

75 – Children of the Promise

Paul has completed his personal defense to the Galatians – and anyone else who read this epistle – which included a rebuke of the chief apostle, Peter, following his hypocritical behavior in fellowshiping with uncircumcised Gentiles until others came from Judea, when he reverted to their Judaic ways. In addition, Paul has made plain his position, born of a revelation of Jesus Christ, that salvation is by faith alone, as is the promise associated with it, and it is not by works of law. It is obvious, in fact, that attempting to adhere to Law when grace has replaced it, makes Christ's sacrificial death in vain! Paul is unequivocal on this, and he has spent the first three chapters of Galatians attempting to convict and correct the ecclesia to get a grip on what they heard from him that led to their conversion and baptism in the spirit.

The Galatians, Paul said, had been “bewitched” means literally, “one who kills with his eyes; also to fascinate with evil intent.

For us today, we are in as great a danger as the 1st century ecclesias, in that we are surrounded by religious traditions that seek to work out their salvation by doing good and observing ritual. Judeo-Christianity, I believe, is called that precisely because it is as full of legalization as Jewish religion has been. It's ultimate effect is bondage, not liberty. Bondage is slavery, and Paul is about to take up the subject in the fourth chapter of his letter to the Galatians.

Chapter 4

- 1 Now I am saying, for as much time as the enjoyer of an allotment is a minor, in nothing is he of more consequence than a slave, being master of all,
- 2 but is under guardians and administrators until the time purposed by the father.
- 3 Thus we also, when we were minors, were enslaved under the elements of the world.

The child, who stands to gain an inheritance, may be master of all, but not as a child. This is the position that the nation of Israel occupied prior to Christ's advent and after their rejection of the gospel preached by the 1st century apostles. They were “sons of the kingdom,” Jesus said in Matthew 8 and 13. They became what Paul called “the sons of [the] stubbornness” in Colossians 3:6. The Jews were repeatedly called stubborn, stiff-necked, and rebellious by God Himself in many places throughout the Old Testament, and the term, stubborn, continues in various apostolic writings, other than Paul's, of the New Testament; namely by John, Peter, and the author of Hebrews.

Stubborn, in Greek, means, literally, “un-persuade,” and it is a refusal to be persuaded. In Hebrew, the term means to be rebellious.

Oswald Chambers, in his book, *My Utmost For His Highest*, wrote recently about what he called “the tiny thing” that we won't give up – as if to say to God, “anything but this...this is mine, mine, mine.” He said “behind the “tiny thing” that God has His finger on, lies “the stronghold of obstinacy.” The stronghold of obstinacy – does that sound like stubbornness to you? It sure does to me.

Listen to this progression...stubbornness=rebellion, rebellion=disobedience. God honors obedience and punishes disobedience, throughout all of scripture. The difference for us today is that, in an administration of grace, punishment is deferred until Christ returns, when “those who are Christ’s in His presence” are presented before His Dais (some versions call it a judgment seat, but you’ll remember that we studied it and found it to be like a judges review stand where awards are given out according to performance). The idea here is that, depending on how we stewarded the “Christ in us” throughout our lives, our award may be lesser or greater, as to ranking. It does not mean we’re going to Hell if we messed up, but our ranking may be affected. The second potential judgment, for those who are not Christ’s in His presence, is at the great white throne, where the second death awaits.

In the 3rd verse, of this chapter, Paul says, when we were still minors—still acting like children too young to be trusted to walk across the street by themselves—we were no better off than stubborn Israel, still enslaved by “elements of the world” (the rituals, legalism and its bondage, and no closer to God than Israelites under the law of Moses.

This is NOT a pretty picture, and not one to which you and I today would wish to aspire. We have a greater expectation, but, in bondage, we’d never know it, and we run the risk of not knowing it.

