

Galatians Lesson 04

Galatians Chapter 4

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Memory verses for this week: *2 Pet 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

Introduction: Last week in Chapter three, we found that the covenant God made with Abraham was all by faith. The law had a purpose in that it taught us our sinful condition before God, but it could never bring us to God. Only by coming through Jesus Christ can we have salvation.

I. Stand In Grace, Not the Law

Galatians 4:1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

Paul relates a servant and a child as being much alike here in Chapter 4. Until a child receives his inheritance he is much the same as a servant. An heir is a prospective owner of an estate. The child is under the guardianship of either a guardian or tutor.

Governors or stewards have charge over the property. In verse 3, it refers to how the Jews, under the law, had no liberty as we have when we accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We that are under grace are free, but the Jews up until this time were not free.

Gal 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

We know that God has perfect times for things that are to come to pass. The angel came and announced that Mary would be blessed and would bring the savior into the world. This was at the fullness of time. In our recent study of John, we saw a number of times when men were sent to take Christ, and he walked right past them. Each time, it said that "his time was not yet come."

But one day, that day did come for him to come and die on Mt. Calvary to pay our sin debt. This was not in man's timetable, but it was exactly when God chose. He was sent from God, born of a woman, according to the scriptures. Jesus came to redeem them that were under the law.

Genesis 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou

hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Hebrews 9:26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 10:9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

Gal 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

What a promise we have when we know Christ as our Lord and Savior. Because God is our Father, we become the sons of God, and an heir of God through Christ.

I like what J. Vernon McGee had to say about this adoption of sons.

God had a twofold purpose: (1) To redeem those under the Law. They were children under the Law. You see, the Law never made anyone a son of God. (2) That they might receive the adoption of sons.

Adoption has a meaning different from that of our contemporary society. We think of it in relationship with a couple that may not have children of their own. They go to a home where there are children for adoption and see a precious little baby there. Their hearts go out to him, and they adopt him in their family by going through legal action. When the little one becomes their child we call that adoption. However, the Roman custom in Paul's day was to adopt one's own son. *Adoption* (the Greek word is *huiothesia*) means "to place as a son." A believer is placed in the family of God as a full-grown son, capable of understanding divine truth.

In 1 Corinthians 2:9–10 we read, *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."*

This simply means that the truth in the Word of God can be interpreted only by the Spirit of God, and until He interprets it, man cannot understand it. The Holy Spirit alone can interpret the Word of God for us. That is what makes the difference today in certain men. A man can bring to the Word of God a brilliant mind. He can learn something about history, archaeology, and language.

He can become an expert in Hebrew and Greek but can still miss the meaning. Why? Because the Spirit of God is the teacher. Even Isaiah the prophet said that: "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him" (Isa. 64:4). If you want to know about Christ, only the Spirit of God can reveal Him to you.

II. The Idolatry of the Galatians before they were Saved

Gal 4:8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

These that were serving these idols were not Christians at the time. They were not servants of these so called gods, but were really following the dictates of their father the devil. The first of the ten commandments states that we are to have no other gods before us.

Exodus 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Gal 4:9 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? 10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

After these were saved, it was a foolish thing to turn to the weak and beggarly elements. Note he refers to turning again to bondage. Any kind of sin is bondage, whether it be idolatry, lying, stealing, or any of the laws God has laid down. In our study of Acts, we saw in Chapter 15 that the Jews were never able to bear this yoke of bondage.

Acts 15:10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

To place one's self back under the law to keep our salvation after being delivered from its condemnation at salvation is contrary to all scriptural teaching.

Gal 4:12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all. 13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. 14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. 15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. 16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

Paul encourages those there in Galatia to be as he was, and that meant to be

faithful. It was a known fact that Paul suffered an infirmity in the flesh which I believe was his eyesight. But this weakness did not stop Paul from preaching the gospel.

2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

The people did not reject Paul when he visited them the first time because of this infirmity, but they received him as an angel sent from the Lord. Notice that he mentions that some would have plucked out their own eyes to give him if it were possible, substantiating my suggestion that the thorn in the flesh was his eyesight. Perhaps some bad words spoken against Paul had changed the peoples view of him this time.

