

Are You A Slave Or A Son? PART I

By Denise Bostic

So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has also made you an heir.
(Galatians 4:7 NIV)

In Galatians chapter 4:21-31, the Apostle Paul tells a story about two women who are figurative of two covenants. He explains that these two covenants are two types of peoples. One type is born of the flesh by a slave woman and the other is born of the Spirit by a free woman. He clearly reveals the identity of these two groups of people as being natural Israel (born under the law in earthly Jerusalem) and the spiritual Church (born from above from a heavenly New Jerusalem). The former keeps a covenant that produces slaves to law keeping, the latter produces sons born into spiritual liberty and who are heirs according to the promise.

Here, Paul is teaching the difference between the Old and New Covenants so that the Church will understand the differences between the two. This was essential for believers to understand for there were those who desired to be under the Law of Moses. (Galatians 4:21) Paul tells them why they are not children of the law, but children born of the Spirit. He explains the difference of what it means to be a slave and what it means to be a spiritual son. Slaves do not receive an inheritance, but sons do. (Galatians 4:1-7) Paul writes, **“But what does the scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance of the free woman’s son.” (Galatians 4:30)** Only those who are sons are heirs to God’s promise. Paul makes it plain that the promises of God are not obtained through the Old Covenant Law but by grace through faith in Christ and receiving the New Covenant. It is only then that we are truly Abraham’s seed, in Christ and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:18, 26-29) Like the Galatians, we in the Church today need to understand the differences between these two Covenants. We need to understand who we are and what covenant we are in.

There are some leaders in the Church today that teach believers that they are under both the Old and New Covenants and this has caused a lot of confusion, misunderstanding and even bondage among some streams in the Church. There are many believers in the Church that are bearing unnecessary burdens of works of the law that they have been set free from in the New Covenant. They have, in effect, become slaves to certain aspects of law keeping instead of living in the liberty of the Spirit as sons of God as they were intended. (Galatians 5:1) There are some ministers in the Church that devote much of their ministry to teaching more of Old Testament law than New Covenant grace and are (whether knowingly or unknowingly) leading others away from Christ and His truth. It may not be as blatant as telling others that one can earn their salvation by works of the law, but may come in much more subtle forms such as teaching others that they must tithe or sow an offering (based on some OT law), or perform works under the law before God will bless them financially, heal them, deliver them or save their loved ones. Unlike Old Testament Israel, New Testament believers are not under the works of the law but God’s grace. Now God gives these blessings freely to us because of what Jesus obtained for us through His vicarious death, not because we have to work to obtain them. These are part of our inheritance as children of God and are stipulated in the Lord’s last will and Testament.

If you left an inheritance for your children, would you stipulate in your will that you will give these things to your children only if they work for it? Of course not! You give these things to them because they are your sons and daughters and you love them! You earned it for them and all they must do is simply receive what you left to them. This is a clear picture of what God wants us to see. He wants us to believe what His Son has done for us and receive it by faith because we have been adopted as His very own children!

God has a purpose in everything He does and this is also true regarding the purposes of the Old and New Testaments. God has been working out His eternal plan and has brought a revelation of it under the New Covenant of Christ. The Old Covenant was a temporary system that only foreshadowed the real and everlasting New Covenant that God has now ratified by the more perfect sacrifice of His Son. (Hebrews 9:1-

14) It was prophesied in the Old Testament that God would make a New Covenant with the House of Israel and would also make it available to the Gentiles. (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hosea 2:23, Romans 9:24-26) It is made plain in scripture that this New Covenant would not be like the Old Covenant that God made with Israel when He brought them out of Egypt. (Jeremiah 31:31-32, Hebrews 8:6-10) In God's Covenant with Israel, He dealt with them through external laws and in the Church in the New Covenant; He deals with them internally by placing His laws within their hearts and minds and giving them a new spirit. (Hebrews 8:7-10)

The blood of bulls and goats offered under the Old Covenant could not provide eternal redemption for God's people and cleanse them of sin. (Hebrews 9:12-14) The New Covenant is based upon better promises and our sins are atoned for by the perfect sacrifice of God's own Son. In calling the first Covenant Old, this shows us that it is no longer in force or in effect. (Hebrews 8:13) God had a purpose in the Old Covenant and its purpose has been fulfilled or completed by Jesus. (Matthew 5:17) Now that its purpose has been fulfilled, God then was able to abolish, wipe out and cancel the Old Covenant and bring a New Covenant that is better into existence. (Ephesians 2:15, Colossians 2:14, Hebrews 10:9)