4 Now when the full time came, God delegates His Son, come of a woman, come under law,

Look at what Paul writes here! When it was time—according to God (and THAT is an important distinction) as opposed to when it was time according to man—God delegates His Son—He “sends forth with orders.” The Greek word for delegate is “exapostolos,” the root of which is, of course apostolos, from which we get Apostle, or commissioner. Here we are dealing not with a commissioner, but with one commissioned, sent forth with orders, a delegate or messenger. Notice that not only was Christ delegated by the Father, but He arrived on the scene “from a woman” AND “come under law.” This is huge, because for Jesus Christ to mean anything to the people to whom He was delegated, He had to come in the same manner they did—i.e., “of a woman”—and also come under the same law, which He came to fulfill.

5 that He should be reclaiming those under law, **that we may be getting the place of a son.**

Why was God’s Son delegated? To reclaim—RECLAIM those under law. RECLAIM means “buy back.” No wonder the law could not save anyone! All Israel, who had been given the law—by God—had to be bought back. Jacob’s children, from the time Moses came down the mountain with the law, written by the hand of God, had to be reclaimed...bought back. Because they had become...and are yet today...in such a state of apostasy: they abandoned their previous, confessed and promised loyalty to God...the holy One of Israel.

Can you see why Paul is taking such pains to get these points across to the Galatians, who, as Gentiles, had nothing to do with Israel OR the Law yet had been talked into

trying to be saved by coming under it, even AFTER Paul had already heralded his evangel of grace and salvation through faith?!

What's wild is that the second half of verse 5 declares that Christ did all this not only to buy back the Jews—the sons of the Kingdom...soon to become “the sons of [the] stubbornness”—but so that WE – the Gentiles – to whom Paul was uniquely “delegated” or commissioned, may be getting the place of a son (or daughter)... JUST LIKE CHRIST HIMSELF!

Do you see the awe-inspiring perspective that Paul captured in a sentence that is so easily run over for its simplicity?

God delegated Christ to buy back stubborn Israel so WE could have the same place He has. When we truly appreciate all that Jesus Christ accomplished in His birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension to the Father, I am brought nearly to speechlessness because the magnificence of it is virtually indescribable!

Galatians 4:6

6 Now, seeing that you are sons, God delegates the spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!"

Remember, as Gentiles, we had no relationship with God, let alone any claim to the promises to Israel, other than to be blessed through them during the Kingdom. God having delegated—having sent for the with orders—the spirit of His Son—just like the Son Himself—into our hearts, crying, “Abba—Papa, Daddy—Father.” Who was the one to have uttered those same words, prior to Paul’s letter to the Galatians?

Look at Mark 14:

34 And He is saying to them, "Sorrow-stricken is My soul to death. Remain here and watch."

35 And, coming forward a little, He fell on the earth and prayed that, if it is possible, the hour may pass by from Him.

36 And He said, "Abba, Father, all is possible to Thee. Have this cup carried aside from Me. But not what I will, but what Thou!"

The point here is to establish who we are to God positionally! Paul is about to emphasize the point and, if possible, have us grasp it fully to emblazon it in our hearts and minds!

Galatians 4:7

7 So that you are **no longer a slave**, but a **son**. Now if a son, an enjoyer also of an allotment from God, through Christ.

8 But then, indeed, having no perception of God, you were slaves of those who, by nature, are not gods.

9 Yet now, knowing God, yet rather being known by God, how are you turning back again to the infirm and poor elements for which you want to slave again anew?

Paul is calling the law infirm and poor elements. It's not enough, he says that you know God, but you are also known by Him! Yes, of course, because He calls us sons and daughters. Why in the world, Paul says, would you want to go backwards into the law,

which here Paul equates with the heathen rites practiced by the nations who had no perception of God! It's an amazing indictment of Judaism, to be equated to heathenism!

Galatians 4:10

10 Days are you scrutinizing, and months and seasons and years.

11 I fear for you, lest somehow I have toiled for you feignedly.

Paul continues his indictment against Jewish practices and observations—even of High holy days and feasts—continuing to compare them to heathen rituals! He says, “Look! If you're going there, 'you're flat scary and I'm staying far away from you!'”

