

'GENDER FREE' ADVERT BY RIVER ISLAND *continued*

Another commented: "Jumping on an agenda driven bandwagon ...will lose customers who will be so sickened by PC overreach ..."

And one user said the advert had made him "100% determined" never to shop at River Island again.

The advert is part of a wider marketing campaign dubbed "Labels are for clothes," which features another model who is labelled '100% woman,' despite being born male and having not undergone any surgery. Of all the models used in the campaign, one third openly represent the LGBT community, a proportion which is drastically higher than the estimated 2% of the general population they make up.

Conscious that this issue is **the latest to be foisted upon us by a generation who call evil good and good evil**, I plan to speak on this topic next Lord's Day evening; 'The Morality Maelstrom – How Does The Church Address Transgenderism?' Please pray for wisdom and power – and circulate the news.

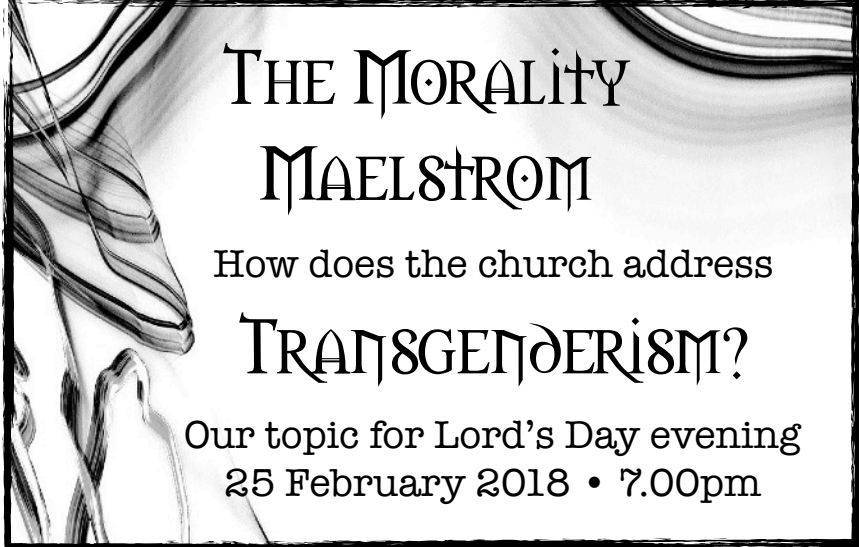


MEETINGS TODAY

- Sunday School – 10.15am
- Morning Worship – 11.30am: *13th Message in the Galatians Series: "Two Mothers and their Sons"*
- Evening Service – 7.00pm: *"Anchoring our Assurance – For Christians Who Doubt"*

INSPIRATION IN A SENTENCE

"Beware of manufacturing a God of your own: a God who is all mercy, but not just; a God who is all love, but not holy; a God who as a heaven for every body, but a hell for none; a God who can allow good and bad to be side by side in time, but will make no distinction between good and broad in eternity. Such a God is an idol of your own, as truly an idol as any snake or crocodile in an Egyptian temple. The hands of your own fancy and sentimentality have made him. He is not the God of the Bible, and beside the God of the Bible there is no God at all." [Bishop J. C. Ryle]



THE MORALITY
MAELSTROM

How does the church address
TRANSGENDERISM?

Our topic for Lord's Day evening
25 February 2018 • 7.00pm

'GENDER FREE' ADVERT BY RIVER ISLAND

A "seriously inappropriate" advert for clothing retailer *River Island* has provoked outrage among parents when it was aired at 4pm. The 30 second advert features 'a gay kiss' and a model labelled '100% gender free.' Parents and other shoppers have voiced their displeasure on social media after it was broadcast well before the watershed.

Commenting on *River Island's* Facebook page, one parent said: "My 10 year old daughter asked me to write to *River Island* as she was shocked to see this on TV. After watching it back I have to say I agree I cannot believe this was aired on TV and especially during the daytime when children may be watching. To say it is provocative wouldn't be enough. It's very sexualised and very in your face!"



