

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4 – Sons and Heirs; Fears for the Church; Two Covenants

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS -- JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH:

After Paul’s dramatic conversion on the Damascus Road, converting him from the chief resistor and persecutor of the early church to one recognizing that in his religious zeal he had actually become a persecutor of the Messiah, he became God’s messenger to the Gentiles. **Oh how he preached the gospel – “I preach nothing but Christ and Him crucified!” (1Co 2:2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.)** That salvation is through and only through the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. Not Christ plus anything else at all!

For the Judaizers had come into Galatia and began spreading a perversion to the gospel message that for one to be saved they had to believe in Jesus Christ AND to be circumcised and to keep the dietary laws and to keep the law of Moses. Paul sees these false teachers as poisoning the believers. He looks on them as kidnappers of the true gospel position of being saved by grace and grace alone. He looks upon their false teachers committing the most horrible thing of taking people away from the one and only pure and true stream of eternal life! So here is addressing their foolishness of turning away for grace!

Thankfully in Paul’s responding to this awful situation, which is still prevalent in the church today, that of false teachers, **the Book of Galatians is such a source of truth and revealing that justification is through faith in what Jesus Christ has done and in this faith alone!**

Habakkuk wrote - Hab 2:4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith. In Galatians, Paul repeats this verse in chapter 3:11 “But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

In chapters 1 and 2, Paul wrote of his personal experience with grace.

Chapters 3 and 4 address Paul’s doctrinal instruction about grace. Chapters 5 and 6 give practical application of grace. It’s a fabulous book—Paul’s manifesto on the absolute necessity of standing in liberty and his glorious defense of the gospel of grace.

Chapter 4:

Look at a young man in love. No one tells him to write love letters, pick flowers, or go for a walk in the park with his sweetheart. These things just happen when we’re in love. That’s what the Lord wants for you and me. He wants to set us free and wants us to respond to that freedom in love. Legalism, however, will drain us of our passion for Jesus Christ. If you are feeling dry or dragged down in your spiritual life, it could well be because you have fallen back into a pattern of legalism. Perhaps you have imposed rules upon your spiritual life—structure, commitments, and vows. Because you can’t keep them, however, you inevitably find yourself feeling dragged down, dried up, and wiped out. Such is what was happening to the believers in Galatia. Judaizers came on the scene, saying, “You need to follow rules and regulations. You need to become circumcised. You need to adhere to the Jewish traditions.” Responding with holy indignation, Paul said, “No. Don’t let anyone burden you with rules, rituals, or expectations. Stand fast in your liberty. You’ll end up serving the Lord more energetically, talking to the Lord more frequently, studying His Word more joyfully, and giving more generously than when you had rules and legalistic trips that you couldn’t keep and that only drained you of joy.” The question then becomes, “Why was the law given?” At the end of chapter 3, we saw the law was given to show us that we don’t measure up, that we’re sinners in need of a Savior. The law is a schoolmaster, said Paul, to bring us to Christ. But after faith is come, we no longer need the schoolmaster, as we exchange a relationship based on the law for a relationship based on love.

I Am His and He is Mine – George Robinson – sung by Discovery Singers

*Loved with everlasting love,
Led by grace that love to know;
Grace of spirit from above,
Thou hast taught me it is so.
Oh, this full and perfect peace!
Oh, this transport all divine!
In a love which cannot cease,
I am His, and He is mine.
In a love which cannot cease,
I am His, and He is mine.
I am His, and He is mine.*

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4 – Sons and Heirs:

Gal 4:1 Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all,

Gal 4:2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

Gal 4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

Gal 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

Gal 4:5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Gal 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

Gal 4:7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Fears for the Church:

Gal 4:8 But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.

v. 1-2 Donald and Marla Trump had a baby. As heir to the Trump fortune, this little Trumpette will one day inherit multiplied millions of dollars. Does this mean when she was five years old she could write checks, use credit cards, and make investments? No. Even though she was an heir, being a child, she was under the restrictions of her parents, nannies, and teachers. The same is true of God's people. Before they were brought into adult sonship through Jesus Christ, they were kept under a tutor, a schoolmaster—the law. God knew all along He would send His Son to die for His people. He knew they would eventually be brought into a right standing with Him through the blood of Jesus Christ. Thus, the law was only a temporary tutor.

