

### Galatians Argument - Lesson 3 – Chapters 3-4

Tonight we are going to continue with our overview of Paul's argument in Galatians. Before we get started, let's briefly go over a few things we need to remember as we go through the rest of the book.

First, I want to get some terminology down so that I can use these terms consistently. [Slide] Otherwise, this can get confusing. If you remember, the first week, we reviewed the Phases of Sanctification – Phase 1 is what happens at the point and time we believe – we are declared righteous by God – we ourselves aren't righteous, but Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. We are saved from the penalty of sin. This happens once and for all when we believe. I'm going to call this "Justification". So, remember – when I say Justification or Justified, I mean Phase 1 imputed righteousness. Phase 2 is our walk after Justification – when we are supposed to be walking in the Spirit and growing into spiritual maturity – learning loyalty to God – growing more Christlike. We are being saved from the power of sin. This is a continual process throughout our lives and we have our ups and downs, our successes and our failures. I'm going to call this "Sanctification". So, when I say Sanctification, I mean Phase 2 experiential sanctification – walking with God. Phase 3 occurs in the future - after we die or are raptured, go to heaven and receive our glorified, resurrection bodies. Then we will be saved from the presence of sin. I'm going to call this "Glorification". So, as I use the terms in these lessons – Justification is the point in time we believe and are declared righteous. Sanctification is the process of becoming spiritually mature. And Glorification our future glorified state of existence.

Briefly let's also define faith. When you talk about faith in a person, faith is simply trust or reliance on that person. Faith requires content - you trust or rely on that person for or about something. If we are talking about faith in God, this means that we are relying on God for something He said He would do, or about something He has revealed. In order to do that, we must know what God has said. So faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. In Galatians, we will see that the Galatian believers are faced with two choices about where they place their faith – either place their faith on God for righteousness – or they can place their faith on the works they do themselves for righteousness.

Let's remember what is going on in Galatians. The issue in Galatians is where does righteousness come from? Does righteousness come from faith or does it come from works? Or some combination of the two? The Judaizers were teaching that righteousness can come from works. Some were teaching that the Galatians needed to put themselves under the Mosaic Law in order to be Justified, and some were teaching that, even though they may be Justified by faith, they needed to put themselves under the Law to be Sanctified.

The final thing to remember is that the Mosaic Law was given by God and, properly understood, was not bad or evil. **Psalm 19:7-8** says: *The law of the LORD is <sup>b</sup>perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.<sup>8</sup> The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.* The problem is not the Law, but what the sinful flesh does with the Law.

Now we are going to cover Galatians chapters 3 and 4. There is a lot to cover, and this is going to be like drinking water from a fire hose, but I hope by doing this we can start to see how Paul

explains why the true gospel really is “good news” and why the false gospel of the Judaizers really is “bad news”.

So - last week we covered Chapters 1 and 2. In this part of the book, Paul is defending his authority as an apostle. The key verse we covered was Galatians 1:11 – *“For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. <sup>12</sup> For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”* In chapters 1 and 2, Paul recounts his history – before and after conversion – to show that he actually was an apostle because he was directly appointed by Christ as an apostle, and that he received the gospel directly from Christ – he didn’t get it from men. So – he is an apostle and the gospel he preaches is the gospel he received from Christ. Anyone who preaches a different gospel is to be cursed – because it is a false gospel.

We ended with Paul’s confrontation with Peter in Antioch – when Peter – who had been eating with the Gentiles - withdrew from fellowship with Gentiles because he feared the Judaizers. Paul called him out because Peter’s behavior would compromise the true gospel – his behavior was saying that they were still under the Law. Paul refuted him by reminding him that righteousness comes only by faith, not works of the Law. Paul ended with verses 2:21: “ <sup>21</sup> *I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”*

So, starting with chapter 3, verses 1 – 5: [Slide]<sup>1</sup> *“You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? <sup>2</sup> This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by <sup>a</sup>hearing with faith? <sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? <sup>4</sup> Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? <sup>5</sup> So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by <sup>c</sup>hearing with faith?”*

After pointing out in the last verse in chapter 2 that “if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly”, it sounds like the idea that “Christ died needlessly” brought out Paul’s deep frustration with the Galatians. Once, again, it’s like a parent getting on a rebellious child. This is very harsh and, just like he did in verses 6-9 of chapter 1, he is getting their attention with some really, really strong language. He says “you foolish Galatians” – this is pretty much the equivalent of “you stupid morons”. They really can’t miss that – he called them stupid morons for even thinking about buying what the Judaizers were selling. It is so bad that it appears to him that someone has “bewitched” them. They know Christ was crucified, it was public knowledge, Paul had proclaimed it to them. And Christ’s crucifixion was absolutely necessary. He’s asking them - Are you really that stupid? (Think about that – if it was moronic back then, what about today? What about Christians today who want to follow the Law – or any sort of legalism?)

