

VII- Dependability of the Pure Gospel Galatians 4:8-31 Galatians 5:1

Galatians 4:8-31 Galatians 5:1 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 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. 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? 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. 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? 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. 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. 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Exposition of the Text:

We come to the last session in the Pure Gospel We Preach section of our outline. Paul was concerned with the Galatians out of a heart of love and compassion. He was probably more concerned for them than they were themselves. He loved them. In this section we see a heartfelt plea from Paul to them as he reminds them from where they have come. He uses the allegory of Hagar and Sarah to show them the better covenant of grace over the law. Paul was concerned that they would turn to paganism again. The sad fact is that this is what happened to the churches of Galatia. J.V. McGee says, "When I visited that Galatian country in Asia Minor, where the seven churches were located, I saw how completely the population then was given over to the worship of idols." 45 The concern was real as we see. They have grown away from the dependable gospel to idolatry. We are only one generation away at any time from paganism in this world. We must depend on the Gospel.

Outline: Dependability of the Pure Gospel Galatians 4:8-31 Galatians 5:1

A- Personal Appeal: Galatians 4:8-20

1- Return to Bondage: Galatians 4:8-11

a- In Past Enslaved to Idols: Galatians 4:8

b- Turned to "Weak and Beggarly Elements." Galatians 4:9

c- To Observing Mosaic Calendar: Galatians 4:10-11

2- Treated Paul Well In Past: Galatians 4:12-15

a- Follow Me: Galatians 4:12

b- Gospel Came By Infirmities: Galatians 4:13

c- Despise Not: Galatians 4:14

d- Willing to Give Own Eyes: Galatians 4:15

3- Had He Now Become An Enemy? Galatians 4:16-20

a- Because of Truth: Galatians 4:16

b- Wrong Motives of Judaizers: Galatians 4:17-18

c- Right Motives of Paul: Galatians 4:19-20

B- Allegory of Sarah and Hagar: Galatians 4:21-31

1- Do You Hear the Law?: Galatians 4:21

2- Historic Facts of Two Sons: Galatians 4:22-23

3- Interpretation As Two Covenants: Galatians 4:24-27

4- Application As Children of Promise: Galatians 4:28-31

C- Stand Firm In Liberty: Galatians 5:1

A- Personal Appeal: Galatians 4:8-20

We have before us the personal appeal of Paul for the Galatians to depend on the Gospel. He referred to them formerly as Galatians but in this section he calls them brethren.

1- Return to Bondage: Galatians 4:8-11

Paul was rightfully concerned in their wish to return to bondage of idol worship. He realized that if the gospel was perverted then it would lead to a hopeless situation.

a- In Past Enslaved to Idols Galatians 4:8

Paul is talking about the unconverted state of the Galatians. He includes both Gentile and Jewish Christians in this area. He might have gotten an argument from the Gentiles about their servanthood to the law so he says that they had formerly been enslaved to gods that were not gods. "They were enslaved in their lack of knowledge of God, because they worshipped false gods...Even if they had not observed the Jewish law they were still enslaved to worship idols..." 46 Act_14:11-13 gives us a living example of this in the life of Paul. He knew this was true first hand.

b- Turned to "Weak and Beggarly Elements." Galatians 4:9

Paul notes that they had stopped depending on the gospel. Why would they even want to return? They had known God and now they were wanting to the, "Revert to dead and sterile principles" (Phillips Translation.) They wanted to go back to the dead things of the past. "Why do you want to go back into bondage, into a second childhood? Leave the ABC's and enjoy the full inheritance that you have in Christ!" 47

c- To Observing Mosaic Calendar Galatians 4:10-11

Rom_1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation." The Galatians wanted to return to the keeping of the days, and feast day and all the holidays associated with the Jewish religion. "The world applauds religious people who observe holy days, etc.; God says they are BABIES!" 48

2- Treated Paul Well In Past Galatians 4:12-15

Paul gives the Galatians their due when he says they did not ill treat him.

a- Follow Me: Galatians 4:12

He exhorts them to follow him. He does this several more times in the scriptures. (See Act_11:35 ; 1Co_4:16 ; 1Co_7:7; 1Co_11:1; Phi_3:17 ; Phi_4:9 and 1Th_3:7) Paul knew his example was worth following. 1Co_11:1 NKJV says, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

b- Gospel Came By Infirmities: Galatians 4:13

Paul remind them that it was at great personal expense that the gospel came to them. He may have suffered greatly among them. He appeals to them here on the basis of his thorn in the flesh.

