying I have set thee to be a light of the 'Gentiles', that thou shouldest be salvation unto the ends of the earth'. As a result of that little conversation there, b&s, there was an uproar in that region, and the Jews, of course, became more intensified in the opposition to the apostle. Do you know why? I believe there are two reasons: it wasn't only that Paul had the audacity to mention Gentiles in the context of Jew which you just don't do, because we're so righteous and they're so unclean! you don't sort of relate the two races, it wasn't only because of that reason, though that, of course, was the major factor, but I believe there was also another big controversy here, because the apostle, b&s, actually appropriated to his own work, a Messianic reference in the bible, THEIR BIBLE! 'For so hath the Lord commanded us saying, I HAVE SET THEE TO BE A LIGHT OF THE GENTILES', now they would have taken, I believe, umbrage at that, that Paul would appropriate to himself, a Messianic reference.

I believe, we have proof of the fact that they took umbrage at that, in the epistle to the Galatians. Because, do you know what Paul did, b&s, and you think of this, you think of a mind that could do this! When he sat down with that pen, and he wrote the epistle to the Galatians, do you know what he did? He wrote the background to that Old Testament quotation, he dispersed that through the book of Galatians; he dropped it in line by line, every now and then, that they might be reminded, that he wasn't going back on that claim. You turn to Galatians and then come back with me to Isaiah 49 where that is taken from and you see how he did this! an absolutely wonderful application of scripture here, b&s, which has great relevance to his argument in Galatians, that we're not really getting away from our central theme at all. You see, he quoted the 6th verse of Isaiah 49, 'It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel:(and this is the quotation of the apostle) I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth'. Now as I say, he appropriated that to himself, and they objected to that, b&s, obviously.

So when he wrote that epistle, as I suggest, he wrote into that epistle, the principles of that chapter. For example, the chapter opens up as a message to the Gentiles; he was perfectly within his rights to apply that to his work, because the chapter in Isaiah says,

'Listen, O isles'. God here was addressing Himself to the Gentiles, and if the God of heaven and earth, b&s, can address Gentiles, what would preclude the apostle Paul from doing it? If God in heaven above, never thought that in His righteousness, He couldn't call Gentiles, why would the apostle Paul think it? or anyone think it? 'Listen, O Gentiles', and the chapter isn't speaking to their condemnation, b&s, it's speaking about their salvation. That is a startling fact, and of course, in the Galatian epistle, chapter 1 and verse 2 and chapter 2 and verse 8, Paul specifically points out that his message was to the Gentiles. In the same verse 1 of Isaiah 49, he says, 'Yahweh hath called me from the womb, and in Galatians chapter 1, b&s, and verse 15 we read this, 'But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb', and you see there that he's talking about the great calling that he had as the apostle to the Gentiles and he's using that language of Isaiah 49 and verse 1. If you don't think that he is, you come back to Isaiah 49 verse 3, 'And He said unto me, thou art my servant, O Israel, (speaking of the Messiah), in whom I will be glorified'. And the end of verse 1, b&s, and verse 24 he says, 'And they glorified God in me'. If you look back at Isaiah 49 again, you'll read in verse 4, 'Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought'; come over to Galatians 2 and verse 2 again, and you'll read here 'I went up by revelation and communicated unto them, that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them that were of reputation, lest by any means, I should run or had run in vain', Isaiah 49 verse 4. So you find dispersed throughout this epistle, those little snippets taken from that prophecy, what for? because he wants them to be constantly reminded, b&s, that he was the chosen vessel of God, not merely to preach to the Gentiles, that's not his point only, but as he says in verse 16 of chapter 1, 'to reveal His Son in me'. Paul's commission, b&s, was far, far, far wider than a mere preacher of the gospel. He was a chosen vessel to reveal His Son in me, and if because the virgin birth was so absolutely necessary for salvation, that God should call one, related to Him from the womb of the earthly mother, then the one who was to reveal Him to the Gentile world, could equally appropriate the language to himself, as the revelation of Him who was indeed, the Son of God.

