

## GALATIANS 4

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Galatians chapter 4 as we continue our study through this letter that Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia.

As we saw in our last study back in Galatians chapter 3, Paul spoke of the Law being a tutor, showing us that we are sinners separated from God. That was all the Law could do, it couldn't save us. Thus, the Law brought us to Jesus who can and has saved us.

Listen to what Paul said in Galatians 3:24-25, **“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”**

Again, the Law could not save us, it could only point out the fact that we are sinners. The Law has no power to save, and, like I have said many times before, the Law is just a mirror to show us how we look before God!

And, as the Bible says, all our righteousness are like filthy rags before Him. In other words, we are a mess and there is no way to rectify that through the Law. In fact, the Law can only condemn us.

Thus, we don't need more Laws, we need a Savior who can save us from our sins! We need Jesus!

And we finished up last time as Paul continues to show us that we are no longer under the Law but under Grace.

Remember what Paul said in Galatians 3:26-29, **“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”**

As we move into Galatians chapter 4 this evening, Paul continues this thought of being a son of God, heirs according to the promise of God, the promise given to Abraham by faith and not by the Law.

And, as we will see, as Paul concludes this chapter, he will very clearly show us that the Law and Grace cannot coexist together for our salvation!

With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Galatians chapter 4, beginning in verse 1, and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

## **GALATIANS 4**

### **VERSES 1-2**

Paul is speaking of a child *“coming of age”* or becoming an adult, which was much more definitive in the ancient world than we see today.

The Roman ceremony was the Toga Virilis and for the Jewish ceremony it was and is called a Bar Mitzvah, which occurs when the boy is thirteen.

Now, until that time he is under the direct and absolute care of his father.

Thus, from all practical purposes a child did not differ from a slave as he was under those who were his master, like a slave was.

The difference being, when the child came of age, he became an heir to all that his father had!

As we have seen, the Law was our tutor or schoolmaster, it took care of us until the coming of the Messiah. Then, when the Messiah came, the Law or the Old Covenant was done away with and the New Covenant, that is based in the shed blood of Christ was established. We are saved by Grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and not by the Law through works.

And let me be clear on this. No one was ever saved by good works, even in the Old Testament. The Law, in a sense, kept us in line, and they were saved looking forward to the coming Messiah and we are saved looking back at the finished work of the Messiah!

### VERSE 3

As we see here, Paul gives us the comparison of our physical life that he just spoke of and relates it to our spiritual life.

When Paul speaks of “**the elements of the world**” he is referring to the law.

Why is the law referred to in this way?

Think about it, the basic building block of society must be the law.

And if any society ignores the laws, the foundational principles of the law, both civil and moral, the society will crumble. We have seen it with Rome in the past and we are seeing it today in our country.

The problem with the law is all it can do is tell us what to do, but it does not have any power to do it!

Thus, Paul says when we were young, we knew our ABC’s or the “**elements of the world,**” the elementary principles of the world.

Now, in regard to God and our spiritual life, these elementary principles are dangerous, they are bad, and we must break free from them. In other words, we must grow up!

Paul tells us in Colossians 2:8-10, **“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”**

Think about this, as one writer put it, “For some fifteen centuries, Israel had been in kindergarten and grade school, learning their ‘spiritual ABCs,’ so that they would be ready when Christ would come. Then they would get the full revelation, for Jesus Christ is ‘the Alpha and the Omega’ (Rev. 22:13); He encompasses *all* the alphabet of God’s revelation to man. He is God’s last Word (Heb. 1:1–3).” (Source Unknown)

When you look at both Judaism and pagan religions they were centered upon a man-made system of works.

That is what Judaism deteriorated into, not where God wanted it to go.

There were all kinds of rules and regulations to follow, to obey and that is the basis for all human religion, achieving Divine acceptance by one’s own efforts!

Let me just share this with you because you can see how bad it had gotten in the Jewish culture in regard to the Law, what they made it into.

The Mishna, which is a collection of the Jewish oral traditions known as the “Oral Torah” contained 186 pages on how you can work and keep yourself clean.

It contained 35 pages on how to wash your pots and pans!

And if that is how you are trying to approach God; you will never reach Him as these Jewish religious leaders found out!