Paul, without saying it, is also displaying God's temperament toward all this legalism and bondage of traditions. God has a tolerance limit for this stuff, as we've studied before. Grace superabounds, but there comes a time when we may become so intractable that God gives us over to our depraved minds and our own lusts.

As Barbara so often says, “God is such a gentleman; He won't make anyone do anything, and we can't.”

As I wrote in my book, *GO GOD!*, We're in a unique time in human history when we can make choices for or against God; there is coming a time when there is only one choice...and the path to that time is not a pleasant one. I would much rather be found on God's side of everything NOW than be faced with being left behind or in the grave during Christ's reign, only to be resurrected into His presence at the great white throne and face the second death that puts my final redemption off until the consummation, when the eons are concluded. Why would anyone want to miss all the glorious events that are a part of God's purpose of the eons?

Let us together agree with Joshua, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Can I get an AMEN?

Now, in verse 12, Paul addresses the Galatians as brethren, taking a completely different, more gentle, fatherly tone:

Galatians 4:12

12 Become as I, for I am even as you, brethren, I beseech you. In nothing do you injure me.

13 Now you are aware that during an infirmity of the flesh I bring the evangel to you formerly.

14 And your trial, in my flesh, you do not scorn, neither do you loathe it, but as a messenger of God you receive me, as Christ Jesus.

15 Where, then, is your happiness? For I am testifying to you, that, if possible, gouging out your eyes, you would give them to me.

In verse 12, Paul says, *“Hey, you're not injuring me here! This doesn't affect my life one bit. But look, be like me...if I gave up my Judaism for the grace of God given through the death of His son, Jesus Christ, how can you even think of going into it?!”*

Paul came to the province of Galatia with “an infirmity of the flesh”—probably an affliction of his eyes, possibly from his original encounter with the Lord on the road to

Damascus. We surmise this from his reference to how the Galatians received him so welcomingly that they would have given him their own eyes!

Galatians 4:16

16 So that I have become your enemy by being true to you!

17 They are jealous over you, not ideally, but they want to debar you that you may be jealous over them.

“THEY” are the Judaizers who were jealous over the Galatians, so much so that they wanted to “debar”—lock out—the new Christians so that the Galatians would be jealous of the Judaizers! If that isn’t a twisted, satanic deception—a “stratagem of the Adversary—I don’t know what is!

Galatians 4:18

18 Now it is ideal for you to **be jealous in the ideal always**, and not only in my presence with you.

Interesting that the words “jealous” and “zealous” are from the same Greek word, and that it’s often difficult to determine the correct rendering. We could just as easily read this, “*be ZEALOUS in the ideal always, and not only when I’m with you!*”

Galatians 4:19

19 Little children mine, with whom I am travailing again until Christ may be formed in you!

20 Yet I wanted to be present with you just now, and to change my voice, for I am perplexed about you.

21 Tell me, you who want to be under law, are you not hearing the law?

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, one out of the maid and one out of the free woman.

23 But the one, indeed, out of the maid is begotten according to flesh, yet the one out of the free woman through the promise:

24 which is allegorizing, for these women are two covenants; one, indeed, from mount Sinai, generating into slavery, which is Hagar.

25 Yet Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia; it is in line with the Jerusalem which now is, for she is in slavery with her children.

This would have made a Jew furious! Paul puts the children of Israel into Hagar’s line, not Sarah’s. The slavery to law, now that the Messiah has come and died to buy them back, puts the Jews into Hagar’s tent and outside of Abraham’s. It gets worse...he’s about to put us into Abraham’s tent with Isaac, the child of the promise, purely by God’s grace to us in Christ Jesus!

Galatians 4:26

26 Yet the Jerusalem above is free, who is mother of us all.

27 For it is written, "Be glad, barren one, who art not bringing forth! Burst forth and implore, thou who art not travailing! For many are the children of the desolate, Rather than of her who has the husband."