What a claim that was, b&s, and how wonderful it is, that Paul should write that to the Galatians. But he did more than that! because you see, he never only just quoted the words of Galatians, what he did, he structured the epistle on the basis of what that chapter is teaching. For example, Isaiah 49 and verse 6 speaks at the end of verse 6 that there was a salvation to the end of the earth, and that, of course, is one of the major themes of Galatians. Now from verses 18 and 20, b&s, we read about a distraught mother; a distraught mother who complains to God from verse 13 onward that she's lost her children. And God says to her in verse 18, 'Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith Yahweh, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth. For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too narrow for me: give

place to me that I may dwell'. Now let's put that together! Here's a distraught woman who's called Zion; she comes to God complaining about her children that her princes have taken away and they've wandered away from her household and she's crying to God about that! God says, 'I understand your problem, but He says, I'm going to tell you something; 'children are going to return to you in such multitudes that your house won't be big enough to contain them, and you will clothe thee with them all'. And when they come to you, they're going to say, we want more places to dwell in! But she had a problem, b&s, in verse 21, 'Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these?' in other words, 'who is their father? seeing I have lost my children and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone! these, where have they come from? So the woman is astonished when these children come home, and she says to God, 'where have they come from? who's their father? You say they're my children, I've never met them! Who is their father? b&s, that's the principle of Galatians; Paul deals with 2 women, he deals with a woman who represents the bondage of the Law, whose children wandered into a desert and were lost, because they practiced the Jews' religion which gendered to bondage. And there was a free woman, Sarah, who had, b&s, Isaac, as a foundation seed, as Paul calls him in Hebrews 11 and verse 11, 'She received strength to conceive' and the word in the Hebrew means 'the foundation seed' (2602) used 11 times in the New Testament, b&s, 10 times, 10 times in the expression 'the foundation of the world'. And only outside that expression, Sarah conceived 'the foundation seed', THEREFORE, there sprang of him as one. And him nearly as good as dead, 'as the stars of the sky for multitude'. And so Paul has those two women, one bewailing the fact that her children have gendered to bondage and slavery, and the other 'a free woman' who produces that multitudinous seed.

Where do they come from? God says in Isaiah 49, 'Lift up thy hand to the Gentiles', and that's why the woman, Zion, didn't recognize them, b&s, because they were all the children of God, He was their father, and why didn't the mother of Zion recognize them? because she thought along Judaistic lines; she didn't believe that God could have children. And if ever she could conceive that idea in her mind, she never could conceive that they're children of God BY FAITH! And that's how they came to be! and so she had to learn therefore, that the first family was lost, wandering in the world. Those that practice the Jews' religion scattered into all countries; and those who returned to her, would not only be made up of Jews according to the flesh, but 'Lo, I lift up my hand to the Gentiles', and her house or her tent as Isaiah 49 would have us to believe, her tent wouldn't be big enough to contain that family. She would have to stretch out the pegs of that tent, as the prophet said in another place, 'stretch out the pegs of your tent to accommodate that family; and the one commissioned, b&s, to take that message to the world, was a tentmaker! And if ever he would understand it, if ever anyone would know, he would know what that meant. And Paul the apostle whose occupation was a tentmaker, with this wonderful figure before him, was commissioned by God, to take that peg out of the ground and to stretch it and lengthen it, and to lengthen the curtains of that tent to include under its shelter, those children who were the children of God by

faith, when they had put on Christ, and become clothed with Him, as a bride does with her ornaments.

That is the structure of the book of Galatians. What sort of a mind would write a letter, b&s, and relate to all the structure and wording of that chapter, that he might ever remind those readers that what he said back in Antioch and Pisidia, he stuck by? 'Though, he said, 'we turn to the Gentiles; for so hath the Lord commanded us, saying,...Isaiah 49. And that's not the only thing, b&s, that's in Galatians from Isaiah 49; you see, Paul took the reason for seeing Peter, James and John in private from this chapter. If you keep your hand in Isaiah 49 and come back with me to Galatians, you'll see that the reason he gave for meeting those brethren in private was from Isaiah 49. We read again in Galatians 2 and verse 2, 'And I went up by revelation (that is up to Jerusalem) and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain'. And then he comes down, b&s, in verse 6 and says, 'But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person): for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter'.