TWO MOTHERS & THEIR SONS

Text: **Galatians 4:21–31**.

Writing as a father to his children, the apostle Paul yearns to help the Galatians to steer a straight path through their confused spiritual lives. In the course of the central chapters of this book, where he is at his most theological, he raises **six arguments** to defend the truth that God saves sinners through Christ, without any add-ons of their own:

Personal (3:1-5), Scriptural (3:6-14), Logical (3:15-29), Historical (4:1-11), Sentimental (4:12-18) and Allegorical (4:19-31) arguments are marshalled. The allegory that Paul pulls in for this final section of the chapter takes us back to two Genesis mothers and their sons. The basic message is: *“Throw out the Judaisers, don’t become their spiritual offspring!”*

[1] THE SETTING OCCUPIED BY THIS ALLEGORY; 4:19-23.

Paul’s story focuses on Abraham and his tangled relationships with Sarah and Hagar – plus his two sons which were born to these mothers, Isaac and Ishmael (cf. **Genesis 12–21**). The historical timeline for this Jewish figurehead was:–

- 75: Called to go to Canaan; promised multitudes in family;
- 85: Sarah runs out of hope with no heir apparent;
- 86: Sarah prompts Abraham to marry Hagar - Ishmael is born;
- 99: God repeats His promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah;
- 100: This son Isaac (“laughter”) is born - problems in the home;
- 103: Due to increased friction, Abraham sends Ishmael away.

The deeper lessons from this historical narrative are:

[2] THE SIGNIFICANCE ARISING FROM THIS ALLEGORY; 4:24-29.

The whole length of this story is a study in contrasts, rivalling Charles Dickens’ *A Tale Of Two Cities* by becoming *A Tale Of Two Women And Their Sons – Revolving Around Two Covenants on Two Mountains*.

Hagar does not represent the Old Testament saints (they too

were saved by the Gospel of God’s grace); rather she stands as a symbol of the Judaisers who relied on a fake, perverted version of God’s one covenant with His people (this is confirmed in **4:29-30** when Paul links Judaisers to the covenant that Hagar represents). (cf. **1:6** – a “*different gospel*” and **2 Corinthians 11:4**, “*another Jesus,*” a “*different spirit,*” and a “*different gospel*”).

There is a contrast about: **(a) LIBERTY**.

Ishmael and his mother were slaves (referred to 5 times as “*bondmaid[woman]*” in this section); even when she became his wife, Hagar remained a servant in the household.

Isaac was born to freedom – born according to God’s promise, by God’s power, “*born after the Spirit*” (**4:29**, cf. **John 3:1-7**), born of parents who represented grace (Sarah) and faith (Abraham) (cf. **Ephesians 2:8-9**).

Ishmael, born “*according to the flesh,*” persecuted Isaac in an effort to drag him into bondage (**4:29**, cf. **Genesis 21:9**) – exactly the method employed by the Judaisers in the churches.

(b) MATURITY.

While Isaac grew and developed (**Genesis 21:8**), brought joy to his home and experienced the fruitfulness of the promise, Ishmael operated as a wild man, out of control (**Genesis 16:12**) – perfect pictures of life in the Spirit vs. life in the flesh.

(c) DESTINY.

Ishmael was expelled from the house of promise; Isaac was welcomed in – and was received into the Jerusalem above.

[3] THE SOLUTION ADVANCED IN THIS ALLEGORY; 4:30-31.

The path to blessing is charted in these final verses. It may sound like a ruthless action, after 17 years, to permanently “*cast out the bondwoman and her son*” - but God approved of it (**Genesis 21:9-12**). The aim of false teachers is to reconcile Sarah and Hagar, Isaac and Ishmael – salvation through God’s gracious gift of righteousness and man’s attempts to earn righteousness cannot ever be reconciled. We too may compromise, but this is the fast track back to slavery – or throw them out, expelling legalistic bondage and living in the full freedom of grace. To live by this grace requires the Holy Spirit – this is emphasised in the two **immensely practical closing chapters** of this epistle