28 Now you, brethren, as Isaac, are children of promise.

Now watch how he continues to draw the parallel between Ishmael and Isaac:

Galatians 4:29

29 But even as then, the one generated according to flesh persecuted the one according to spirit, thus also it is now.

Note that Paul is careful to say that his comparison is a spiritual one. Certainly, in the flesh, the Jews are out of Isaac; in the spirit, however, it is as if they may as well be descended from Ishmael! Remember, too, what the angel of the Lord told Hagar about Ishmael (means "God Hears"):

Genesis 16:12

He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward *all* his brothers."

One has only to read Genesis chapters 16 and 21 to understand why solving the Arab-Israeli conflict is impossible in the flesh. God alone has the resolution, and we would do well simply to bless Israel and stay out of its business, until the Lord Himself returns in Glory to put things right.

In Galatians 4:19-25, Paul brought the story of Isaac and Ishmael into the realm of the spirit, where things really matter. In the spirit, the Jews are like Ishmael, jealous and hostile toward all their brothers, the Gentiles, who, again in the spirit only, have been put in the place of Isaac – the children of promise...and a much greater promise at that, than only physical land and a literal kingdom, but a celestial position far superior. Of course Jews who are clinging to their fleshly inheritance would be jealous and want to lock out anyone claiming an even greater inheritance!

Galatians 4:30

30 But what is the scripture saying? Cast out this maid and her son, for by no means shall the son of the maid be enjoying the allotment with the son of the free woman.

Paul isn't done with the Judaizers. He goes right to Genesis 21:9, where Sarah tells Abraham, "*Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son, Isaac!*" Any Jew who heard this ought to have been convicted so thoroughly that all he or she could do is repent to God and become like Paul, thanking God for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, and superabounding grace that frees us all from the law of sin and death!

Paul ends this chapter with the simplest and most final declaration:

Galatians 4:31

31 Wherefore, brethren, we are not children of the maid, but of the free woman.

So, the question Paul asks so far is, essentially, are you going with flesh or spirit here? Will you join yourself to Isaac or Ishmael? I believe it's the same question he would ask Christians today. Wait till you see how he follows up this startling and unprecedented revelation of whose family to whom we belong.

Galatians 5:1

1 For freedom Christ frees us! Stand firm, then, and be not again enthralled with the yoke of slavery.

“enthralled” means “hemmed in, entangled, ensnared; also to hold in or hold within” – today, we hear people talk about holding things inside, and we know the toll that takes in the spirit, soul and even in the physical body ...that’s the idea of enthralled. Notice Paul says don’t go there AGAIN! It’s like, “*You just got free from your own enthrallment with your heathen practices...now you want to go there again with Jewish ones? What are you thinking?*”

Galatians 5:2-3

2 Lo! I, Paul, am saying to you that if you should be circumcising, Christ will benefit you nothing.

3 Now I am attesting again to every man who is circumcising, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Here’s what the Concordant Commentary says about these first 3 verses of Galatians 5:

This paragraph [these first 3 verses] is the summary and conclusion of the doctrinal argument. Tersely, he puts the case. Which shall it be, Christ or circumcision! No half hearted allegiance here, no serving of two masters. Circumcision might have been a badge of privilege in the past, but now it has become a sign of apostasy. It does not lead to justification from sin, but to exemption from Christ. It is incumbent on such to keep the entire law. Grace has no room in which to operate.

A quick sidebar here: I am finding the Concordant Commentary very helpful as I’m studying. I don’t want to read it all as we go, because I prefer to let the Holy Spirit do the teaching; however, if you have a commentary, or care to look it up online through the concordant web site, I believe you will find it helpful too.