v. 3 The “elements of the world” refer to the law. Why is the law referred to in this way? Because the basic building block of society must be the law. Any society that ignores the foundational principles of the law will crumble, dissipate, and be destroyed from within. The problem is, the law tells us what to do, but it fails to give us the power to do it.

v. 4 when the fullness of time—at just the right time—Jesus Christ came to purchase we who were under the law, we who were trying hard to obey it, but powerless to do so.

v. 5 The Greek word translated “adoption” is *huiothesia*. *Huios* meaning “son,” and *thesis* meaning “position,” *huiothesia* means “taking the position of a son.” **The Son of God took our position on the Cross of Calvary in order that we might in turn take the position as sons of God.** Adoption is not the means of entry into God's family.

v. 6 Because we're adopted sons, we have the Spirit of the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, in our hearts. Therefore, we can call God “Abba,” the Hebrew word that means “papa,” or “daddy”—and He will respond.

v. 7 Although we're no longer slaves but sons, we need to understand that the privilege of prayer, wherein we cry, “Abba, Father,” is not given to enable us to give God orders, to say, “Bless this, do that, provide the other.” Such is not prayer at all. Prayer is the Spirit of Jesus Christ working in and through us **in order to bring us into harmony with the perfect purposes of the Father.** Prayer is the Spirit of Jesus in me crying, “Abba”—not for manipulation, but for unification—to become one with His perfect purpose and plan.

v. 8 “Before you were saved,” Paul said, “you served those which by nature are not gods.” The same is true today. People who are into the worship of idols wear robes and put on masks. They sprinkle water, burn incense, spin prayer wheels, and light candles—all in an effort to manipulate their gods. Galatians.

v. 4 But when the fullness of time was come, and this is of course referring to the coming of Jesus Christ, God had promised for four thousand years that the Messiah would come. And that in the fullness of time, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, and you remember how conscious Jesus was of this hour, this day.

The Psalmist spoke of the day (*Psalms 118:24*), this is the day that the Lord has made. We will be glad and rejoice in it. Save now! Save now! Blessed is He comes in the name of the Lord, the day when the Messiah would arrive.

And as Zechariah said (*Zech. 9:9*), behold, rejoice ye daughters of Jerusalem, shout for joy, your King is coming. He is lowly, sitting upon a donkey. And that day that Jesus made His entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, was the day that God had promised to Israel.

But, according to the prophecy of Daniel (*Daniel 9:26*), the Messiah was cut off without receiving the kingdom.

But Isaiah tells us (*Isaiah 53:8*), that in His being cut off or crucified, he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.

So, the whole program was laid out by God in the Old Testament. **But through the death of Jesus Christ, we have now righteous provision for the forgiveness of our sins. And we have now a new relationship with God. We are children of God.**

In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son. He was made of a woman. Going back to the very beginning (*Gen. 3:15*) when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, God said the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head or would destroy the serpent, bruise the serpent's head. Actually, here He is! Born of the woman.

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Gal 4:9 *But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?*
Gal 4:10 *You observe days and months and seasons and years.*
Gal 4:11 *I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.*

Gal 4:12 *Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all.*
Gal 4:13 *You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.*
Gal 4:14 *And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.*
Gal 4:15 *What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.*

Gal 4:16 *Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?*

Gal 4:17 *They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them.*

Gal 4:18 *But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you.*
Gal 4:19 *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,*
Gal 4:20 *I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.*

vs. 9-11 “What are you doing?” asked Paul. “You’re burning incense. You’re sprinkling holy water, lighting candles, fingering beads, and repeating prayers over and over again. You’ve gone right back into pagan ritualism, but you’ve been set free from all that stuff.” There’s something within us that gravitates towards the law and rituals, legalism, paganism, and all the stuff from which Jesus Christ came to set us free. “Well, I just feel more holy if I can hear the chants or the swishing of robes,” you say. That’s okay—but you don’t need those things. There’s a better way: Be totally free in your love relationship with God. Just enjoy the Lord!

v. 12 “I’m not keeping ‘kosher’ rules. I’m not under Judaistic traditions,” said Paul. “You’re Gentiles. I live like you do.”

vs. 13-14 “*at the first*,” said Paul, “you received me and the message which I brought, even though I was suffering from a physical infirmity.”