We should ever temper our tongues to speak only the truth. Paul asks if they will turn from him because he preached the truth. The Word of God is a divider, and many will not accept God's truth. They want to hear pretty, soft things that tickle the ears. False teachers will do this for you, but not a true man called of God who is in God's will. Many turned from Christ when he preached strong doctrine.

John 6:60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Gal 4:17 They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. 18 But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

The Galatian believers had listened to false teachers and had turned from the truth to a lie. Paul lays out what the motive of these false teachers is:

- They zealously seek you in no good way.
- They desire to shut you out.
- Their object was to shut out the Galatians from Paul that they might be sought as teachers themselves. Only when God trains someone are they qualified to teach.

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

III. The System of Law and the System of Grace Exemplified in 2 Sons

Gal 4:19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, 20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

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

The Galatians for some reason had a desire to be under the law rather than grace. This probably come from their Jewish traditions and past service.

Gal 4:22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Hagar and her son Ishmael are an allegory picturing law and works while Sarah and her son Isaac are an allegory picturing grace and faith.

Ishmael was the son of Hagar, the bondwoman.

- Ishmael was born after the flesh. Natural birth, law, and works.
- Ishmael speaks of the covenant from Mt. Sinai which gendereth to bondage.
- Hagar as a handmaid brings forth slaves, as she was a slave.
- Mt. Sinai in Arabia speaks of the earthly Jerusalem and her children were in bondage.

Isaac was the son of Sarah, the free woman.

- Isaac was born of promise. This speaks of the spiritual birth, grace, and faith.
- It speaks of the covenant made with Abraham which is older than that made with Moses.
- The covenant made with Abraham and his seed speaks of the heavenly Jerusalem.

- The heavenly Jerusalem is free. This speaks of believers in Christ.

In the John Gill Commentary, Bro. Gill had these comments:

Paul gives an account of the false apostles, who pretended a zealous affection for the Galatians; which was not a good one, nor with right views, (Galatians 4:17), though zeal in a good cause, and which continues, is very commendable, (Galatians 4:18), and such a constant and hearty attachment had the apostle to them; wherefore he calls them his little children, says he travailed in birth on their account, it being his earnest desire that Christ might appear to be formed in them, (Galatians 4:19), wherefore since he was in doubt and distress about them, he was very desirous of being with them, and to alter his way of arguing with them; and from the law, and not the Gospel, show them their mistake and folly, (Galatians 4:20,21), which he does in the following allegorical way, by observing that Abraham had two sons, the one by a servant maid, the other by his lawful wife; the one was after the flesh, the other by promise; which allegorically signified the two covenants of Sinai and of Sion, (Galatians 4:22-24).

Agar the bondmaid represented the covenant made at Mount Sinai in Arabia, under which the carnal Jews and their posterity were in a state of bondage; and Sarah the free woman, the covenant of grace under the Gospel dispensation and the Gospel church state, which is from above, free, fertile, and numerous, (Galatians 4:25,26), which is confirmed, (Galatians 4:27), by a passage out of (Isaiah 44:1) and as these two women were typical of the two covenants, so their respective offspring represented the two sorts of professors, legalists and evangelical Christians.

True believers in Christ are like Isaac, the children of the promise; legalists are like Ishmael, men after the flesh, and of the same persecuting spirit with him: wherefore as it was then, that carnal Ishmael persecuted spiritual Isaac, so at this time the carnal Jews persecuted the real Christians, (Galatians 4:28,29) nevertheless for the comfort of the latter, it is observed out of the Scripture that the former shall be cast out, and not be heir with them, (Galatians 4:30), and the conclusion of the whole is, that the saints under the Gospel dispensation are not in bondage to the law, but are made free by Christ; to which freedom they are called, and in which they should stand.

Gal 4:27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the

bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

We, as Christians who know Jesus as Lord and Savior, are like Isaac. We are free.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

John 8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

We know the flesh and the spirit are at war against one another daily. The flesh shall not inherit with the spirit. We are to cast out the flesh, and put off the old man daily. We are to put on Christ.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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