Thus, Paul's point is that we are to die to these elemental principles, not follow these false teachings as Paul said in Colossians 2:20, "**Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations.**"

And notice what the answer is for our problem with sin, for the fact that our righteousness before God is like filthy rags. Look at what Paul says next starting in Galatians 4:4.

#### VERSES 4-5

Make no mistake about it, God's timing is perfect!

Think about it, God's timing was the perfect time *politically speaking*. What do I mean by that? Listen carefully. We are told,

"It was a time when the *pax Romana* extended over most of the civilized earth and when travel and commerce were therefore possible in a way that had formerly been impossible. Great roads linked the empire of the Caesars, and its diverse regions were linked far more significantly by the all-pervasive language of the Greeks. Add the fact that the world was sunk in a moral abyss so low that even the pagan cried out against it and that spiritual hunger was everywhere evident, and one has a perfect time for the coming of Christ and for the early expansion of the Christian gospel." (Boice)

Not only that, but it was the right time *prophetically speaking*.

Remember that in Daniel we are told that it would be 483 years until the Messiah came and if you counted off 173,880 days from the going forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the coming Messiah, you would come to March 14, 445 B. C.

It is a day we call Palm Sunday, the only time that Jesus came as Messiah the King into Jerusalem, just as Daniel was told!

And listen to what Paul tells us here, that at this appointed time, “**God sent forth His Son**” to redeem sinful man who was under the curse of the Law!

Jesus came to “**redeem**” us; EXAGORAZO, (ex-ag-or-ad’-zo) in the Greek, and it speaks of buying back or buying out and was often used of slaves whose freedom was purchased.

Think about that, we were slaves to sin under the Law, but Christ bought us out by His sacrifice and now, instead of being a slave to sin we are an heir of God, sons of God!

So, to go back into the Law is to undo the very work of Christ on the cross! Is that making sense to you? I hope so.

Paul also tells us that Jesus was “**born of a woman**” which speaks of His humanity and the virgin birth.

He was fully God and He was fully man!

He was born into a society that was in bondage to the Law and yet He kept it perfectly, and only He could, as He said in Matthew 5:17, “**Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.**”

Notice that He did not say we are to fulfill them, because we can’t, but He could, and He did!

And the reason that this is so important is that because He was sinless He could pay in full the penalty for our sins as Peter tells us in I Peter 1:18-21, **“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”**

I like the way that Govett put it. He said, “Christ, by nature Son of God, became a son of man, that we, by nature sons of man, might become sons of God. Wonderful exchange.” Amen to that!

“John Newton, the man who wrote the most popular and famous hymn in America, *Amazing Grace*, knew how to remember this. He was an only child whose mother died when he was only seven years old. He became a sailor and went out to sea at eleven years old. As he grew up, he became the captain of a slave ship and had an active hand in the horrible degradation and inhumanity of the slave trade. But when he was twenty-three, on March 10, 1748, when his ship was in imminent danger of sinking off the coast of Newfoundland, he cried to God for mercy, and he found it. He never forgot how amazing it was that God had received him, as bad as he was. To keep it fresh in his memory, he fastened across the wall over the fireplace mantel of his study the words of Deuteronomy 15:15: *You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you*. If we keep fresh in our mind what we once were, and what we are now in Jesus Christ, we will do well.” (David Guzik)

VERSES 6-7

Because of what Christ has done we can have an intimate relationship with God the Father, we can, in a sense, call Him *“Daddy!”* or *“Papa!”* as the Aramaic word **“Abba”** implies.

Now Jews in trying to keep the Law could never have that kind of relationship with God but now all who receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior can, not because we are so good but because Christ has cleansed us of all our sins and we can say to God, *“Daddy!”*

You see, as Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane in Mark 14:36, **“And He said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.’”**

So we too can pray *“Abba, Father!”* for God gives to us all that His Son possesses!

Paul, in Romans 8:16 tells us, **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”**

God’s Spirit testifies to our hearts that we are a son of God by adoption.

Thus, as Luther tells us, “A son is an heir, not by virtue of high accomplishments, but by virtue of his birth. He is a mere recipient. His birth makes him an heir, not his labors.”

Think about this for a minute. A slave child is not the son of the master. He must prove his worthiness each day of his life through obedience and hard work, to earn the right to remain a part of the household.

And here is the problem. If he doesn’t measure up, he is cast out or sold to another.

But the heir is a son of the master through birth and as such doesn’t have to prove or earn the right to remain a member of the household for the house and everything in it belongs to him.