We must understand that previous to the New Covenant, Gentiles had no covenant or relationship at all with God, only the Jews did. Under the Old Covenant, Gentiles were excluded from the Covenant God made with the Jews and had no access into His presence. In order for Gentiles to be in Covenant relationship with God, the Lord had to tear down the Old Covenant system that separated Jews and Gentiles so that both might be reconciled to God and have peace with one another and therefore bring unity in one body called the Church. (Ephesians 2:8-16) Since it is God's will that none should perish but have everlasting life, Gentiles are now no longer excluded, but included in the eternal plan of God. Now salvation is available to the whole world.

JESUS IS THE WAY

The fact that the nation of Israel as a whole has rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah does not change God's redemptive plan for them and the way that He has made for them to obtain eternal salvation. (Romans 9:31-33, 11:11-16, 25-32) There is only one way that God has made for all mankind to receive eternal salvation. Jesus said, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man can come to the Father except through me."** (John 14:6) There are some Jews (a remnant) who have received salvation through Jesus. (Romans 9:27) It is God's will and plan that the rest of Israel receive salvation the same way- by receiving Jesus Christ as Messiah and receiving the New Covenant that He has prepared for them. There is only one Messiah (Savior) promised in God's word. (Genesis 3:15, 17:7, Isaiah 53, Romans 9:7-8, Galatians 3:16) It is also through this same Messiah that God would make a New Covenant with His people.

The New Covenant that God would make with Israel was foretold long before it actually was put into force or effect. (Jeremiah 31: 31-34, Hebrews 8:7-13, 10:15-18) Lest the nation of Israel think that they would be exclusive heirs of the New Covenant, we must not forget that God also foretold that the Gentiles would be saved and enter into the New Covenant as well. (Hosea 2:23, Romans 9:22-26) God has not offered a different covenant to Israel than He has to the Church; it is the one and the same New Covenant that is ratified by the blood of Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (John 1:29, Acts 8:26-37, Hebrews 9:12-28) There is only one name under heaven by which men can be saved. (Acts 4:12) This is precisely why the Church must preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Israel in the hopes that they too might be saved. (Romans 10:1)

In this article, we will take a look at some popular teachings going on in certain circles that is being received by growing numbers. The Church of Jesus Christ must know and understand who we are and not allow others to mislead us by false teaching, instead we must **"study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"** (II Timothy 2:15) and **"search the scriptures daily to see if these things are so."** (Acts 17:11) Our message must be right if we are to be in obedience to Jesus' command to go and preach the gospel to the world. Our message should be in sync with the One we claim to follow. Believers need to **"prove all things, hold fast to that which is good."** (I Thessalonians 5:21) We are admonished to prove by the word of God whether what others teach is true or false. Blind obedience is a dangerous place to walk if those you are following are blind also. (Matthew 15:14, Luke 6:39)

BEWARE OF ANOTHER GOSPEL

The Apostle Paul warned the Galatians of those who were spreading a message that was not according to the grace of Christ. We in the Church need to make sure that the message we preach is in line with the true gospel that is given by Jesus Christ and not after man. The Galatians started out with the true gospel but

were turning away from the Lord by receiving “another gospel” which was a perversion of the gospel of Christ. (Galatians 1: 6-9) Let’s examine some teachings that have been circulating in the Body of Christ that do not line up with the truth of the Gospel. We must not underestimate the power and influence of those who are preaching another gospel. Not only is it possible for them to influence other leaders, their own congregation or followers but also millions on a platform of worldwide television. There are many such teachings that have become enmeshed in Church doctrine as fact, but bear little resemblance to the truth of New Testament scripture. The doctrines of men are alive and well in this advanced technological era, with the accelerated ability to spread them farther and faster than ever before in history.