So the point was this, he comes to Jerusalem and he says, I have to face up to big problems here, there was a mounting problem in the centre of the earth. Not only the centre of the earth geographically, but ecclesially, that Jerusalem, the ecclesia that was virtually looked upon as the basis of all ecclesial life; there was tremendous problems mounting in that city. Paul was no fool, he knew that when he got there, he better talk to brethren of like minds, that they were all at one. He said, I don't want to run in vain, no good getting into conference and find Peter contradicting me or me contradicting Peter or James or John. They had to be one on this, so he uses the language of Isaiah 49; why? because the thing they had to agree on behind closed doors, was, 'look, Peter, do you believe I'm the gospel to the uncircumcision? Peter would say, 'my word, I do, Paul!' Well, Paul would say, I'll tell you something, Peter, I believe that you've got a commission to the circumcision; and they'd shake hands on it. He uses the word 'koinonia' (2842) they got the right hand of fellowship, they shook hands, b&s, and agreed behind closed doors that they would stand by the principle that Jew and Gentile were no different in God's sight; and if Peter's work was seen to be among the Jews, it wasn't because he believed that no Gentile should be called. And if Paul's work was seen to be among the Gentiles, it wasn't because he believed that no Jews should be called; and he got that from Isaiah 49, 'it is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the preserved of Israel: I WILL ALSO GIVE THEE as a light to the Gentiles'. It's a light thing, he says, that you should be my servant, to raise up the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee as a light to the Gentiles', and when their hands met in that clasp of 'koinonia' of fellowship on that question, b&s, they were shaking hands, they were the top, I believe, of the principles set clearly before them in Isaiah 49

verse 6. And that's why he didn't want to run in vain. He wanted that principle to stand up and to be seen for what it was!

And so that, I believe, b&s, serves somewhat perhaps, as a little illustration, of some of the wonder that is in this epistle, which is based so subtly upon the principles of the Old Testament scripture, long before perhaps, Judaism would appear in its New Testament form, but was always there. So the problems were native, weren't they? in Isaiah's day as they were in the days when Paul wrote to the Galatians, it didn't make any difference.

And now what we're going to do in the remaining few moments of our first session is just to sketch for you very briefly, chapters 1 and 2 of Galatians and then we can perhaps settle down to a little bit more detail consideration of the rest of the epistle, chapter by chapter. Just perhaps as a paraphrase, b&s, we'll set before you some of the matters of this epistle. If I seem to be lisping or missing my words it's because Jimmy Luke's been at me, two days ago, and I'm having a bit of trouble with my teeth. But anyway, in this particular section, chapters 1 and 2, what you find in the first 5 verses here, is the apostle Paul setting before them, his claim as an apostle. Now, of course, why would he do this? Well, look, the Judaizer, he must if he can undermine Paul's authority as an apostle. And of course, they attempted to do that! and so what the apostle does in these first few verses, is to emphasize the fact that he is an apostle, and he's not self appointed. He was an apostle 'not of men, neither by man', in other words, no one individual made him an apostle, and no group of men made him an apostle; he's neither of men nor man. Who made him an apostle? he's an apostle of Jesus Christ, that's his authority, b&s, and if they want a higher authority, he's from God the Father, and if they think, b&s, that there are two independent witnesses to his apostleship, let him bear this in mind, that God raised the other One from the dead! So the One that appointed him to be an apostle, was Himself endorsed by resurrection. You can't get greater endorsement than that! And if Jesus Christ, as He surely did, came out of the grave by the appointment of God, if that set Him forth, b&s, that God had given assurance unto ALL men that He had raised Him from the dead, if that's the One who appointed the apostle, then his authority goes back to the origin. That's the point he's making in the first verse.