Then he asks them several rhetorical questions to point out how stupid they are being. They knew the answers to these questions and that the questions clearly show the Judaizers to be wrong. He appeals to what they already know and what they have clearly seen first hand:

First, *did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by <sup>a</sup>hearing with faith?* Ok, Galatians, answer me this – did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law or by hearing with faith? They know the answer to this – hearing with faith. Picture a parent looking down at the child and the child looking up at the parent – the child says remorsefully – “hearing with faith”.

Next, parent Paul says: “are you really this foolish”? And then the Galatians get hammered with another question - *Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?* – “go ahead, tell me - *Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?* They knew that they had “begun” by the Spirit – so, did they think they could be perfected by their own flesh - they had to say – “well, no”.

Next, parent Paul says - *Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?* Galatians have to say – no, that would be really stupid. We haven’t endured all this suffering that we have experienced because of our faith for nothing.

Next, Paul, the parent, closes the argument and asks - *So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?*” They knew the answer – hearing with faith.

Think of things this way. What was going on in Galatia before Paul and Barnabas brought them the good news of the true gospel? Nothing. Jews were meeting in the synagogue like they always did – no Holy Spirit, no miracles, no persecution. Same thing with Gentiles – they were worshipping their idols – no Holy Spirit, no miracles and no persecution. Just living life.

Then come Paul and Barnabas with the true gospel. They preach the gospel, Jews and Gentiles believe and – Bam! – they receive the Holy Spirit. They see these miracles done through the Holy Spirit. It is clear to them that they have received the Holy Spirit. It’s not something that’s undetectable for them. How did they know it? Paul doesn’t exactly say here – he does refer to the authenticating miracles that were done “among them” – by Paul and Barnabas in this passage and maybe that’s what he was talking about. This had all happened when they believed the true gospel. This hadn’t happened before in the synagogue. This hadn’t happened with the Judaizers. This had only happened with faith – faith in the true gospel proclaimed by Paul and Barnabas. It is all based on faith. The Jews had been trying to make themselves righteous by “works of the Law” long before Paul and Barnabas got there. No Holy Spirit then. But when they believe in the gospel – they receive the Holy Spirit. Hmmm. Wonder who’s right – Paul or the Judaizers? Hmmm.

Paul points something else out. Everyone knew that they had “begun” by the Spirit. There is a lot of doctrinal depth in just this one clause – as there will be in most of the rest of the book - and we could go really, really deep – but we aren’t. We are going to take it generally. Paul is speaking of what happened at the beginning, when they believed. When they believed, they had “begun by the Spirit”. That’s Justification. This had occurred by faith and they knew it. So he asks them, having begun this way – having been Justified by faith – do you really think that you can be perfected by the flesh? This is speaking of Sanctification. You were Justified by the Spirit, do you think you can be Sanctified by the flesh? They know the answer is no – they know the flesh can’t do that. So, faith is required for both Justification and Sanctification. Reliance on the Law is the same as reliance on the flesh, and the flesh can’t do anything good.

So, in these verses – Galatians 3:1-5, Paul is trying to get their attention and is basically telling them – open your eyes, think about all that has happened – you know very well that none of this occurred through works. It has all occurred through faith. And you know that, having begun by faith, you continue by faith. Works didn’t justify you, and works won’t sanctify you. And if you didn’t already know that, I’m telling you that now. I’m the same guy, Paul, who brought you the true gospel of faith, the apostle sent to you by Jesus Christ, the one who did the miracles among

you – on behalf of Christ, I’m telling you that you can’t Justify yourself by works and you can’t Sanctify yourself by works.

At this point he goes into a long defense of justification by faith. The rest of Chapter 3 and through Chapter 4, he is going to the Bible – he’s going to Biblically defend the true gospel, and Biblically explain what the Law really was. He’s going to give them a Biblically correct perspective on both.