I hope you can see that the difference between Law and Grace, between work and faith is the difference between a slave trying to earn, each day, the right to stay a member of God's family or being born into it by faith and therefore an heir forever through God's grace.

Again, ***AMAZING GRACE, HOW SWEET THE SOUND, THAT SAVED A WRETCH LIKE ME!***

One more point here and I want you to notice the way that Paul weaves the Holy Trinity into these verses.

God the Father sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts to give us the assurance we are children of God.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; one God manifested in three distinct persons!

As we read on we will see the heart of Paul for these Galatians, his love for them and his concern regarding what they are going back to.

### VERSES 8-11

Here's the thing, why would someone who has come to know God, someone who has been set free, place themselves under bondage once again?

That is just plain foolish and yet, people still do that today. They are saved by Grace through faith and enjoy that liberty but somewhere down the road they feel they need to do this or that to maintain their salvation, to be good enough for God to love them.

Let me let you in on a little secret, you can't be good enough!

The reality is God loved you when you were still a sinner and He died for you when you were in that condition – it is a free gift for you to receive by faith, not by works.

Don't go back to the ABC's or the elementary principles. Don't think legalism makes you more spiritual, it is a facade and it places you back into a second childhood in your faith!

I like the way that Stott paraphrases this. He says, "If you were a slave and are now a son, if you did not know God but have now come to know Him and to be known by Him, how can you turn back again to the old slavery? How can you allow yourself to be enslaved by the very elemental spirits from whom Jesus Christ has rescued you?"

Now, how was this legalism being manifested in their lives?

Listen again to what Paul said in Galatians 4:10, "**You observe days and months and seasons and years.**"

Keep in mind that they came out of the pagan world where they worshiped days, months and so on. And now, they are being brought into Judaism and the Law, and for these churches in Galatia, who were for the most part Gentile, they were now being swayed to keep days or weekly Sabbaths, months or new moons, seasons or the Jewish feasts, and years or Sabbatical and Jubilee years for their salvation!

There is nothing wrong with celebrating Passover or any of the Feasts unless you are doing it for salvation, or thinking it makes you more spiritual, then it is wrong!

Paul said in Colossians 2:16-17, "**So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.**"

I don't think Paul can be any clearer on this point.

These things were just a picture of what was to come, Jesus! And now that Christ is here, why go back to a picture?

Can you imagine, you are at a party and your wife is beside you and instead of introducing her to the people around you, you pull out a picture of her and say, “***This is my wife!***”

It would be a very cold night for you besides being just plain foolish and that is Paul’s point, going back to a picture is foolish when we have the substance, we have Christ!

For Paul, he was concerned that all his work in this area, how he labored to the point of exhaustion, would be in vain, have no effect upon their lives! A works relationship makes the whole Gospel empty, in vain!

Now, is Paul concerned that because they are going back to the Law that they were never saved in the first place?

I don’t think so!

In Galatians 4:9 he speaks of them knowing God “intimately” and I think that means that they are saved.

Then, in Galatians 4:12 he calls them, “brethren” and again, he is saying that they are saved.

Then what is his point?

I think he is saying that even though they are going back to the Law, they are saved by Grace, they came to saving faith but they are going to remain spiritual babies and they will not be able to grow up in the faith until they return!

Warren Wiersbe put it like this, “One of the tragedies of legalism is that it gives the appearance of spiritual maturity when, in reality, it leads the believer back into a ‘second childhood’ of Christian experience.”

Still saved but infants, spiritual babies and they need to grow up, they need to return to the Grace of God!

### VERSE 12

Paul clearly understood what legalism was all about. You see, as a Pharisee he tried to keep the Law, do the best he could, but it was a dead end. It never brought Him closer to God.

Then God got a hold of Paul and transformed his life; he saw the Gospel message, a salvation by Grace and not by works.

Thus, Paul's call is to be like him, free from the Law, free in Christ, not to place themselves into a Law relationship when they never lived by the Jewish Law in the first place.

He does not want them to place themselves into a Law relationship with God but a love relationship!