There are some who are taking the scriptures out of context in order to support their message. We must have the correct foundation if we are to be built up properly as the house of God. (I Corinthians 3:9-11) Our foundation must be Jesus Christ, or else our house will not stand. (Matthew 7:24-27) Beware of those who would bring you under the bondage of the Old Covenant Law. We cannot go back to law and try to fulfill what Jesus has already fulfilled. Instead we are to be liberated with the freedom of Christ in the New Covenant. (Galatians 2:1-5, 4:21-31 & 5:1-4) Paul warns us in scripture of those who desire to be teachers of the law, but are actually spiritually ignorant of what the law really says. (I Timothy 1:7, Galatians 4:21) All believers need to understand what Christ accomplished for us by His death on the cross and what He has left to us through His last will and Testament. (Hebrews 9:14-17) To find out the terms of the will, we must look to the New Testament and not to an Old Covenant that is no longer valid, in effect or force. (Hebrews 8:6-13)

There is a movement going on today that has been a problem for the Church since its very inception and that has infiltrated many denominations today in a very subtle way. This movement consists of those who are trying to bring believers back under the Law of Moses (Judaism) under the guise that it is something that God is restoring to the Church in these last days. Proponents of this belief have much more influence upon the Church than we realize. The effects are seen in many Churches as they incorporate Old Testament Laws into their teachings and practices, albeit a little at a time. Although these individuals may be sincere and zealous for the law, they do not teach with the knowledge of Christ. The New Testament scriptures are very clear regarding this subject and warn believers of the dangers of reversion to the religion of Judaism. It is also made clear that when believers turn back to the Law of Moses, they are falling away from Christ and His grace. (Galatians 4:8-11, 5:1-4, Hebrews 10:26-30)

Those that adhere to Old Testament Law actually are blinded to (or cannot understand) the fullness of the revelation of Christ in the New Covenant. This blindness is only taken away when one turns to Christ and the Spirit of liberty that is in the New Covenant. (II Corinthians 3:13-18, Galatians 5:1) The book of Hebrews says we are not of the house of Moses (the Old Covenant) but we are of the House of Christ (the New Covenant). (Hebrews 3:1-6) Are those who are teaching the Church to observe Old Testament law acting in line with the truth of the Gospel of Christ? Let’s examine some teachings that have become prominent in the body of Christ.

CONVERTED TO CHRIST AND NOT JUDAISM

Some are teaching now that the Church must come back to her Jewish roots which often means exploring, embracing and practicing the Torah (Law of Moses). Is the Church Jewish or Gentile? An in depth study into the scriptures is eye opening indeed. Our previous Church fathers had to address that very situation when God began saving Gentile converts using Peter (a Jew who accepted Jesus as the Messiah) as an instrument of His divine will to do so. Paul, another Jewish convert to Christ, had been appointed and sent by the Lord Himself to turn the Gentiles to God. These men obeyed the commands of the Lord and understood that the Gentiles also were able to receive the free gift of eternal life by grace and faith in Christ alone. However, a group of men from Judea came down to Antioch to add their requirements to the salvation message. They believed that the Gentiles receiving salvation had to become a Jew (by the rite of circumcision) and keep all the law in order to be saved. (Acts 15:1-2) This caused a ruckus in the Church at Antioch for there were many Gentiles turning to Christ at that time.

This incident raised a very important question. Is this new Church Jewish or Gentile? Must those Gentiles who are turning to Christ convert to Judaism (i.e. be circumcised and keep the law of Moses) in order to inherit eternal salvation? These questions were then taken before the Apostles of the Lord in Jerusalem. The decision made at what is commonly referred to as the Jerusalem Council, set the precedence for how the Gospel was to be preached to all nations. The conclusion? No, we should not make the Gentiles become Jewish (adhere to the rituals of Judaism). Why? **We are saved by grace and faith in Jesus Christ alone and not by the works of the Law of Moses. (Acts 15:11,15)** To preach and teach otherwise

would not be in line with the truth of the Gospel as given by the Lord Jesus Christ. (Galatians 2:13-21) New converts were to be converted to Christ and not Judaism.

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH NOT WORKS

In Antioch **Paul rebukes Peter publicly for his hypocrisy for forcing the believing Gentiles to conform to Jewish customs and reminds him that it is not works of the law that justifies us before God but faith in Christ alone.** Peter went against what he knew to be an established truth in the Church. Note here that Peter was not blatantly preaching that people must "keep the law" in order to obtain salvation, but he was sending the wrong message to others in the newly formed Church by his actions. He reverted back to the practice of Judaism by separating himself from the uncircumcised Gentiles for fear of what the circumcised Jews would think. By his actions of separating himself from the Gentiles, Peter was going against what Jesus had accomplished on the cross and was in effect rebuilding the middle wall of partition (of the law) that Jesus had broken down which had previously separated Jews and Gentiles. (Galatians 2: 16-18, Ephesians 2:13-16) Since Peter was an Apostle and leader of the Church, his actions caused others to follow his example, which brought a division to the body of Christ and his actions were not in line with the unifying work that Jesus had accomplished on the cross. (Galatians 2:14)

