

Series: Galatians

Title: Law and Grace

Scripture: Gal. 4: 21-31

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Galatians 4: 21: Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

The problem with sinners who desire to be under the law is that they do not hear the law. There are many ways to be under the law: if any part of salvation depends on our works then we are under law. Remember, those who were bewitching the Galatians were not out-and-out denying that salvation is by Christ Jesus. But by insisting that believers must yet do something to contribute to their salvation they were rejecting Christ entirely. They were under law, producing children of the flesh who were under law.

Proposition: Salvation is by God's everlasting covenant promise fulfilled entirely by Christ Jesus, the Son of God—salvation is of the Lord!

Galatians 4: 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.

Abraham married Sarah—the freewoman. But Sarah was barren. God made a covenant promise to Abraham that God would give him a son through Sarah. It pictured the covenant of promise—the new covenant of grace. God promised to produce this son of the barren freewoman.

But after 10 years, God had not produced the son. So Sarah gave Abraham her handmaid, Hagar. Hagar is the bondwoman, a slave. Abraham married Hagar and produced a son. So Ishmael was born after the flesh of Abraham's wisdom, will and works. Ishmael was born into bondage because he is the son of the bondwoman, Hagar.

God waited longer until Sarah was well past the age of child bearing at 90 years of age and Abraham was 100 years old. God made certain it was obvious this was the child of promise produced by God. So Abraham had a son through Sarah named Isaac. This was the son of the freewoman, Sarah. Isaac was the son of promise—born free—born from above of God according to promise.

Galatians 4: 24: Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; but 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.

Divisions: 1) Two covenants 2) Two religions 3) Two kinds of religionists

TWO COVENANTS

Abraham's two wives represent two covenants. A covenant is an agreement between two or more parties. Promises are made based on conditions that must be fulfilled. God only deals with sinners upon the basis of covenant. The old covenant law said, "Do and live." The new covenant is of grace, of promise; it says, "Christ has done it all so we are given eternal life freely through faith in him."

Hagar typifies the old covenant law given at Sinai—*"the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar."* Hagar was a bondswoman, a slave. She pictures the old covenant law given in mount Sinai which genders to bondage. It only produces bondage. It was NEVER given to give life by our works nor to rule believers in any way. It was given to show our sins and pronounce us guilty.

Romans 5: 20: Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.

So Hagar typifies the old covenant law. Her children are born into bondage. To make salvation in any part dependent on the work of our hand is to be under old covenant law and it is to be in bondage under the curse of the law.

On the other hand, Sarah represents the covenant of promise, the covenant of grace. Sarah was Abraham's wife before Hagar. She continued being his wife after Hagar entered the picture. God made his covenant promise long before Hagar entered the picture.

Before God made the world God, God the Father and the Son of God entered into an everlasting covenant—a covenant of promise, the covenant of free grace. God chose whom he would freely in Christ. Christ alone fulfills this covenant of redemption. The covenant of promise is not dependent upon man: *God made promise to Abraham.* The entire work of salvation beginning to end was put into the hands of God's Son, the Lord Jesus. The work of magnifying the law, making it honorable for God and his people is of Christ's works. The work of redeeming and justifying God's elect from the curse is of Christ's works. The work of sending the Spirit to give us life is of Christ's hand; this is the new covenant law that Christ promised to write on the hearts of his people by the Spirit in the new birth. The work of producing fruit in his people, of subduing our sin-nature, of preserving us and glorifying us is all of Christ. Christ is Alpha and Omega in the salvation of his people. All was settled in eternity when God the Father and his Son entered into the everlasting covenant of promise. The covenant of grace is that which is fulfilled by Christ, apart from our doing.

So in Sara the freewoman—we see the everlasting covenant of free grace. She represents that covenant of free salvation, the covenant which give eternal life freely from God through the blood of Christ through faith alone. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob did not have the law of Moses. Yet they were made righteous and sanctified and walked this earth accepted of God and entered glory. How? Through the covenant of promise, God purified their hearts through faith in Christ. Christ was made their all.

TWO KINDS OF RELIGION

Galatians 4: 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.