And he sends to all the ecclesias in Galatia in verse 3, grace and peace from God the Father; you notice, b&s, in this epistle, there is a studied attempt not to commend them. They were not to be commended at this stage of their life; you don't find the commendation that you even find of the Corinthians, with all their problems, You don't find it here, do you know why? because you ever find this with the apostle Paul, whilst he could bear with human weakness, whilst he could express himself in terms of endearment even to those, b&s, who had suffered the reverses of the flesh, and would fall in prey to the temptations of the world, he had no patience with those who turned to Judaism; because their weakness was dressed up in strength. You never commend anyone who's weakness is paraded in strength, for all you'll ever do is to foster their

cause. Paul never did that to a Judaizer, and you find, therefore, no commendation at all to the Galatians, by contrast the expression, 'O foolish Galatians'. But grace and peace is sent to them, b&s, and those two greetings, of course, grace and peace are expressions which are used to unite Jew and Gentile together; if ever the grace of God was demonstrated, it was in the call of the Gentiles, wasn't it? And the Jewish greeting of 'Shalom' (to be at one with each other) was common among the Jews. God doesn't send peace or grace, He sends grace and peace, and they were to understand that.

And he points out, b&s, that what they ought to understand, is that there ought to be in their lives, a different motive force than Law because in verse 4, Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father, and what he's trying to tell them with this here, b&s, is this: there are two cardinal factors to think about in the sacrifice of Christ (you listen now as I'll illustrate to you, I believe, so you can clearly understand this, how Judaism is native to our flesh). There are two things to remember about the sacrifice of Christ: I'll put them in a different order than what the apostle did for the point of my illustration. The first thing we understand about the sacrifice of Christ, b&s, is that it was by the will of God. It was God's will that He die, and no one is going to dispute that and remain in fellowship, because that is absolutely fundamental; and we've fought over the years for that principle, that it was God's will that He should die. But what needs to be understood, b&s, is the second point, that although it was God's will, He volunteered to die, 'who gave Himself for our sins, according to the will of God'. And how many arguments have we witnessed, and in our own immaturity, b&s, have been involved in, where there's been an imbalance in that! where we've stood to the principle that Christ had to die for Himself, and not always understood in its entirety, that though that is doctrinally true and sound, that when He did submit to the will of God, He did it voluntarily! and that adds another dimension to the sacrifice of Christ, b&s, that along with the doctrinal, the theoretical things that were accomplished in that death, there's a highly emotionally charged issue, that One of the human race with all our weaknesses volunteered to submit Himself to the will of the Father. Judaizers don't always see that! and that's something we've got to remember!

And then, b&s, from verses 6 to 10, he talks about these perverters of the gospel of Christ. He was astonished in verse 6 that they were 'quickly removed' from that gospel of the grace of Christ unto another gospel; notice what he calls the gospel here, b&s, he calls it 'the grace of Christ', that's a wonderful expression! It meant more to them than it would mean to us immediately, because they would associate Christ with the Messiah, and the Judaizers conception of 'Messiah' b&s, was some great lofty, proud, tremendous figure, who would never debase Himself to human status or standards. But Paul is talking about the grace of Messiah, Messiah, b&s, was saved by grace; that's something a Judaizer could never comprehend. But that's the gospel he says he preached; now you've got a different one, (heteros-#2087) he says, you've got a different gospel than that. And they're reverting back, b&s, to hero worship in the sense of the 'great warrior', one whose life could not be made compatible with that of the suffering servant. But, of course, they were very clever, b&s, not to entirely deny in

so much language, the gospel that the Galatians had been taught, because as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11 and verse 4, 'they preached another Jesus', they didn't change the name or the titles or the terminology; oh, the language of the truth was used, but behind that language was ideas which made that gospel absolutely different despite the similarity in language. And we've fought and are still fighting, b&s, errors in the brotherhood, with people who use biblical, scriptural and pioneer language, but when their ideas are assimilated and dissected, they are totally subversive to the gospel of Christ. But because Paul saw those kind can't always see the difference, they say, 'but they say this and they say that and they say something else'; of course they do, it's not what they say, b&s, it's what they teach and imply by what they say. And that's what Paul says, it's not another gospel in the sense that it's an additional gospel, it's a perversion! 'Though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed'. Strong language, isn't it? of course, the expression, the mode of expression, 'an angel from heaven', Paul never contended for any moment that an angel could preach another gospel; it's a mode of expression to show the intensity of his feelings. And what he's saying is this, it doesn't matter what position a person holds in the ecclesia, he may seem to be an absolute pillar of uprightness, if what he says subverts the gospel of Christ, he's Satan. 'Though we or an angel from heaven', and the leader of that group he called 'an angel of light', and they couldn't see where he was wrong! but the apostle could. He repeats that, 'As I said before, so say I now again', why does he repeat it, b&s? because he wanted to make that principle stick in their mind, that you reject an heretic after the 3rd or 4th admonition. It wasn't something he did lightly! they were going to be accursed (Chaldean and Hebrew word is 'devoted' - 2764), something that is entirely devoted to destruction; but God will not tolerate, and those things which were being taught, couldn't be tolerated!