We cannot compromise with the Gospel because we fear men or want to be men pleasers. (Galatians 2:12) Keeping works of the law do not grant us any special favors with God. They do not add to our salvation experience. The Gospel of Christ is more than salvation alone; it is also everything that accompanies salvation. (Hebrews 6:9) We can't obtain anything in our Christian walk by works of the law, but only by faith in Christ and what He has done for us. **The reason our inheritance in Christ can't be obtained through works of the law is because it was based on a promise that God made to Abraham and God made it contingent on the basis that it can only be received by faith in Christ. (Galatians 3:6-18)** All of God's promises to Abraham are now in Jesus Christ.

There are those today that are making the same mistake that Peter did and are also forcing the practices of Judaism onto the Body of Christ by their teachings and actions. Remember that actions speak louder than words. Not only can we not teach that salvation is based on works (because that is a free gift from God), we must also be careful that we are not sending the wrong message that we can **gain favor** from God by practicing works of the law. The works of the Jewish law will not give us an advantage or make us more righteous before God than those who do not practice works of the law. (Galatians 2:14-16) This type of teaching is dangerous because it promotes a message of trusting in our own works instead of trusting in Christ. This is teaching a work-based religion instead of a grace-based faith. The scriptures clearly teach us that we cannot be justified in any way by works of the law. (Romans 9:30-33, Galatians 2: 16,21, 3:1-18)

WE ARE NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST

By the same token, believing Gentiles must not force their customs upon those Jews who come to Christ, for we are not to put stumbling blocks in our brother's way that might cause them to fall. (Acts 15: 19-20, Romans 14) In Christ, there is no longer the distinction of being Jewish or Gentile but we now find our identity in Christ as a brand new creation and He is our common ground. (Galatians 3:26-29, 6:15 & II Corinthians 5:17) Jesus is the firstborn of many brethren. (Romans 8:29, Colossians 1:15,18) According to these scriptures, Jesus is the firstborn of all born again sons of God. It is He who must have the preeminence and not any other. A brand new creation is exactly that. We were not created after a worldly pattern, but a heavenly one and are adopted into the very family of God as sons. The Church is not Jewish or Gentile but the collective body of Christ and we are now new creatures created after His image. (Galatians 3:28, Romans 12:5, I Corinthians 12:12-27, II Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Colossians 1:15, James 1:18) God was not then and is not now making an extension of Judaism, Paganism or any other "isms", but new creatures in Christ, born again from above from a Kingdom not of this world. We are born again of the Holy Spirit and have become sons of God through spiritual adoption. (John 3: 1-8, John 1:12)

LAW AND GRACE DO NOT MIX

As believers, we must understand that there are different Covenants recorded in the Bible and we need to understand the differences between these Covenants otherwise we can get confused about how we are to receive our inheritance as sons of God. Those who teach Christians that they are under both the Old **and** New Covenants have a lack of knowledge about what Jesus Christ has done and established for His Church and need to be able to see the distinction between the two. We are not under law **and** grace, **only grace.** The two cannot co-exist with one another. Either one is under the influence of the law or the Holy Spirit. We

cannot follow both at the same time. One is powered by the work of the flesh, the other powered by divine ability of the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 3:1-5, & 5: 16-18)

To state that believers today are under the Old Covenant means that they are under the Law of Moses (the Torah), for this is the heart of the Old Covenant. The Law of Moses was a temporary system imposed on the nation of Israel until they would be brought to faith in Christ their Messiah (Savior). (Galatians 3:19-25) When Jews come to Christ, they are no longer under law, but grace. Why? Jesus delivers them from the law in order that they may be free to serve Christ in the newness of the Spirit. (Romans 7:6) In Romans chapter 7, the Apostle Paul likens Jewish converts to Christ as being married formerly to the law, but now dying to it in order to marry another, which is Christ. Paul makes it clear that Israel could not keep the Law of Moses and that salvation and righteousness was not found in the law, but only by God's grace through Jesus Christ our Lord. This is why we all needed a Savior from sin and death.