Galatians 5:4

4 Exempted from Christ were you who are being justified in law. You fall out of grace.

That’s like the final nail in the coffin, isn’t it? “*You want to be a Jew? Fine; knock yourself out, but you’ll have no part in grace.*” Where it was once held that breaking the law put one outside of God’s favor, now, in this new economy, it is “**keeping**” the law that does it! Law is all about works and earning forgiveness and favor. Grace is gratuitous – “give-gushed” is the Greek Word – it is without cause. You can’t earn through works, and it is poured out lavishly in faith, and in faith alone.

Paul is about to reinforce that point:

Galatians 5:5-6

5 For we, in spirit, are awaiting the expectation of righteousness by faith.

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is availing anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, operating through love.

In verse 5, we can see how early we are in Paul's ministry, as he speaks of *"the expectation of righteousness by faith."*

7 You raced ideally! Who hinders you not to be persuaded by the truth?
8 This persuasion is not of Him Who is calling you.
9 A little leaven is leavening the whole kneading.
10 I have confidence in you in the Lord that in nothing you will be disposed otherwise.
Now he who is disturbing you shall be bearing his judgment, whosoever he may be.
11 Now I, brethren, if I am still heralding circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? Consequently the snare of the cross of Christ has been nullified.
12 Would that those who are raising you to insurrection struck themselves off also!
13 For you were called for freedom, brethren, only use not the freedom for an incentive to the flesh, but through love be slaving for one another.
14 For the entire law is fulfilled in one word, in this: "You shall love your associate as yourself."
15 Now if you are biting and devouring one another, beware that you may not be consumed by one another.
16 Now I am saying, Walk in spirit, and you should under no circumstances be consummating the lust of the flesh.
17 For the flesh is lusting against the spirit, yet the spirit against the flesh. Now these are opposing one another, lest you should be doing whatever you may want.
18 Now, if you are led by spirit, you are not still under law.
19 Now apparent are the works of the flesh, which are adultery, prostitution, uncleanness, wantonness,
20 idolatry, enchantment, enmities, strife, jealousies, furies, factions, dissensions, sects,
21 envies, murders, drunkennesses, revelries, and the like of these, which, I am predicting to you, according as I predicted also, that those committing such things shall not be enjoying the allotment of the kingdom of God.
22 Now the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 meekness, self-control: against such things there is no law.
24 Now those of Christ Jesus crucify the flesh together with its passions, and lusts.
25 If we may be living in spirit, in spirit we may be observing the elements also.
26 We may not become vainglorious, challenging one another, envying one another.

Chapter 6

1 Brethren, if a man should be precipitated, also, in some offense, you, who are spiritual, be attuning such a one, in a spirit of meekness, noting yourself, that you, also, may not be tried.
2 Bear one another's burdens, and thus fill up the law of Christ.
3 For if anyone is supposing himself to be anything, being nothing, he is imposing on himself.
4 Now let each one be testing his own work, and then he shall be having his boast for himself alone, and not for another,
5 for each one shall be bearing his own load.
6 Now let him who is being instructed in the word be contributing to him who is instructing, in all good things.

7 Be not deceived, God is not to be sneered at, for whatsoever a man may be sowing, this shall he be reaping also,

8 for he who is sowing for his own flesh, from the flesh shall be reaping corruption, yet he who is sowing for the spirit, from the spirit shall be reaping life eonian.

9 Now we may not be despondent in ideal doing, for in due season we shall be reaping, if we do not faint.

10 Consequently, then, as we have occasion, we are working for the good of all, yet specially for the family of faith.

11 Lo! with what size letters I write to you with my own hand!

12 Whoever are wanting to put on a fair face in the flesh, these are compelling you to circumcise only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ Jesus.

13 For not even they who are circumcising are maintaining law, but they want you to be circumcised that they should be boasting in that flesh of yours.

14 Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation.

16 And whoever shall observe the elements by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, also on the Israel of God.

17 For the rest, let no one afford me weariness, for I am bearing in my body the brand marks of the Lord Jesus Christ.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren! Amen!