Listen to what Paul says in Galatians 3:12, and this is from The Amplified Bible. We are told, "**But the Law does not rest on faith [does not require faith, has nothing to do with faith], for it itself says, He who does them [the things prescribed by the Law] shall live by them [not by faith]. [Lev 18:5.]**"

And now, listen to how The Amplified Bible puts Galatians 4:12, "**Brethren, I beg of you, become as I am [free from the bondage of Jewish ritualism and ordinances], for I also have become as you are [a Gentile]. You did me no wrong [in the days when I first came to you; do not do it now].**"

If it is of faith, it is not of the Law for the Law requires work, faith requires belief!

And keep in mind that Paul's remarks to the churches in Galatia were not based upon some hurt they caused Paul, but out of love for them, concern for them not to go into this bondage but be free in Christ!

That is the heart of Paul and should be the heart of Pastors and really all Christians – responding in love and not in anger!

Over the years, seeing what some people get into, the false doctrines they embrace, it breaks my heart. I feel horrible. And I know the Devil beats me up on this because I feel that I did not teach them enough and thus, they fell prey to these things. But the Lord is gracious, and He has shown me that people have a free will to do what they want, and they do.

But it doesn't mean I am not grieved when I see it! That was Paul.

#### VERSES 13-16

As you read this you can clearly see that the reason Paul went to the area of Galatia was because he had acquired some kind of illness.

There is much speculation to what happened to Paul and we can't be dogmatic about it. But if we put the pieces of the puzzle together, you might say, this is what I think went on.

It is very possible that while Paul was in Pamphylia, which was located in a lowland area that was marshy, he developed Malaria.

Thus, he traveled to the higher Galatian areas until he was better.

But even with this painful, debilitating disease, Paul still preached the Gospel Message to them!

What moves you from completing the work God has for you? What is moving you off course or causing you to drop out?

For Paul, nothing was going to move him from preaching the Gospel message, from getting the Word of God out! It is hard to stop a man like that!

And, unlike the church in Corinth where many did not like Paul, the Galatians received Paul with joy and the Gospel message with joy.

Now Paul's appearance was not too attractive, with this eye condition he probably had a constant discharge from his eyes and yet it did not cause them to reject Paul or his message.

In fact, their love for Paul was so deep, so strong that if it were possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul.

That is one of the reasons that I believe Paul had some kind of eye trouble maybe from the malaria he had, or it could be a number of things.

Also, in Galatians 6:11 Paul tells us, **“See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!”**

This eye condition gave him poor eyesight so that he had to write with big letters to see what he was writing!

Now you may be thinking, “Why is this a big deal? Who cares!”

Because, as Fung tells us, “As physical infirmity and illness were regarded by Jews and Gentiles alike as a symbol of divine displeasure or punishment, there would have been a natural temptation for the Galatians to despise Paul and reject his message.”

But they received the Gospel message of Grace, the message Paul spoke and the messenger himself, Paul!

It is as Calvin wrote, “It is not enough that pastors be respected, if they are not also loved. Both are necessary; otherwise, their teaching will not have a sweet taste. And he declares that both had been true of him among the Galatians. He had already spoken of their respect; he now speaks of their love.”

And Boice makes this point, “To the degree that ministers and teachers of the Word of God do teach the Word, to that same degree should they be received as the Galatians received the apostle Paul. Ministers should not be received and evaluated on the basis of their personal appearance, intellectual attainments, or winsome manner, but as to whether or not they are indeed God’s messengers bearing the word of Christ.”

Exactly, it is not a popularity contest, it is bringing the Word of God to the people so that they can grow, and they won’t get tossed to and fro by the false winds of doctrine that have blown and are blowing through the church!

Now here’s the thing. I have experienced this, and I am sure you have as well. But as a pastor, when I have to confront someone that has gotten into something that is wrong, like false teaching, it is not usually received with praise or thanks. Those words are not usually what they say of me.

Make no mistake about it, when people hear the truth, when they are confronted with their sin, they get mad at the person exposing them. Thus, they avoid them, don’t talk to them, and Paul is saying, ***“Hey, don’t get mad at me, I’m just telling you the truth. Deal with it!”***

Tragically many people refuse to deal with it as one writer pointed out for us. He wrote, A prostitute came to our church one day looking for help. She was quite successful financially but was plagued by tremendous feelings of guilt and anxiety. She drank heavily, took drugs, and realized her life was a mess.

When I explained the gospel to her and assured her that God was eager to forgive her sins and give her new life if she trusted in Jesus Christ, she expressed a great interest.