Teaching believers today that they must keep the law causes much confusion among the saints and actually leads to frustrating the operation of the grace of God in the lives of believers. (Galatians 2:14-21 esp. verse 21) Not only is God's grace frustrated, but believers become frustrated as well as they experience defeat from trying to obey God through their own fleshly works. We can only have victory in Christ and in the power of His Spirit. We can be so busy following **rules** and **regulations** that we can miss what the Holy Spirit wants to lead us to do. God now brings change to His people from the inside by a new spirit and not from outward rules and regulations. We can only truly obey God as we are empowered by His Spirit. (Romans 7&8) The Church in the New Covenant that the Lord has established is made up of a people that have a new heart and spirit given by God through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. Only now are we able to obey God in the Spirit. **Under the Old Covenant Law, Israel followed the letter of the law; under the New Covenant God's people follow the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8 & John 14 & 16) He now leads us into all righteousness.**

CHRIST IS GREATER THAN MOSES

There is also a higher law now in effect than the Law of Moses and this is the Law of Christ. The Law of Christ is greater than the Law of Moses and is what Christians are to obey today. (Hebrews 1:1-2, 3:1-6, I Corinthians 9:21) If we try to follow the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ, we will be trying to serve two masters and we know that Jesus said that this is impossible. God has made it known throughout the Holy Scriptures that the Old Covenant Law (of Moses) has been fulfilled so that the New Covenant (Law of Christ) could come. This New Covenant was established by the Lord Himself and is an everlasting Covenant. This Covenant was made between God the Father and God the Son, it cannot be broken and is ratified and sealed with the Blood of Christ Himself. It was based on a promise that God made to Abraham and God made an oath to Himself that He would fulfill the promise! He has done that through His Son, Jesus. This is a powerful truth that we can be certain of! The revelation of this fact is a must for every New Covenant believer in Christ. (To understand this awesome truth, read carefully *Hebrews 6:13-20, 7:18-19, 8:7,13, 13:20, Colossians 2:14, Ephesians 2:15)

As we can see, the fulfillment of the promises of this New Covenant is not based on what we do, but on what Christ has done. We must understand that the New Covenant promise is not made directly to us (the seeds) but to Christ (the Seed), so it is not up to us to try to fulfill the requirements or conditions; Jesus has done that for us. (Galatians 3:16-18) When we understand this incredible fact, we can just receive our inheritance in Christ by faith, cease from our own works and enter into His rest! (Hebrews 4:7-11) We all need to stop trying to work for what God gives us freely by His grace. (Read the story of the Prodigal's Son – Luke 15:11-32) We cannot be in unbelief about what the Lord has done for us. (Hebrews 3:12, 17-19) All we have to do is believe and enter into the finished work that Jesus accomplished on the Cross and walk in it by the power of God's Spirit. To God be the glory for all of His marvelous works and wisdom! He knew that we could never fulfill the promise, so He did it for us! We need to believe in Christ and the New Covenant.

In His Word, God has made it clear that the promise would not come through works of the Law but by faith in Christ. The Old Covenant was only a temporary covenant until the everlasting Blood Covenant could come. (Galatians 3:19-25, Colossians 2:14-17, Hebrews 8:6-13, *13:20) A greater Covenant has been established with better promises and the blood of Jesus (the Christ) has ratified it. (Hebrews 8:6) This is where God is working today. The Old Covenant is obsolete (out of date or no longer in force); God is no longer working there. Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant Law and brought it to a completion so that the New Covenant could come. God has moved on and so must we. All Christians today are under the New Covenant and this is what we are to follow. Instead of trusting in our own works, we are to trust in what Christ has done for us. (Galatians 2: 19-20)

GRAFTED INTO CHRIST BY FAITH

There is a popular teaching among some in Messianic Judaism that when Gentiles receive Jesus as Savior, that they are then grafted into Israel according to Romans 11:17-18. This cannot be true for two reasons. The first is that the nation of Israel is identified as the branches that were cut off through unbelief. It is only when Jews come to Christ that they would be grafted back into the tree and then they are grafted in by faith in Jesus Christ. Secondly, those who teach that all Christians must come back to their Jewish roots must understand who supports who. (Romans 11:18) Those that teach that our roots are in Judaism need to let the Bible interpret the Bible. In the Word of God the Root is identified as being Christ, not the nation of Israel. (Isaiah 11:10, Romans 15:12, Revelation 5:5 and Revelation 22:16) In fact we are taught that we must be **rooted in Christ** and built up in Him. (Colossians 2:6,7) **Israel does not bear (support or sustain) the Church, but Christ does.** He is the Author and Finisher of our salvation. Only those who are born again of the Spirit are grafted into Christ. Those who are grafted in constitute the Church or Body of Christ. According to this our roots must be in Christ and not a religion. Only those rooted in Christ have eternal life.