First, he starts with Abraham. Let’s read Chapter 3, verses 6-9: **[Slide]** <sup>6</sup> *Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.* <sup>7</sup> *Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.* <sup>8</sup> *The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the nations will be blessed in you.”* <sup>9</sup> *So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.* <sup>10</sup> *For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.”* Ok, he’s going to explain Justification by faith alone using Abraham as the example. This is the “go to” Scriptural support for Justification by faith – **Genesis 15:6** – “Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” This is the imputed righteousness you received the moment you believe. Abraham believed God– a one time occurrence – and this one time belief was reckoned to him – God declared that he was righteous – a judicial decision. That’s our example for Justification by faith. Belief = declared righteous = Justified. This is all that is required. You don’t make yourself righteous, you don’t justify yourself in the court of heaven, God declares you righteous. (Paul doesn’t say this here, but it is Christ’s righteousness that is imputed to us. That’s how we can be declared righteous.)

Therefore, he says – “be sure” – or, better – “know this” – that “it is those who are of faith who are ‘sons of Abraham’”. Only those who are Justified by faith – like Abraham – are “sons of Abraham”. They are spiritual descendants of Abraham. Only those who are of faith – not those who are of works. The Jews thought that, since they were physical descendants of Abraham, they were righteous. But Paul is saying – no – only those who are Justified by faith like Abraham – only these are “sons of Abraham”.

Paul’s logic is this, just like Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, we believe and it is reckoned to us as righteousness. Therefore, believers are “sons of Abraham”. They are the spiritual descendants of Abraham. By faith, not by blood and not by works. These spiritual descendants are sons entitled to inherit the benefits of the promises.

And it’s not just the Jews – because verse 8 - “*The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the nations will be blessed in you.”*” <sup>9</sup> *So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.*” So, God’s promise to Abraham that “all the nations will be blessed in you”, was looking forward to Christ and was actually a OT revelation of the gospel – it revealed that God justifies the nations by faith – Jews and Gentiles. All the nations means all the nations – Jews and Gentiles. All are justified by faith.

So then – another conclusion – “those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham the believer”. Only those who are of faith – Jews and Gentiles – are blessed with Abraham. Not those – Jews or Gentiles – who rely on works of the Law for righteousness. Why? Because they are under a curse according to the Law itself: Look at verse 10 – “*For as many as are of the works of the Law are*

*under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.”* He’s quoting **Deut. 27:6**. If you – Jew or Gentile – chose to rely on works of the Law to earn your righteousness before God – you will not. The Law itself places anyone relying on it under a curse – that’s **Deut. 27:6** – if you do not obey all the Law – every jot and tittle - the Law itself puts you under a curse. Contrast that with faith. Faith = Justification = sons of Abraham = blessing. Works = curse. The only way to be blessed with Abraham is by faith. All works of the Law gets you is a curse.

Paul then shows from the OT that - since Justification is based on faith - the Law cannot justify because the Law is not based on faith. Paul says – verse 11 : **[Slide]** <sup>11</sup> *Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident;”* No one is justified by Law, and he says this is evident: *for, “<sup>b</sup>The righteous man shall live by faith.” [that’s Hab 2:4]* <sup>12</sup> *However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “He who practices them shall live by them. [that’s Lev 18:5]”* Now, a more accurate translation of **Habakkuk 2:4** is this: “The one who is righteous by faith shall live.” He uses **Habakkuk 2:4** to show that man is Justified – declared righteous - by faith. And then he uses **Lev 18:5** to show that the Law is not based on faith – it is based on works – you have to do the works of the Law when you live under the Law. So, the Law isn’t of faith. Which means it can’t Justify anyone, all it does is impose a curse.

So now you have the blessing of Abraham which will include “all the nations” - and you also have Jews under the curse of the Law. How can the promise of blessing to all the nations be realized if the Jews remain under this curse of the Law? Jesus Christ. One thing that Paul makes very clear from this book is that Everything – Everything – Everything - hinges on Christ. Look at verse 13 **[Slide]**– <sup>13</sup> *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—* <sup>14</sup> *in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”* Christ took on the curse of the Law and redeemed everyone who was under the curse of the Law – through His death He took on the curse of the Law and took everyone who was under the Law out from under the curse of the Law – no more curse. So that, now in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come. God’s promise to Abraham that all the nations will be blessed in him, looked forward to Christ. In Christ, this blessing is made possible. And this is just the beginning of the blessing – this work of Christ also enabled everyone to receive the promise of the Spirit – Jews and Gentiles. But only through faith. Not works – through faith.