Then, of course, he's got to establish his own credentials which he does in the rest of chapter 1, which we will not deal with in particular, b&s, but he goes over his own life's history, and of course, the Judaizers would whisper behind his back, 'yea, it's alright for him, but I'll tell you, all he's telling you is what he got from Peter'. Now, they held Peter in high esteem, why? because Peter was the apostle to the circumcision. Not that Peter would agree with him, although, of course, in this chapter, he did defect momentarily, but in principle Peter would never really agree with them. But they quoted Peter and they'd say, 'ah, it's because he's had a bit of contact with Peter, he's just repeating what Peter said, but he's got it mixed up, he doesn't understand, but Peter does!' 'He's gone and seen James, he's been speaking to John', and so the apostle in the rest of chapter 1, b&s, has got to clear the matter up, so he delineates for them, every contact that he had with those men; with Peter for 15 days. He went up to see him and uses the word 'historeo' (2477) from which our English word 'history' comes from. It means to 'make one's acquaintance' in the Greek; he didn't go up there to find out what the gospel was all about, he went up there to become more understanding of Peter's position, he wanted to cement their relationship and their friendship, on the basis of what he already understood; and he claimed, b&s, that none of those men taught him, but that his

revelation had come from the Lord Jesus Christ. And it had! on the way to Damascus the revelation came; and in Arabia for those years and months that he would have spent in that desert, listening to the voice of God through His Word. And the revelations and visions set in 2 Corinthians 12 which he says was 14 years since he wrote the Corinthian epistle, which would have taken him right back to his conversion days, b&s, and he had revelations and visions, that not even Peter had! Therefore, he didn't learn that from anybody, he got that directly from the Lord Jesus Christ!

And he speaks about the time that he went up to Jerusalem in chapter 2, with Titus, and there was an issue made about Titus in verse 3. 'But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised, and that because of 'pseudo delphos', not Christadelphians but false brethren, 'unawares brought in who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage'. Now they wanted to make an issue about Titus because he was a Greek, and you know, of course, the apostle became criticized by the Judaizers saying, 'ahah, he wouldn't circumcise Titus, but he went and circumcised Timothy; yes, he did! You know, b&s, if there's one thing, if you want to see, look, you say, 'what is Judaism?' It's like a disease, that a doctor can diagnose on the basis of symptoms; you know, a Judaizer can never see anything else but BLACK and WHITE. He can't see anything else but that! and he would say, he circumcised him and he didn't circumcise him; he's wrong! A Judaizer has an native inability to understand why he didn't circumcise him, and why he did circumcise him. They don't reason like that! They have an absolute point of view which becomes so entrenched, they become so incorrigible, you can't get them to see a reason; but there was a reason why Timothy was circumcised and there was a reason why Titus was not circumcised, and in the circumcision of the one and the uncircumcision of the other, there was absolute consistency in the apostle's action, which a Judaizer could never see. But you and I would understand, b&s, where the consistency was; this boy of Greek origin, they said you must circumcise him; he said, no way. There was an issue involved in that, b&s, to circumcise Titus would be a confession to Judaistic principles. But this boy, Timothy was not of only Greek origin, his mother was a Jewess, and the two boys were dissimilar in their native abilities and their characteristics even, that the truth moulded for the speaking of the gospel. This boy was strong-minded and strong-willed and a powerful boy, Timothy was weak in body and form, timid to the extreme, but a wonderful boy in bringing men and women together and cementing relationships in the love of God. Titus stood for the uncompromising principles of the truth, and Timothy stood for the conciliatory attitude between Jew and Greek whereby God's love could bring them together. There is no disagreement in principle, and how difficult it would have been for the apostle to explain his action one with the other, to Judaistic minds who would never understand that. When you look at his words in the second chapter there, he says in verse 5, 'To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; why? 'that the truth of the gospel might continue with you'. Now, b&s, I'm trying to relay to you those issues which can overcome us, here's another one!

