

Gal 4:17

17 They zealously (to be resentfully envious or suspicious of a rival or rival's influence) court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them.

Judaizers attitude: Follow law of Moses

18 But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you.

Many Galatians wanted the path of the law.

Paul sets out to prove that Christians are not under the law.

The law had its place,

- it was used to keep us until grace came.

In this last section of chapter 4 we will see:

- Two sons,
- two women,
- two covenants,
- and two Jerusalem's.

Paul illustrates the importance of living in the spirit and not in the flesh, to live in freedom and not in bondage.

Gal 4:21-31

1 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. 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 – 26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. 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."

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. 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. 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." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Paul was giving them the big picture 21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

He seems to be giving them a warning here,

- you who desire to be under the law,
- Do you understand the burden you're signing up for?

Many were Gentile, therefore they didn't understand.

Paul comes up with 3 arguments,

- historical, allegorical and personal.

Historical:

- Paul begins with chapters 12-21 of Genesis

When Abraham was 75 years old, he set out on a journey that God sent him on.

- God promised him that he'd be the father of many nations.

Ten years go by, Abraham was now 85 years old, Sarah is 75 years old, still no children.

Sarah, is now becoming impatient and decided to give her maid Hagar to Abraham.

This wasn't God's will,

Scriptures don't say that Abraham prayed and asked God if he should marry Hagar. But he married her anyway.

It didn't take long for her to get pregnant.

- A year later she has a child
- and Abraham names him Ishmael.

Sarah becomes impatient:

How long does it take us to become impatient!

When we go outside of the will of God we often stumble.

Finally at the age of 100 for Abraham, and 90 years old for Sarah,

- the Lord gives them the promised child
- and they named him Isaac.

But soon another problem arose,

- this new child Isaac had now become a rival to Ishmael,
- so Abraham has to make a difficult decision
- to send Hagar and Ishmael away.

Why, because Ishmael began to mock Isaac.

Ishmael had been an only child for 14 years

This hurt Abraham deeply

- because he now had to wean his older son as well
- and cut the cord and let him go.

So historically there were 2 sons and two moms.

- Both sons were the sons of Abraham.
- There was Ishmael and Isaac.
- Ishmael was born from Hagar, a slave from Egypt.
- Isaac was born from a free woman in Sara.

The two boys and their moms represent two covenants,

- the old and the new covenant,
- the law and grace

He compared the Judaizers to Ishmael - work of the flesh.

He compared Isaac to the Spirit - work of God.

Paul wanted the Galatians to understand

- that they needed to live their lives out practically by taking after Isaac who was conceived by the power of God and not as Ishmael who was conceived by the power of the flesh.

How many people today are living under the power of the flesh!

Our life would be so much smoother if we'd only allowed God to direct our path!

Gal 4:24-26

24 which things are symbolic. 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 – 26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

He links Hagar with Mt. Sinai which is the law of God because she was in bondage, a slave. And he links Sarah with the freewoman thru a promise.

Paul also speaks of 2 Jerusalem's, earthly Jerusalem and heavenly Jerusalem.

The earthly Jerusalem is symbolic of the Jews. It's a fitting capital city that speaks of the Jewish nation.

Paul quotes verse 27 from Isaiah 54:1.

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."

Isaiah speaks of when God is going to restore

- the nation of Israel back to national favor and blessing.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.

29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh (Ishmael) then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit (Isaac), even so it is now.

There's the comparison. What the Judaizers are doing to you by persecuting you in the flesh is what Ishmael did to Isaac. But you're in the Spirit not in the flesh.

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." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

In other words, what are we supposed to do Paul,

Paul says, do the same thing Abraham did with the bondwoman and her son,

- he cast them out.

Gal 5:1-6

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

If we were to come up with a theme for the letter to the Galatians it would be to stand fast! (To be constant. Literally to keep standing, hold fast and don't yield)

Stand fast:

This isn't the first time Paul says to stand.

To the Corinthians he said,

- stand fast in the faith, be brave and be strong.

To the Romans he said to

- stand by faith.

To the Ephesians he said:

- to put on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil

To the Philippians he said to stand firm as they contended for the faith:

- to stand fast in one spirit
- to stand fast in the Lord

To the Colossians he said:

- that he prayed for them so that they'd stand perfect and complete

And to the Galatians he says:

- Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free

But notice the warning Paul gives to the Galatians, he says:

Do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

Many Galatians were once slaves.

Now the Judaizers were trying to convince the Galatians that

- they were foolish to think they could have freedom in Christ.

It's as if Paul was telling the Galatians,

- "Hey, you just got released from your chains of bondage
- and now you're jumping into the net"
- Don't do that!

So Paul was saying to the Galatians, why would you want to go back to that!

Jesus said:

Matt 11:28-30

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Interestingly, Paul uses 3 phrases to describe the losses which the Christian incurs when he turns from grace to law:

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2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, (Paul said, if you do this), **Christ will profit you nothing.**

3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that **he is a debtor to keep the whole law.**

(Once you step into that arena you have to live there. If you're getting circumcised that's the beginning of Jewish law. And if you're going to do that you have to do it the rest of your life.)

4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; **you have fallen from grace.**

Paul is not saying if you've become a legalistic Christian you're going to hell. But we've been talking about the law and grace. Jesus is everything or nothing.

If you who attempt to be justified by law; **you have fallen from grace.**

5 For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

1 Peter 1:3

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

This is important because the hope we have is not a dead hope. We have a living hope in Jesus Christ!

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.