So now Paul has demonstrated from OT Scripture that everyone can be Justified by faith and cannot be Justified by works. That if you are of faith, you are sons of Abraham and by virtue of that spiritual sonship are blessed with Abraham. On the other hand, if you are looking to the Law for righteousness, you are not under any blessing – you are under a curse. The Law itself imposes a curse on everyone who bases his righteousness on the Law. Christ died and took on this curse so that, in Him, the promise to Abraham would be realized in human history – that “all the nations will be blessed in you”. So, the curse of the Law does not apply to those who are of faith like Abraham. Christ – Christ - is the blessing of Abraham – only through Christ is Justification by faith possible, and only in Christ are the blessings available, including the promise of the Spirit

Before we move on, let’s make an observation. The promise to Abraham was made over 400 years before God gave Israel the Mosaic Law. So, works of the Law had nothing to do with

Abraham's Justification. Law wasn't around, then, yet Abraham was Justified by faith. So, the Law doesn't have anything to do with Justification. Didn't then and doesn't now. That's one reason Paul used Abraham as the example. It's before the Law. The Habbakuk passage – “the one who is righteous by faith shall live” – this was written just before Judah went into exile in Babylon. So, by then, the Law had been around for over 800 years. This passage shows that the giving of the Law didn't change things - even after the Law had been given, righteousness was based on faith, and not works. Paul explicitly makes this point in the next verses.

Look at verse 15 - [Slide] *“<sup>15</sup> Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. <sup>16</sup> Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ. <sup>17</sup> What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.”* It's pretty clear what Paul is pointing out – that God made a covenant with Abraham – who was before the Law – and to Abraham's “seed” – meaning Christ – who would fulfill covenant and inherit all the promises God made to Abraham. This covenant was ratified by God to Abraham before the Mosaic Law was given. And the covenant would be fulfilled in and through Christ. Don't skip over this point - the covenant was made to Abraham and Christ. So, the Law didn't and couldn't do anything to the Abrahamic covenant. It was made and ratified before the Law was given and it was made to Christ, who came and ended the curse of the Law. So, the Law didn't nullify the Abrahamic covenant, it didn't change the covenant, and it didn't add any conditions to the covenant. The Abrahamic covenant stands as it was ratified by God, and the Law didn't change it. So, the inheritance – the fulfillment and inheritance of the benefits of the Abrahamic covenant are based on God's promise and not on the Law. Because, as Paul says, if it is based on Law, it is not based on a promise, but it IS based on a promise. So, God's promise to Abraham was not affected by the Law, nor was it made conditional by the Law. It would occur despite the Law because it is founded on God's faithfulness to His word. In other words – the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant and realization of its blessings – including the promise that “all the nations will be blessed in you” – which Paul already said looked forward to the gospel of justification by faith - depends only on God. The Law did not change anything. It certainly did not make its fulfillment conditional on human works.

So – now Paul has completely demolished the idea that Justification can come by works of the Law. It simply is not the way to be Justified. Christ had to be crucified to satisfy the curse of the Law, just to get it out of the way. So, Galatians – why does it make any sense at all to go back under the Law and the curse that Christ gave Himself to remove for you? As Paul said earlier, it is a rejection of God's grace. It makes absolutely no sense. The same thing applies to us today – if we put ourselves under any legalistic system, we are deserting God and rejecting His grace.

This naturally leads to a question – If all this is true, and righteousness was never by Law, why was the Law given?” – verse 19 – [Slide] *“<sup>19</sup> Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. <sup>20</sup> Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.”* So – why the Law then. I wish he would have explained the answer a little more, but I'll try to do the best I can. Why the Law then? First, observe that the Law had to do with transgressions - and not righteousness. Paul doesn't explain this here. There are other

passages in other books that do and you can look at those for further study. The only clues here are the mention of the Law being “ordained by angels” – the angels were involved (maybe as witnesses), and it required a mediator (presumably Moses). And Paul points out that you don’t need a mediator if only one party is involved and that party is God. But if there are two parties involved – holy God and unrighteous Israel – then a mediator was needed. That’s the hard part about this verse, but thankfully, I don’t think that is the main point.