c- Despise Not: Galatians 4:14

They could have thought that he was very unattractive and shunned him but they did not.

d- Willing to Give Own Eyes: Galatians 4:15

What was Paul's thorn in the flesh? I personally believe it was eye trouble of some sort. Here they would have willingly given him their eyes if it were possible. He also wrote with large letters. Notice what J.V. McGee says,

"Probably Paul's thorn in the flesh was some sort of eye trouble, and it evidently made him very unattractive. I cannot conceive of them wanting to pluck out their eyes and give them to Paul if what he really needed was another leg. Apparently Paul had an eye disease which is common in that land and is characterized by excessive pus that runs out of the eyes. You can well understand how unattractive that would be to look at while he was ministering to them. Paul says, 'You just ignored it, and received me so wonderfully when I preached the gospel to you.'"
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3- Had He Now Become An Enemy?: Galatians 4:16-20

Set against the contrast of them even being willing to give him their eyes this next statement bears a lot of weight. Is he, "therefore become your enemy?" he ask them.

a- Because of Truth Galatians 4:16

Paul says because he told them the truth. Is that why he had become their enemy.

b- Wrong Motives of Judaizers: Galatians 4:17-18

Paul says that the Judaizers "Zealously affect you." The Judaizers used "Flattery." 50 They wanted to alienate Paul from the Galatians. It only takes a little seed of doubt to alienate some from the truth at times.

c- Right Motives of Paul: Galatians 4:19-20

Paul now not only calls them brethren but, "my little children." "In perhaps no other single verse does the apostle display more of his agony and aspiration for all his converts than he does here in Galatians 4:19 ." 51 Paul's heart is breaking over their rejection of the gospel.

B- Allegory of Sarah and Hagar: Galatians 4:21-31

Now he turns to an allegory of Sarah and Hagar to try to help them to see the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant. The entire book of Hebrews spends time contrasting these difference and showing the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant.

1- Do You Hear the Law?: Galatians 4:21

Paul ask them if they have really stopped to thing of what they are wanting to go back to. "Do you not hear the law?"

2- Historic Facts of Two Sons Galatians 4:22-23

The account that Paul uses here is found in Genesis 16-18; Gen_21:1-21 . The basic story is that Abraham had two sons, Ishmeal by Hagar, who was a hand maid of Sarah, and Isaac who was born of Sarah who was his wife and a free woman. One was after the flesh the other after the promise.

3- Interpretation As Two Covenants: Galatians 4:24-27

He gives the interpretation of this as meaning that there are two covenants. The old covenant represented by Hagar was the law and a covenant of bondage. This covenant had its origin at Mount Sinai. Hagar brought forth only a slave or a servant when she bore Ishmael and the law only brings forth servants.

The other was the new covenant of grace represented by Sarah and Isaac. Sarah brought forth the son who was after the promise and was free. Paul make the assumption that the readers would be familiar with the story and would be able to fill in the blanks.

4- Application As Children of Promise Galatians 4:28-31

He next relates the Christian to the Children of Promise like Isaac was. Isaac was born of a supernatural birth and we are born of a supernatural spiritual birth. In Galatians 4:29 the comparison is made to the persecution of Ishmael toward Isaac as being of the same nature as the Judaizers were doing to Paul. He reminded them that they were of the free and not of the bondwoman. The Gospel that Paul preached could be depended on for it was a gospel of grace and not bondage.

C- Stand Firm In Liberty: Galatians 5:1

"The danger that Paul saw in Galatia is with us today. The flesh loves and craves 'spiritual excitement'- candles, rituals, atmosphere, robes, etc. Men want a calendar for them to follow, celebrating Lent, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Whitsuntide, etc. THIS IS ISHMAEL BACK IN THE FAMILY AGAIN! There can be no mixture of law and grace. May God help us to hold fast to the simple grace of God!" 52

Paul admonishes us to "Stand fast...in the liberty...Christ has made us free.." We need to realize my friends that we must depend on the Gospel for salvation and not return to the "yoke of bondage." The gospel is dependable and we see this as we see that the law is totally undependable.