During the course of our conversation she had told me of a little book in which she kept the names and phone numbers of her customers. I suggested that we take the book and burn it right then, as a symbol of her repentance and renunciation of her old life.

But she balked at the idea, saying, "I can't do that! Those names are worth thousands of dollars. I guess I don't want Jesus as much as I thought I did."

Like many people, she knew her way of life was wrong and ruinous, but she loved it more than the Lord and would not give it up.

- John MacArthur

Folks, is there something in your life that the Lord wants you to get rid of, to make right and you refuse because you love something more than you love the Lord?

Now you would never think of it like that, but if there is, then you love that more than you do the Lord, deal with it!

### VERSES 17-18

Interesting enough, what Paul speaks of here we see many of the cults today use this technique informally known as "*love bombing*." What does that mean?

They overwhelm a prospective member with attention, support, and affection. Yet it isn't really a sincere love for the prospect; it is really just a technique to gain another member.

We are to love people with sincere love and help them to grow because we love them.



These Judaizers were smooth-talking the Galatians to win them over and then “**exclude**” or literally “lock you up” into their legalistic ways, alienating them from other Christians, and from Jesus! The sign of false teachers is always, “*Our way is more spiritual.*”

And make no mistake about it, the Galatian Christians were no doubt impressed by the *zeal* of the legalists. They always come off super sincere and more committed than other believers.

And who did they draw them to? They drew them to themselves; “**. . . that you may be zealous for them.**” It is about what they knew, the insight that they had, even if it went against what the Word of God is saying. And folks, I have seen this, and it is so dangerous!

Interestingly enough, Wuest tells us, “The Judaizers had pursued the adroit [skillful] course of presenting to them only part of the requirements of the Mosaic law, those parts which might be least repulsive to them as Gentiles. Having gotten them to adopt the festivals and perhaps the fast days, the Judaizers were now urging them to adopt circumcision.” You would not want to come with that one at first, ouch!

And when you look at the cults today as they go around courting converts, never telling them their bizarre doctrines, beliefs, but just the warm fuzzy things to sway them to their side, ***DECEPTION!***

The Jehovah Witnesses are a prime example of a cult that is locking people up, putting them in prison you might say.

You see, they can’t read religious material other than what is Jehovah Witness propaganda!

I have no problem reading their material because I know God's Word will expose their lies, but they are afraid to read the truth because it may expose their lies, their people may be set free!

How sad, what bondage, and to be afraid that what you believe is not supported by the Bible and you have to tell your people, warn them, forbid them to read it!

Now let me say this, there is nothing wrong with being zealous. And there can be a lot wrong with being zealous.

Paul was zealous when he was persecuting Christians before he got saved. That was not a good zeal.

But here in Galatians, Paul admonishes them to be zealous in the good things, even when he is not present. Don't just put on a show, live what you believe!

#### VERSES 19-20

Paul is reminding them that he shared the Gospel with them, and they came to saving faith. He birthed them, in a sense.

And he speaks of the Galatians becoming like Christ in character and that truly is what God is doing in each of us.

In Colossians 2:6-7 Paul tells us, "**As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.**"

In Romans 13:14 we are told, "**But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**"

And in Romans 8:29 Paul says, “**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.**”

But Paul has a concern and that is this.

He has already birthed them and now, by drifting away from Jesus and to the Law, he was going to have to birth them again!

Obviously that is not natural and that is the point!

They were being swayed by the winds of doctrine that were blowing through the church. They had set their sails high and they were babes, not mature in the faith!

Stott put it this way, “He likens his pain to the pangs of childbirth. He had been in labour over them previously at the time of their conversion, when they were brought to birth; now their backsliding has caused him another confinement. He is in labour again. The first time there had been a miscarriage; this time he longs that Christ will be truly formed in them.”

As we read on we will see that Paul is going to return to his doctrinal argument against those who want to be Christians and still live by the Law. He is going to show us that the Law and Grace cannot coexist!

### VERSES 21-23

As you can see, Paul is trying to get their attention. His point is simple, those who want to live under the Law as their basis for their relationship with God, “***Do you really hear what the Law is saying?***” he is asking them.

You see, as I have said often, the Law can’t save; it just exposes our sinful condition and if you want to live under the Law you will die in the Law!

And to prove his point about the Law and Grace he takes them to Abraham, the father of the Jewish faith.