The main points Paul is making in this verse is that the Law had to do with transgressions and was not permanent - but temporary. In Greek, the first part of this verse reads more like this - “It was added on account of transgressions until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made”. The part about the angels and the mediator is later in the verse. So, the Law was temporary – God meant it to last until – and that is the key word – until – the seed would come to whom the promise had been made – that means Christ. So, what I think we should get out of this is that the Law had something to do with transgressions, not righteousness, and it was TEMPORARY – was only intended to last until the seed of promise – Christ – came.

There’s another question - if the Law did not affect the Abrahamic Covenant, is the Law contrary to God’s covenant promises? [Slide] <sup>21</sup> *Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.* <sup>22</sup> *But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.* Is the Law contrary to God’s promises? Paul says emphatically – a very emphatic denial – NO! – May It Never Be! – Paul answers so strongly because the question itself comes from a fundamental error about the Law and righteousness. They did not realize that men are spiritually dead and that righteousness requires new spiritual life – being born “from above”. Following the Law could never do this. It is powerless to impart spiritual life. And if the Law given by God can’t impart spiritual life, certainly no human law – no human religious/moral/ethical system - can impart spiritual life. The Scripture – including the Law – imprisons everyone under sin – Jews and Gentiles - so that, the only way out is “the promise by faith in Christ to those who believe”. Spiritual life can only be imparted through faith in Christ, and therefore righteousness is only available through faith in Christ. It’s part of the promise - “all the nations will be blessed in you”. So, if you think that you can make yourself righteous, you are utterly and profoundly wrong. Without Christ, you are spiritually dead and you are powerless to make yourself spiritually alive by your own works. Only through faith in Christ can that be done.

The Law was not contrary to the promises of God because the Law was never intended to make a person righteous. It was powerless to do that. No law can do that. Only faith in Christ can do that. That pretty much puts the nail in the coffin for works based righteousness.

Paul now goes back to his point about the temporary nature of the Law. Here he starts using an analogy – the “παιδαγωγός” analogy. [Slide] <sup>23</sup> *But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.* <sup>24</sup> *Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.* <sup>25</sup> *But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a<sup>a</sup> tutor.* Paul is talking about the time in history between the giving of the Mosaic Law around 1450 BC until Christ came. This is what he means by “before faith came”. During this period of time, the Israeli was like a minor child who was under the care of a “tutor”. The word translated “tutor” is not really a “tutor” the way we think about it - in the sense of teacher or instructor. It was more like a personal guardian. This was a very common

arrangement when Paul wrote Galatians. A parent would appoint a guardian for his minor child – usually a trusted slave - and the guardianship ended at the time set by the parent. The guardian had authority over the child and the child was supposed to obey the guardian. The guardian was supposed to restrain, protect, and help the child grow into a responsible adult. This relationship continued until the child reached the age appointed by the parent. When the appointed time came, the guardianship was over – the guardian had no more authority over the child. So, in God’s plan, before Christ came into history, God appointed the Law as guardian over Israel. But, also in God’s plan, this guardianship was over when Christ came.

Paul then applies this to individual believers (talking to the Galatians): **[Slide]** <sup>26</sup> *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.* <sup>27</sup> *For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.* <sup>28</sup> *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* <sup>29</sup> *And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.”* This describes the position believers now have through faith in Christ. This also happens the moment we believe and are Justified. Through faith in Christ, we all become “sons” of God. “Sons” means adult sons entitled to all the privileges, benefits and responsibilities of adult sons. As adult sons, the guardianship of the Law does not apply – we are adults, the Law was for minors. Everyone who has been baptized into Christ – not water baptism, but Spirit baptism – everyone who has been baptized into Christ is identified with Christ – we have clothed ourselves with Christ. We are sons because we are His. This privilege of sonship by faith in Christ includes everyone without any of the class distinctions that the Law made (which makes sense, since the Law doesn’t apply anymore). Everyone is one in Christ – no Jew/Gentile distinctions, no slave/free distinctions, no male/female distinctions. And since we belong to Christ, through Christ we are Abraham’s descendants and heirs of the promise. All the Abrahamic promises will be realized to Christ and through Christ – remember the promise “all the nations will be blessed in you” – we are heirs of the promised blessing through Christ. This is all about Christ. Our new position is because of Christ. We are sons because we are in Christ and we are heirs of the promises to Abraham because we are in Christ. Everything runs through Christ. To have any of this you have to be in Christ. And you can only be in Christ by faith. Works won’t put you there.

