

#11 Galatians

Tom Tillman

Verse 19: 'My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰ I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.'

Paul is saying, 'You Galatians, my spiritual children, for whom I suffered persecution in bringing the Gospel to you, at the first: I'm worried about you and now I must go through this mental anguish again; how do you think I feel after hearing that you're abandoning the simplicity of the True Gospel, the Gospel of Grace and Mercy, the Gospel of Life... to willingly take yourselves under the bondage of Law, leading only to death.'

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

Paul is referring to the Law in two ways: first, the laws and statutes themselves, the 10 commandments as well as all of the 613 laws given to Moses. If someone thinks they are bound by any law or that they are able to do anything at all to curry favor with God, then they are bound by all the Law and under all the curse of the Law because, again, God said, very clearly, that all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, anything we can do is completely worthless in that regard; every man stands guilty and condemned except, only those who come to God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second way of listening to the Law: he means, the whole of the Law, the 5 books of the Law, the books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy: the whole of the history, especially of Abraham and of Israel, while being led, by Moses, through the wilderness.

The history of Israel under the Law is a history of failure, their continued failure while juxtaposed with the continued, never-ending faithfulness of God.

Even before the Law: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his sons: they're all stories of the failures of men against the always faithful, steadfast loving-kindness of God.

That is the picture Paul offers the Galatians. In himself, man can do nothing that is pleasing to God but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, He offers the freedom and liberty of the sons of God.

'You foolish Galatians!?' How can you be so blind!?''

I'm angry at the Galatians, just reading about it... think how Paul must have felt! I want to call down the fires of Heaven on these lying, deceitful Judaizers... and they're long dead... poor Paul! I look at the lying, false apostles, false prophets and false teachers of today... the same thing should rise up in us when we hear their lies and deceit. It's not a question of... 'Oh well... there are many different interpretations... some people think differently... as if any two opposing ideas can be correct. There is only right and wrong, good and bad, there is no gray with God. Even if Scripture does not specifically address some aspect of life, God has given us His Spirit Whose job it is to lead us into all righteousness. The problem arises when we chose to rebelliously go our own way. The same is true whether it be teachings we believe or actions we do; Paul wrote, 'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. ¹³ Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.' 1 Cor 6:12 There is no gray with God. Today's Judaizers are groups like Seventh Day Adventists and Hebrew Roots; both seek to bring you under Law, the Law which was never given to us and was never meant for us.

But, they say, 'He's a pastor so he must know what he's talking about... right? Live and let live...' Live and let die is what we do when we're silent. Too often, we remain silent because we don't know God's Word well

enough to recognize when we're hearing lies and deception so, out of fear, we just remain silent and let their lies have their deadly result.

Others say, 'We can eat the meat but spit out the bones:' what a stupid saying! Oh sure, they say, some things that are a little off... but all in all, it's a pretty good book or, he's a pretty good teacher or she's a pretty good preacher or whatever. He or she is on television so they must be ok... right!?

Jesus said, 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.'¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Matt 7:15 Paul, Peter, John and Jude wrote much the same. False teachers and false prophets would always be a danger to the Church and especially in these Last Days.

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

Now, of the history, in the *Books of the Law*, if you'll remember, God had promised to Abraham: 'You will have a son who will eventually become a great nation, you'll have all this Land and you will, eventually become a blessing to all the peoples of the Earth and the promised Savior would eventually be born from Abraham's descendants.' The problem was, it didn't happen right away. Abraham was 75 years old and Sarah was 65 when God first promised him a son so Abraham figured, he and Sarah had better *get busy*...if you know what I mean... so they got busy, as much as they were able, as much as they were able to be busy; some of us, being around that age, give or take a few years, know that it's not always easy to be as busy we might like. Well, about 10 years went by with Abraham and Sarah being as busy as they were able but it seemed as though God had forgotten His promise so they decided that they should help Him along.

Sarah had this great idea, that Hagar, her maid servant should be a *stand in* for her. Now Abraham, probably said, 'Oh, no, Sarah... we can do this but he may have been thinking, '*hubba, hubba!*' Anyway... that's what they did, Abraham got busy with Hagar and she got pregnant right away. She had a son whom they named Ishmael which means, *God will hear*.

Hagar had it made but throughout the time of Abraham's being busy with her, Sarah was angry and cruel toward her. Then, when Hagar became pregnant, she despised Sarah. Then, Sarah blames Abraham, 'It's all your fault!' So Abraham says, 'she's your maid, she's your problem, do whatever you think is best, dear.' So Sarah is cruel and Hagar runs away. Can you even imagine the turmoil in that household? Too much busyness!

But even this is all part of God's plan. In the person of 'The Angel of the Lord,' He came to Hagar: 'The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand."¹⁰ Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." (too many to count)¹¹ And the Angel of the LORD said to her:

"Behold, you *are* with child,

And you shall bear a son.

You shall call his name Ishmael,

Because the LORD has heard your affliction.

¹² He shall be a wild man;

His hand *shall be* against every man,

And every man's hand against him.

And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

Ishmael's descendants are today's Arabs and some Palestinians; just like Jacob, who became Israel, Ishmael also had 12 sons who became a great multitude of Arab tribes.

Imagine how much easier it might have been for Israel, throughout history, without the Ishmaelite multitude. See how God blessed the descendants of Ishmael: so much oil and money and yet, so lost as Muslims.