v. 15 Here, many commentators believe we are given a clue as to what Paul’s infirmity was—perhaps an eye disease that caused his eyes to ooze and always appear runny, similar to perpetual pinkeye. Not only would such an infection be painful for Paul, but it would be painful for others to look at as well. Yet Paul says his infirmity didn’t prevent the Galatians from receiving him with such a measure of devotion that they would have given him their own eyes if possible.

v. 16 “Are you turning away from me now because I am speaking truthfully by telling you that you’re missing the mark by getting involved in legalism again?” asked Paul.

v. 17 Legalists appeal to the macho mentality within each of us. “Come join us,” they say. “We’re really radical. We pay the price. We bear the Cross. We deal with stuff that only a few can deal with.” And we are prone to say, “I want to be one of the few, one of the chosen, one of the elite group that God will use in these last days. So I’ll submit to stipulations and regulations in order that I can be among the few, the chosen—the spiritual marines!” “*they want to exclude you*” “Legalizers have their own agenda,” said Paul. “They want to exclude you from grace in order that by your own works, you can support them.”

vs. 18-20 “I labor in birth again..,” said Paul. To another group of believers, he said, “You have ten thousand instructors, but not many fathers” (see 1 Corinthians 4:15). Paul’s goal was not merely to dispense theological information, but to see the reality of regeneration. He wanted to see people born again, to see them grow in grace, to see them mature in liberty.

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INTERPRETATION

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Two Covenants

Gal 4:21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

Gal 4:22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.

Gal 4:23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,

Gal 4:24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—

Gal 4:25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—

Gal 4:26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Gal 4:27 For it is written: "REJOICE, O BARREN, YOU WHO DO NOT BEAR! BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR! FOR THE DESOLATE HAS MANY MORE CHILDREN THAN SHE WHO HAS A HUSBAND."

Gal 4:28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

Gal 4:29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.

Gal 4:30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREEWOMAN."

Gal 4:31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

vs. 21-23 To validate his argument, Paul appealed to Abraham, father of the Jewish race. God said to Abraham, “I’m going to bring you into a new land. I’m going to give you a new name. I’m going to make you great. And from you will come forth a people as innumerable as the stars in the heavens or the sand on the seashore.” Abraham believed God. But when he was eighty-six years old, with the promise yet to be fulfilled, his wife said, “Honey, I realize God spoke to you, but let’s be practical. You’re eighty-six. I’m seventy-six. This promise isn’t going to come to pass the way we thought it would. Therefore, take my slave girl, Hagar, have relations with her, and the child you produce will be the promised seed God promised you.” When God gives a promise, there is almost invariably a gap of time. Because God is so good, the promise still comes because He’s faithful to His Word. But the problem is, I have a bunch of Ishmaels to deal with. You see, to this day, blood is shed daily in the ongoing struggle between the children of Ishmael and the children of Israel. So, too, in my own life, whenever Ishmael is born as a result of my own fleshly efforts, strife, anxiety, and tension are also birthed in my life. Push God, rush God, help God out—and you’ll have an Ishmael on your hands. Abraham was a great man. Yet this friend of God, this father of faith, this incredible saint had a problem that God recorded as a lesson for each of us today: He was impatient.

v. 25-26 “Hagar illustrates Jerusalem—or Judaism,” said Paul. “But the Jerusalem which is above—the heavenly Jerusalem—is free.”

v. 27 I Paul reminded the Galatians that, according to Isaiah 54:1, the barren one—the Gentiles—would produce more children than the people of promise—the Jews.

v. 28 We’re Isaac, the children of promise. It’s a miracle we’re here. Ten years ago, would you have thought you would be sitting in church—called out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God’s glorious light?

v. 29 The custom in Abraham’s day was to throw a party to celebrate the day one’s son was weaned. Thus, it was at Isaac’s “weaning party” that Ishmael, his half brother, began to taunt and tease him. That is what the law does to this day: It causes those who live by it to taunt and tease those who don’t. “You’re shallow. You’re carnal. You’re weak. You’re immature. I’m disciplined. I’m chosen. I’m a spiritual marine,” says the legalist to the child of promise.

vs. 30-31 The cure for the mocking and taunting of the legalizers is to get rid of the law. Cast it out. We are to preach the law to those who are hard of heart. Once a man opens his heart, however, the law has done its job