Now, Paul is going to describe another aspect of what Christ did - He uses a similar analogy to the child/guardianship analogy he used before. He starts with a positional truth - Chapter 4, verse 1: **[Slide]** *Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything,* <sup>2</sup> *but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.* <sup>3</sup> *So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the <sup>b</sup>elemental things of the world.* I’m not sure who the “heirs” are in this analogy – is it just Jews or is it Jews and Gentiles. In my opinion – which doesn’t mean much – it is referring to all the nations. My reasons are: the context is “heirs” in the sense Paul just used it in the immediately preceding verse – that *if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.* – that Paul’s point in the last verse was that there is no Jew/Gentile distinction among the heirs – that the blessing of Abraham is to “all the nations” – that the “elemental things” referred to is a broad term that applies to Jews and Gentiles – and that, the Law was given by God and was not one of the “elemental things of the world”. So, I think that Paul is talking about the condition of “the nations” – Jews and Gentiles – before Christ came. In this analogy, Paul is describing the worldly powers that could control men before Christ, and what happened to those powers when Christ came.



Even though a child is the heir of the entire household, he is like a slave because his guardians and managers have control over him - he doesn't have the power to resist their control. So, until Christ came, the nations were held in bondage – powerless to resist the control of the “elemental things” of the world. These elemental things are the world's ways of thinking – its view of truth, reality, ethics, religion, God, idols, etc.. – the pagan worldview. It is the antithesis of the Biblical worldview. So, until Christ came, these ways of thinking had the power to control men. But, when it was time for men to come out from under this bondage and control, God sent Christ: <sup>4</sup> *But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,* <sup>5</sup> *so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.* Notice that this is very similar to verse 3:13. Christ redeemed “those who were under the Law”. He was born of a woman (His humanity) and born under the Law (a Jew) so that He could redeem everyone who was under the Law. This allowed everyone – Jew and Gentile – to receive the adoption as sons – adult sons, heirs of God. No longer under the control of the “guardians and manager” – the elemental things of the world.

Paul then applies this to individual believers: <sup>6</sup> *Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”* <sup>7</sup> *Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.* Because we are in a Father/Son relationship with God, we also have received the “Spirit of His Son” – the Holy Spirit – who indwells us and calls out directly to the Father in the intimate way a true son would – Abba, Father. It is an expression that assumes an intimate, familial relationship. So, through Christ, we are sons, we have the Holy Spirit, we can call out to God through the Spirit, and we are out from under the control of the “elemental things of the world”. **This is a positional truth – we are adopted sons, which occurred at the same time we believed and were Justified – but also a Sanctification truth – because of this position, we are out from under the power of the “elemental things of the world.” We don't have to live in slavery to them. We don't have to be under their control. In our Sanctification, our growth and maturity, we don't have to be controlled by these elemental things. More on that in Chapter 5.**

Now, in light of everything Paul has just said, he asks them another question: **[Slide]** <sup>8</sup> *However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.* <sup>9</sup> *But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless “elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?”* <sup>10</sup> *You observe days and months and seasons and years.* <sup>11</sup> *I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.* Before you believed, you were slaves – under the irresistible control of - these elemental things of the world. Christ died to free you from this slavery. This freedom is available to you by faith. Why in the world would you turn back to them and be enslaved all over again? He's amazed that they would do that. And – get this – Paul is saying, if you follow the legalistic gospel of the Judaizers, you will put yourself back under the control of the elemental things. Now we are starting to talk about Sanctification – growth and maturity. Paul is telling them that the false gospel of the Judaizers – that you can Sanctify yourself by following the Law – or any law - is itself one of the “weak and worthless” elemental things of the world – and that this false gospel will enslave and control you. That's what he says they are doing if they follow the Judaizers and look to the Law for Sanctification. Even if they believe that Phase 1 Justification is by faith, this will kill them in Phase 2 Sanctification. **This is a sanctification truth – a bad thing – even though we are no longer under the control of the elemental things of the world, we can choose to put ourselves back under them. If we do, we**

**become enslaved all over again, and we become worthless. We may think we are pleasing God with our legalism, but we are in fact deserting God and rejecting His grace. This is why Paul feared for them, that his labor would be in vain.**