Eventually, 14 years later with Abraham and Sarah doing their best at keeping busy; they were 90 and 100 years old. Finally, Sarah miraculously became pregnant and delivered the child of promise: Isaac, which means, '*he laughs*.' Abraham delighted in Isaac so Ishmael, a teenager, was jealous and picked on little Isaac. 'So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. Therefore she said

to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *namely* with Isaac." ¹¹ And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son. ¹² But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. ¹³ Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he *is* your seed."

Two sons: Ishmael and Isaac: one born to a woman in bondage through works of the flesh, people trying to help God along... the other born to a woman who was free but a pregnancy and birth which were miraculous; only God could have accomplished it in people so aged.

Isaac is a forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ: both were children of promise and both were miraculous pregnancies.

Verse 23: 'But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic.'

One born according to the flesh, the other born according to God's promise; one born according to the works of man, the other born miraculously according to the plan, purpose and work of God. Paul says that they are symbolic, meaning they are a picture of something else. He doesn't mean that they are the imaginations of Moses, the writer; they were real people and real events. They were pictures of two Covenants:

Verse 24b: 'For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— ²⁵ for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children,'

Hagar and Ishmael are representative of the bondage of the Law. Remember, all that Paul is writing is in response to the Galatians choosing to leave the freedom and liberty of Salvation in Jesus Christ to go into the bondage of the Law which the Judiazers were peddling. They were choosing to take upon themselves the heavy, impossible bondage of the yoke of the Law. That impossible to keep Law was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai which is in Arabia which is the land of the Ishmaelites. And, remember too, the purpose of the Law was twofold: to illustrate the absolute Holiness and Righteousness of God and the absolute sinfulness of Man.

The Galatians were wanting to take upon themselves, to clothe themselves in the bondage which broadcasts their sinfulness while choosing to leave the freedom in which they were clothed, which shone forth as the Righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ through their faith in Him.

Two Covenants: the first ***Covenant of Promise*** which is actually the New Covenant and the Second Covenant which is actually the Old Covenant, the ***Covenant of Bondage***. Remember, we think, Old Covenant, New Covenant... Old Testament, New Testament... but the reality is, the New Covenant, under which we are, is similar to the 'older Covenant' with Abraham which, like ours, was built upon the promise and work of God.

Paul is illustrating that the True Church, the Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, we who are the adopted Sons of God, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Jesus Christ, His Covenant with us is very much like His Covenant with Abraham... based on the promise of God which would be fully accomplished by God. Just like Isaac, whose conception and birth were miracles of God, so, too, our New Birth is all the miraculous accomplishment of God; our salvation is all God's work, from His having chosen of us, from before the foundation of the World, to our New Birth when He chose to call us, reveal Himself and draw us to Himself, to our final being taken home with Jesus Christ, at death or in the Rapture. Our salvation is all God's work from beginning to end and throughout all Eternity... just like His Covenant with Abraham.

On the other hand, the World is overflowing with those who are under the Covenant of Bondage, who are depending upon their own 'good works' to gain favor with God: Paul is specifically referring to Israel under the Old Covenant of bondage but also, to so many who call themselves, 'christian,' today, and so many in the false religions around the World. Billions of people remain under the Covenant of Bondage while the Bible says a remnant of humanity will come into the light and life of freedom in Christ: 'Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.' Matt 7:13

Verse 26: 'but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.'

The New Jerusalem, above, created by God and most probably the place to which Jesus Christ referred when He said: 'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.'² In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. ***I go to prepare a place for you.***³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.' John 14:1 New Jerusalem is the wondrous place, we see coming down to Earth after the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ and after God recreates all things, in Rev 21:9: 'Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,¹¹ having the glory of God. Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.'

Now certainly, a place, a golden city cannot be the bride, the Lamb's wife; it's obviously referring to the people who populate the city. Even now, it's populated with all who have died, in Christ, who make up the Bride of Christ. When we say, 'Portland is weird,' we don't mean the buildings; we mean the people.

Verse 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."

See how this corresponds with Sarah, Isaac and our Salvation in Jesus Christ. She was the barren one, she was the desolate one but her descendants are many and they will have their final expansion and blessedness during the 1000 year Earthly Kingdom of King Jesus; they will be the head of the Nations and their king will be David, himself. David will be king of Israel but the Lord Jesus Christ will be King of all that is, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Israel is the Earthly people of God but Paul is saying something more in that we, the True Church, are the Heavenly people of God and our number will eventually exceed even Israel's. What Paul just quoted, above: 'Rejoice, O barren, etc.' is the beginning of Isaiah 54. Isaiah 53 is the famous chapter which describes the Messiah's crucifixion with the last words of that chapter being: 'And He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.'

Paul is referring to Israel, first, but also, even more so, the Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ and even more, so, the huge number of Gentiles who will come to faith during the Tribulation and then the countless Gentiles who will come to faith during the Millennium.

Verse 28: 'Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was*, are children of promise.

We are the miraculous children of promise, like Isaac.

Verse 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.

Just as Isaac was persecuted, so, too, have been the true Christians for the past 2000 years.

Just one example is Catholicism. They are definitely according to the flesh; their entire religion is based on works of the flesh, always doing but never enough while masquerading as the True Church. They persecuted and martyred countless true believers who stood on the truth of God's Word regarding our Salvation and Justification being based only on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 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."

All those, all around the World, who believe in their works for salvation have been cast out from the true family of God. We are the heirs of God. Jesus said, 'Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you...' Matt 7:22

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

We are the sons and heirs of God, we are those who live in the liberty and freedom of Salvation in Jesus Christ.