There is no way that Israel (or Judaism) could be to the Church what Christ is to His people. As a matter of fact, the Nation of Israel as a whole have not accepted Jesus as their Messiah and are identified as the **branches** that were cut off. (Romans 11:15-21) In this passage, both Jews and Gentiles are identified as **branches**, not the tree or root. As those Jews come to Christ they are then grafted back into the tree of life as they come to faith in Christ. (Israel was to keep the law that would eventually lead them to their Messiah who would give them eternal life.) Jesus said, **"I am the way, the truth, and the LIFE: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."** (John 14:6) Notice that they are grafted back in by faith in Christ, not into their own religion of Judaism. In other words they are to make the transition from the Old Covenant to the promised New Covenant that provided the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 8:8-10)

We must remember that God chose the Nation of Israel to be the keepers of His promises through the Law and of the Messianic Prophecies. (Romans 9:4-5) They were inheritors by being entrusted with the Covenants, but were to later come to faith in their Messiah in order to receive the promise of eternal salvation. (Galatians 3:19-25) The Gospel is preached to the Jew first, then to the Gentile. The nation of Israel must have the gospel preached to them as well in order to be saved. The promise of eternal salvation is first made available to them. According to the Bible just because one may be a physical descendant of Abraham (natural Israel) though does not mean they are automatically children of God (spiritually). (Romans 2:28-29, 9:6-8) One must receive the promise as handed down to the Promised Seed, which is Christ in order to be grafted in to eternal life.

All promises of salvation and inheritance from God are now in Christ. (Galatians 3:6-18) In order to obtain the promise, one must accept Christ as Messiah or Savior, whether they are Jew or Gentile. As of now, only a remnant is being saved, although it is God's will for all of Israel to be saved. (Romans 11:26) All branches (both Jews and Gentiles) that are in Christ are there **by faith** and are not to boast against each other for we are all under God's grace and mercy. (Romans 11:16-21, 32, Ephesians 2:8-13) The branches do not support the root, but the root supports the branches. The branches do not supply life but bear the fruit of it. In Romans 11, both Jews and Gentiles who accept Jesus as the Christ are grafted into Him by faith. The Apostle Paul makes it clear that these promises would not come through the law, but faith in Christ. (Galatians 3:11-18)

According to the Bible, **a Jew** does not become a true Jew or Israelite until they come to faith in Jesus Christ the Messiah. (Romans 2:28-29, 9:6-13) In other words, a Jew cannot really arrive at their true destiny of being sons of God until they come to Jesus Christ as Savior. Until Israel comes to their Messiah, they are servants and not yet sons of God. (Galatians 4:1-7) What life does a tree have if it has no root? So also, we do not have eternal life without Christ. Branches cannot survive apart from being connected to the tree just as well as branches cannot survive apart from the vine. (John 15:1-5)

Those who teach that the Church (which at the present time is made up mostly of Gentiles converts) is grafted into the people of Israel most often insinuate that they should adhere to the principles of Judaism as well. As was stated earlier, the Church is not Jewish or Gentile but we are now united into one new man (a new race) and joint-heirs with Christ. (Galatians 3:28) We are not to be entangled again into bondage to Jewish laws, but have died to the law so that we may live for Christ. (Galatians 5:1-5 & 2:19) It is not for us to go back to an impossible system to keep because the law could not save us but only condemn us. (Romans 8: 1-10, II Corinthians 3:9) The law could not save Israel and the law cannot save us in the Church. The law could not ultimately justify Israel in the sight of God and neither can it justify the Church in His sight. As the Apostle Paul declared, **"For if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ**

died for nothing!” (Galatians 2: 21 NIV) Not only could the law not save us but also it could not empower us to live up to the righteous requirements that the law demanded. This is precisely why Jesus had to come to save us all from our sins and do for us what we could not do for ourselves- fulfill the righteous requirements of the law.