Now, Paul is going to appeal to them in a more personal way to persuade them to listen to him – once again like a loving parent would speak to a wayward child - starting with verse 12: [Slide] <sup>12</sup> *I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong; <sup>13</sup> but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; <sup>14</sup> and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself. <sup>15</sup> Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. <sup>16</sup> So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? <sup>17</sup> They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them. <sup>18</sup> But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you. <sup>19</sup> My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you— <sup>20</sup> but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.*” This is a personal kind of exhortation – become as I am (free from the Law) because I have become as you are (free from the Law) – both were truly free from the Law. He reminds them how they had received him when he first came to them – despite his condition (whatever it was) – which many would have despised or loathed – they received him as they would “an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself”. They had received him with love and blessing. He asks them why that changed - all he has done is tell them the truth. Why would that make him their enemy? The real enemy are the Judaizers who are trying to convince you that you need to be “in the club” to be saved. They want you to need them. He was “in labor” with them before – like a mother with her unborn baby– when they first heard the gospel and he taught them about Christ, and after they were “born” they were running well. And now they have regressed and he is “in labor” with them again until they get the truth of Christ straight, again. He just doesn’t understand why they would want to go back to the things that had enslaved and controlled them and that Christ died to deliver them from.

Paul moves to one final argument in this part of the book – the allegory he applies to the story of Hagar and Sarah – verse 21: [Slide] *Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? <sup>22</sup> For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. <sup>23</sup> But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. <sup>24</sup> <sup>a</sup>This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. <sup>25</sup> Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. <sup>26</sup> But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. <sup>27</sup> For it is written,*

*“REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR;  
BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR;  
FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE  
THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND.”*

<sup>28</sup> *And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. <sup>29</sup> But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. <sup>30</sup> But what does the Scripture say?*

*“CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON,  
FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE  
WOMAN.”*

*<sup>31</sup> So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.*

This is the story of Hagar and Sarah, from Genesis 16. In Genesis 15:4, Abraham was childless and God promised him that he would have an heir. In Genesis 16, Sarah was barren and convinced Abraham to father a child through her slave, Hagar, as his heir. He did – this was Ishmael. However, in Genesis 17, God told Abraham that Ishmael would not be the heir of God’s promise, but that Sarah would have a son, even though she was barren and past child bearing age. She did – this was Isaac. So, here’s Paul’s point. Abraham had these two sons – the slave Hagar’s son Ishmael was born through a work of the flesh. Abraham did it. He didn’t rely on God but tried to impose his own plan on God and make his own heir. The free woman Sarah’s son Isaac was born through a supernatural work of God. God had His own plan and it wasn’t Abraham’s plan.

Hagar is the Mosaic covenant – the Law - which is represented by “present day Jerusalem” – the center of Judaism. The children of Judaism are born according to the flesh – relying on themselves and their own works and plans and not God - and, because of that, they are in slavery. Everyone under this system is under slavery.

Sarah is the Abrahamic covenant – she is not in slavery. She is free. And her child Isaac – the child born supernaturally by God according to God’s promise and God’s plan – is not under slavery. He is free. And we believers, like Isaac, are also born supernaturally by the Spirit. We are born by faith, in accordance with God’s plan and God’s promise. We are not in slavery. We are free.

However, just like Isaac - the supernatural child of promise - was persecuted by Ishmael - the child of the flesh, the believers in Galatia were being persecuted by the Jews.

And, like Scripture commanded - *CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN* - the Galatians were to separate from Judaism and those Judaizers who teach it. The same thing applies to us. The gospel of grace by faith and the false gospel of legalism proclaimed by the Judaizers cannot mix. You cannot put the two together. Paul has demonstrated that legalism is not and has never been God’s plan for righteousness. Never, not even when the Law was in place. So, the idea that legalism can somehow be pleasing to God is wrong. It’s like Abraham trying to impose his own heir and his own plan on God. That doesn’t work. God tells us what He has done for us through Christ and that all that is required is that we accept that in faith. We don’t do anything but have faith. God tells us that, when we have faith in Christ, He Justifies us. God tells us if we walk in faith in Christ, He will Sanctify us. God tells us that, because we are Christ’s, He will Glorify us. Legalism is a desertion from God, it rejects all of this grace He has bestowed on us. The false gospel of legalism cannot be allowed to infect the church.

That concludes Paul's defense of the true gospel, and why the legalism of the Judaizers can never work and can only lead to futility. Next week, we will cover Chapters 5 and 6 which tell us how we are supposed to live.