How often is it in ecclesial life when you've got a problem, a real problem, and you have to withstand a brother. Very sad that is, it rips the insides out of me, but sometimes it is necessary; and if that brother especially has and holds a reputation in the meeting, you know, it's galling to have to be in a group of people and have to listen to the old adage which everybody accepts; it's wrong! 'You know it's only personalities', oh that hurts, b&s, because, alright, I'm not saying that it's not always personalities, what I'm saying is, there are cases when it just isn't personalities, it's a question of whether it's right or wrong, and Paul says we didn't let them get away with it for an hour, what for? because with personalities? NO, b&s, 'that the truth might stay with you'. They couldn't see that! He wrote the Corinthian epistle, and you can almost see the stains of his tears on the letter, to try and tell them that, but they couldn't see that! personalities! Nothing to do with personalities, it was a question of right and wrong that the truth of the gospel might stay with you. You know, b&s, if ever that became practically demonstrated it was in the defection of Peter. Was that personalities? and here in the Antioch ecclesia, an ecclesia by the way, of which we know very little, except it was Paul's home base, of which we read of no particular problems ecclesially, that is! but where Paul was held, of course, in the highest esteem, and so was Peter, and here are two brethren face off, was that personalities? So Paul has to illustrate his point not with a Judaizer but with one, b&s, who momentarily, stumbled because of Judaistic arguments.

Verse 11, 'But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed'. You know, some say Paul should have taken Peter aside and spoke privately with him! Do you know, b&s, that is not true! do you know that Paul had scripture to back him, that Peter had to be withstood to his face? do you know that? It's not always that we're commanded to speak privately with our brethren; you know the reference in Timothy which says, and you see this quoted often under a picture of Dr. Thomas, 'that they that labour in word and doctrine are to be worthy of double honour' (1 Timothy 5 verse 17), 'especially those who labour in the word and doctrine'; do you know what the next verse says? verse 20, 'them that sin rebuke before all'. Why? because they're public figures. Because they do labour in word and doctrine and if they go wrong, they are publicly wrong, because if they're not publicly wrong then the public will go on believing they're right. Give them double honour especially those who labour in work and doctrine and they that sin, rebuke before all. Well, he did! Peter was a public figure, he was the apostle to the circumcision, he stood for a principle, he's wrong, he has to be shown publicly to be wrong. Paul had every right to do that. In the book of Nehemiah, when the rulers of Israel were taking usury, and Nehemiah wrote and said, he called a public assembly before them because they were rulers. They were public figures they had to suffer public rebuke. I'm a study leader here, not by choice, you said come over and lead a study on Galatians; if I say something fundamentally wrong this weekend, b&s, it would be wrong for you to take me aside and say to me privately where I went wrong because I may not put the matter right; it's got to be put right, otherwise, many people will go away and say, 'John says that, so it must be right!' It's not always right, and so that's why Peter had to be withstood to his face.

Now look what he did! Verse 12, 'Before that certain came from James', notice that, b&s, Peter's up in Antioch and he's quite happy to sit down and eat with Gentiles; up from Jerusalem come certain men and say, 'you know, I don't think James would approve of that; you know, that was a lie'. It was James who wrote a letter, b&s, which was endorsed by the Jerusalem council, which said that there was nothing wrong with Gentiles being in the truth and joining in fellowship with brethren and sisters of Jewish extraction. James was dead against that, but they used his name wrongfully. And James, of course, the half brother of our Lord is a powerful figure in the Acts of the apostles; and at the mention of his name, people's ears would shoot up, and how often is it when brethren come up and say, 'brother so-in-so said this', and they quote some notorious name in the brotherhood, and everyone says, 'oh, he said it, so it must be right'; let's go and check what he actually said, b&s, to see if they misrepresented him! It was enough to undermine Peter, because he withdrew himself, separating himself, 'fearing them which were of the circumcision party' says the RSV. And then it goes on and says, 'Other Jews dissembled' so you see, it all started off with the circumcision party, they put pressure on Peter and he cracked! And you know what they would have said, 'Look Peter, when it's all said and done, ah, yes, I suppose the Gentiles have a right to hear the truth, but ah Peter, Leviticus 20, you know what it says about the unclean animals and how God made a difference between us and them, and said that they were unclean; and oh, they are alright now, I suppose, but you know Peter, really.....'