Contrasts between real Christianity and legalism:

v. 22 The first contrast Paul draws between real Christianity and legalism is the contrast between freedom and slavery. One son of Abraham was born by a freewoman, and one was born by a bondwoman. The real Christian life is marked by *freedom*.

v. 23 The second contrast Paul draws between Christianity and legalism is the contrast between a work done by God’s promised miracle and a work done by the flesh. The real Christian life is connected to *God’s promised miracle* and not the flesh.

vs. 25-26 The third contrast Paul draws between Christianity and legalism is the contrast between heaven and earth. Real Christianity comes from *heaven* and not earth.

v. 27 The fourth contrast Paul draws between Christianity and legalism is the contrast between many more and many. The abundance and glory of the New Covenant is shown by the fact that it would soon have many more followers than the Old Covenant.

v. 29 The fifth contrast Paul draws between Christianity and legalism is the contrast between persecuted and persecuting. The legalists - represented by Ishmael - have always persecuted true Christianity, represented by Isaac. As we walk in the glory, in the freedom, in the miraculous power of this New Covenant, we should expect to be mistreated by those who don’t.

v. 30 The sixth contrast Paul draws between Christianity and legalism is the contrast between inheriting all and inheriting nothing. While the “Isaacs” of this world may be persecuted, they also have a glorious *inheritance* that the “Ishmaels” of this world will never know. We are heirs of God through the principle of grace, not works.

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Excerpts from C.H. Spurgeon's Sermon, “Preaching! Man's Privilege and God's Power

If you will be blessed under the Word, would that you would pray before you come here.

You sometimes hear of preparation for the Lord's Supper—I am sure if the Word is to be blessed, there ought to be a preparation for hearing it.

Do you, when you come up to this house, pray to God before you come?

"Lord, give the minister words;

help him to speak to me to-day;

Lord, save me to-day; may the Word to-day be a quickening word to my poor soul?"

Ah! my friends, ye would never go without the blessing, if ye come up prayerfully looking for it, having asked it of God. Then after prayer, if you would be blessed under the Word, there should be an expectation of being blessed.

Now if you can come up to the house of God expecting that there will be something for you, you will have it.

We always get what we angle for. If we come up to find fault, there always will be faults to find.

If we come up to get good, good will be gotten. God will send no man empty away; he shall have what he came for.

If he came merely for curiosity, he shall have his curiosity gratified; if he came for good, he shall not be disappointed.

We may be disappointed at man's door; we never were at God's.

Man may send us away empty, but God never will.

Then while listening to the Word with expectation, it will naturally come to pass that you will listen with deep attention.

A young boy who had been awakened to a sense of sin, was remarked to be exceedingly attentive to sermons, and when asked why it was, he said, "Because I do not know which part of the sermon may be blessed to me, but I know that whichever it is, the devil will do his utmost to take my attention off then for fear I should be blessed;" so he would listen to the whole of it, lest by any means the Word of life should be let slip.

So do you, and you will certainly be in the way of being blessed by the Word.

Next to that, all through the sermon be appropriating it, saving to yourselves, "Does that belong to me?"

If it be a promise, say, "Is that mine?"

If it be a threatening, do not cover yourselves with the shield of hard-heartedness, but say, "If that threatening belongs to me, let it have its full force on me."

Sit under the sermon with your breasts open to the Word; be ready to let the arrow come in.

INTERPRETATION

Above all, this will be of no avail unless you hear with faith, Now faith cometh by hearing There must be faith mingled with the hearing.

Go home to your chamber, and say unto God,

"I desire to believe what I have heard;

I desire to trust my immortal soul in Jesus' hands.

Give me genuine faith;

give me a real trust.

Save me now, and save me hereafter."

I dare avow it—I never can believe that any man so hearing the Word can by any possibility perish.

Hear it, receive it, pray over it, and trust Christ through it, and if you are lost, there can be none saved.

If this foundation give way, another can never be laid. If you fall, we all fall together.

If trusting in Christ you can perish, all God's prophets, and martyrs, and confessors, and ministers, perish too. You cannot. He will never fail you; trust him now.

Spirit of God! incline the hearts of men to trust Christ. Enable them now to overcome their pride and their timidity, and may they trust the Savior now, and they are saved for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APPLICATION