These two women also represent two kinds of religion: the religion of works and the religion of grace.

Hagar represents works religion—*"For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children."* Mount Sinai is in Arabia. It is outside the land of promise. If we go back under the law we must leave heavenly Jerusalem, the land of promise, and go back into the wilderness. Hagar represents Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children. At that time most in Jerusalem rejected Christ by teaching works of the law were necessary in addition to faith in Christ. The Judaizers came saying it is ok to believe on Christ but you must keep the law, too. But any in our day who make any part of salvation dependent upon the works of the sinner, be it law keeping, turning gospel precepts into law, making a degree of knowledge necessary, making morality to contribute to salvation, church ordinances or traditions of men, are in works religion. The children of works religion are in bondage.

Sara represents the true church of God—*"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."* Heavenly Jerusalem is where Christ sits from where his gospel goes forth. Since Christ births his children through the Spirit through the gospel preached by the church, the church is compared to a mother. Christ is her Husband. He sends the gospel and the Spirit by which her children are born again of the incorruptible seed. So all her children are born from above by the miracle of God's grace as was Isaac. In Christ, our Redeemer we are free from the law, born-again under grace under Christ's rule. We are led of the Spirit by faith and constrained by love.

Christ is our Husband who redeemed all his people therefore all shall be born from above. So we shall have many children—*"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."* After Isaiah 53 declared Christ's travail by which he justified his people. Isaiah 54 opens with this good news:

Isaiah 54: 1: Sing, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou *that* didst not travail with child: for more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. 2: Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; 3: For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. 4: Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. 5: For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

The true heavenly Jerusalem is the church who preaches salvation by Christ alone, apart from the sinners works. Christ is our Maker, our Husband. He is the LORD of hosts so he can get his gospel to all his people. He Redeemed us from the law—he is our Righteousness, we must be born again of him. Christ is the Holy One—he is our Holiness of heart. When he births us we are holy and righteous in and by Christ and we rest in him alone. This is true religion.

TWO KINDS OF RELIGIONISTS

Galatians 4: 22: For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23: But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise...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.

Ishmael was born by a bondmaid, after the flesh. Abraham birthed Ishmael by his works. All sinners who claim to be born-again by something they did—their will, their faith, their works—are born after the flesh. They are in bondage under the curse of the law. All who imagine some part of their salvation is of their hand in addition to Christ or apart from Christ are born after the flesh. They are in bondage under the curse of the law.

Isaac was born of the freewoman, by promise. Christ produces his sons according to his promise to God his Father. God elected them unto salvation and Christ promised to redeem them and he did. Christ promised to create them anew in his righteousness and holiness through the gospel which gives him all the glory—and he shall. Christ promised to bring each one home to the Father and he shall. So we who are born again of the Spirit and in Christ we are born free—*"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise."*

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

These two kinds of religionists represent the two kinds of religionist in the whole earth—works and grace. They will never get along—*"But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now."* Ishmael mocked and persecuted Isaac. Legalists always persecute the children of God, burden them with do's and don'ts.

Galatians 6: 12: As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised...

Any fleshly constraint—making some fleshly requirement for salvation, doubting another due to something done in the flesh—anything other than faith in Christ alone is legalism. It is the same as the Judiazers who were constraining the Galatians to be circumcised.

Galatians 6: 12...only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13: For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

We have an Ishmael in our sin-nature. So we are so prone to put ourselves under law or to bring our brethren under law. Ishmael was about 13 years older than Isaac: he was stronger than Isaac. Our old flesh is older than our new man. It is stronger except the Spirit of God subdue our legal, old man.

Galatians 5: 16 *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Abraham tried to keep Ishmael and Isaac under the same roof—*"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. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."* A believer cannot walk under law and under grace. The son of the law cannot be heir with the son of grace. Salvation must be all of grace all of Christ all of faith, apart from any works of our own.

Romans 10: 4: For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Galatians 6: 14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16: And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

Here is the Holy Spirit's application to us who believe on Christ.

Galatians 5: 1: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3: For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4: Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. 5: For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Amen!