And so it would have gone on and on and the pressure would have come! James wouldn't approve! poor old Peter cracked, Paul uses a word which says he acted 'hypocritically'; he acted like a hypocrite, he 'dissembled' (4942) himself. And do you think that poor old Peter was put under pressure? you know, b&s, if we were there on that occasion, I think we would have seen an ecclesial row brewing, the magnitude of which, we could not appreciate. Do you know the measure of the magnitude of that issue? if ever you could measure it, you could even measure it by this, even Barnabas was carried away. Well, how would that measure it? Well, Barnabas was noted, b&s, for an understanding characteristic, he had no bias in him says the 11th chapter of Acts; he was a brother who was not influenced by national distinction. He is here! even Barnabas! imagine the pressure, b&s, that was brought to bear on this occasion.

And Paul's answer to Peter is absolutely majestic! Verse 14, 'When he saw that Peter walked not straightly, straight-footed, one Greek word, 'straight-footed' (3716) according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews'? Now the first point he makes is this, and you see, b&s, this is always the point with people that go astray especially those with Judaistic principles; you find they stand up and make an issue in the ecclesia but they fail to see, that behind the pointed finger is a life of inconsistency! Now the first point that Paul makes is this: Peter, when you learnt the truth of the Gentile call, you learnt by a great sheet knit at the four corners let down upon which were all manner of four-footed beasts and

unclean things, and you were told to arise, kill and eat; that relation from God, Peter, freed you to eat with Gentiles! You lived like they lived, but now you say, they've got to live like Jews again'. Fancy an answer like that, b&s! and it was unanswerable! Whilst Peter was practicing his freedom, he was imposing restrictions on others. That's something we've seen in action, haven't we, b&s?

He further said, 'Peter, now you know this too, in verses 15 and 16, (in ironic language here) 'we who are Jews by nature, 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', so you see, he knew that from Psalm 143 verse 2, b&s, 'that no man living would be justified in God's sight', and Paul repeats that later on when he says at the end of the verse, 'that no flesh would be justified'. So taking the Psalm, 'no man living, no man, no flesh' Peter knew and understood that, that he's not talking about Jew or Gentile, he's talking about MEN, flesh, and we're all men, we're all flesh, whether we be Jew or Greek, and none of us are justified, Peter. You learnt that!' and he had learnt it. Now in verse 17 he says, 'If while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ the minister of sin? If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a deliberate transgressor'.

Now the point he's making is this, b&s, Peter along with the other apostles had destroyed the notion, that any man (whatever man he was) could be justified by the works of the Law. And he pointed out that he learnt that by the faith of Christ, how did he learn that? Well, there's a crucified man on the cross, He's of Jewish extraction; nay, He's more, He's of the royal line of David. And He hangs upon the cross to tell us that no flesh could glory in God's presence. So by the teaching of Jesus Christ, they had taught people that Jew and Gentile didn't matter; that no man, not even a Jew, could be justified.

Now when Peter crossed the floor, b&s, when he would only eat with Jews, he was saying that that was wrong. He wouldn't say it theoretically, but the fact that he's only sit at that table and not that table, he's saying that's wrong; and when he said it was wrong, he's saying that that which is wrong is that which he was taught by Jesus Christ; and if he says that that which is wrong which was taught to him by Jesus Christ, then Christ's effect has been the same as the Law. Because the purpose of the Law was to point out human weakness and make a man see that which was wrong! and when he saw that which was wrong, 'thou shalt not covet', there was an auto-suggestion within him which says, 'what can I covet', so the Law, b&s, not designed to do this, but because of human weakness, becomes the promoter of sin. And Paul's telling him, 'look Peter, you learnt that, you said that Christ said, that no Jewish flesh even could be justified; now you're only sitting with Jews, so you're saying it's wrong and that Christ taught you that it's wrong, and now you're telling me, that Christ is talking up an equal position with the Law! Peter, we've destroyed that notion, and here you are building it again, before everybody's eyes'.

And you see what we can do, b&s, we can stand for principle alright, but where our feet take us, sometimes can be a position whereby we're telling everybody that we're totally wrong. Totally wrong, and how many times have we had brethren, wave their finger, 'no, no, no, no', that they're wrong in principle, they've done this, but they've never been and seen the person concerned; and they're wrong while they're telling you. They're wrong while they're telling you and their words may have some element of truth in them, their actions are an absolute denial of the very principle they're standing for. And so Peter took up that position, b&s, and he had to be seen as a transgressor.

Then Paul told him his own position. 'Now let me tell you where I stand, Peter! You've brought the Law alive, you've said in effect that Christ's doctrine is no different than the Law, it's all back again alive. We destroyed that! but Peter, I am dead to the Law, and because I'm freed from that notion, Peter, I can do what you can't do! I can live unto God'. Now do you know how he was able to live unto God, b&s? He lived by the faith of the Son of God, and do you see the subtle point that Paul is making: if Peter was enslaved to the point where he could only sit with those who were only native Jews, he said, 'Peter, you've built again the principles of the Law, you are now in bondage to the Law; you are now with one group of people. I'm free from that Peter, I can live unto God, and I live unto the Son of God'.

Tell me, b&s, what nationality is God? What nationality is God? and if that's God's Son, then there is no nationality! the relationship that God has with the human race is that we are men and He is God, and the One that came in our nature, b&s, may have been a son of Mary and a son of David, HE WAS GOD'S SON, and as such there are no nationalities.

And Paul says, 'that's how I live, Peter!' I have no problems meeting with anyone who names the name of the truth, the Son of God! Yes, I'm crucified with Christ, distinctions mean nothing to me, but I'm still alive, but Peter, I don't live my life as Paul, as you do at the moment as Peter, Cephas, the apostle to the circumcision, I live it by the faith of the Son of God. And Peter, I am not living it because I'm compelled by Law, I live it because He loved me, Peter. That's what compelled me to live like I do. He loved me and gave Himself for me, and because He loved me, then He said, I will have love and mercy upon others, because He loved all those who are called to the truth. I don't frustrate God's grace like you're doing.

You know, b&s, there's a consistent expression Paul uses in his writings, and it's this, he keeps telling people that he obtained mercy, I obtained mercy on a couple of occasions in one of the epistles of Timothy and in other places he uses that expression, 'I obtained mercy', why does he use that expression? because he was the apostle to the Gentiles, b&s, and in the prophecy of Hosea chapter 1 verse 6 and 7, it says, 'that there would be a people who would not obtain mercy, but now have obtained mercy because God was merciful unto them. And Paul in his exposition in Romans chapter 9 and 10, pointed out that those people of whom Hosea was speaking, were really

Gentile people; there might seem to be a Jewish connection and there were people who hadn't obtained mercy that now obtained mercy, and he kept going around the world, telling people I obtained mercy, but he was a Jew, and he was showing everybody, b&s, that whether they be Jew or Greek, we all need to obtain mercy. Those who were God's people, the Jews, had become no people, and God will have mercy on them in the end. And those who are Gentiles and had been no people, are now a people, and God has had mercy on them. And this is what the apostle is trying to tell Peter, 'I'm free to do that!' and I'm going around telling everyone, that I, the apostle, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, circumcised the eighth day, I am free to mix with others! That the life that I now live, being dead to the other, is a life I live with the Son of God with whom there is no national distinctions. And the course of action that I'm impelled upon, Peter, is not because of pressure by the Judaizing sect, but because He loved me and gave Himself for me, and I will not frustrate the grace of God.

That, b&s, is some of the grand principles that are in this epistle, which we hope we will see embellished in our future studies together, as we move from here, through the rest of the epistle.