Now, in a sense, these legalists were sons of Abraham, but don't forget that Abraham had two sons; Ishmael who is a type of the flesh, and Isaac who is the son of promise.

God had promised a son to Abraham and Sarah but at 85 years of age, Abraham didn't think things were looking too good, considering his wife was 75 years old!

So Sarah convinced Abraham to have a child with her maidservant Hagar, helping God out.

And Abraham said, "*For you dear, I'll do anything!*" I am paraphrasing of course, but what a guy!

Thus, from this relationship was born Ishmael, when Abraham was 86 years old!

Here is the problem! God does not recognize the son of the flesh, for in Genesis 22:2 we are told, "**... 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.'**"

You see, Abraham had two sons and yet God did not recognize Ishmael because Isaac was the son of the promise, a miracle of God, born when Abraham was 100 years old and his wife Sarah was 90!

Picture it like this as one writer explains,

The conception of Ishmael represents man's way, the way of the flesh, whereas that of Isaac represents God's way, the way of promise.

The first is analogous to the way of religious self-effort and works righteousness; the second is analogous to the way of faith and God's imputed righteousness.

The one is the way of legalism, the other the way of grace.

Ishmael symbolizes those who have had only natural birth and who trust in their own works.

Isaac symbolizes those who also have had spiritual birth because they have trusted in the work of Jesus Christ.

- John MacArthur

And if you still don't get it, listen to what Spurgeon wrote, "The better legalist a man is, the more sure he is of being damned; the more holy a man is, if he trust to his works, the more he may rest assured of his own final rejection and eternal portion with Pharisees."

It is really so simple and yet we make it so complicated. And please keep in mind that Paul is not done with this picture.

You see, the true story of Isaac and Ishmael represents deep spiritual truth, which Paul now proceeds to explain.

#### VERSES 24-27

The Law, the Old Covenant was given to Moses on Mount Sinai and its requirement was for the Jews to keep all the commands.

***"That is humanly impossible!"*** you say and rightly so.

Thus, it made them a type of religious slaves, bound to the master from which there was no way out.

If you feel you can work your way into heaven then you are a child of Hagar, the bondwomen!

The freedom comes from the New Covenant that is based in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and that is a free gift of God, a grace gift that God has given to us and that is freedom, that is the New Jerusalem.

Thus, in quoting out of Isaiah 54:1 Paul is saying that Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, will outnumber legalistic Jews or those following the Law, and we see that has come to pass!

And if you are still struggling with this, compare the two and see if they are the same!

**The “ISHMAELS” – Legalism**

Slavery and Bondage  
Ishmael: born according to the flesh  
Coming from the earthly Jerusalem  
Many children  
Persecuting  
Inheriting nothing  
Relationship based on law-keeping

**The “ISAACS” – True Christianity**

Freedom  
Isaac: born by God’s promised miracle  
Coming from the heavenly Jerusalem  
Many more children  
Persecuted  
Inheriting everything  
Relationship based on trusting God

And, as we will see, Law and Grace cannot coexist together because as soon as you add works to Grace, it is no longer Grace, but now God owes you heaven because of what you have done.

Let me be clear on this, that will never happen. Heaven is given to us as a gift from God, not because we deserve it, it is a Grace gift, eternal life with Him!

**VERSES 28-31**

Keep in mind that Ishmael mocked Isaac, and it has always been true that those born of the flesh have persecuted those born of the Spirit.

Think about it, look at the sufferings of our Lord and of the Apostle Paul at the hands of unsaved men.

And I have seen this played out. Because I believe that we are saved by Grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone I have been accused of worshiping God on a pagan day, Sunday, a day given over to a Greek god!

And that makes me laugh because if that is true, then the Sabbath day Friday, into Saturday is also given over to a Greek god. In fact, every day of the week is!

No, I don't worship any other god than the true and living God and I worship Him every day of the week!

I have been accused of not teaching books of the Old Testament because I am not keeping the Law!

First of all, that is a lie, and the person saying that knows it because I have taught every book of the Bible here at Calvary, and most of them twice, including the Old Testament!

And, if they truly believe that they need to keep the Law, how much of it are they keeping?

You see, the Law does not give you a license to pick and choose which ones you like and which ones you don't!

Think about speed limits, they are posted, they are the law and you can't say, "Hey, no traffic on the highway, I don't have to go 70 miles per hour, I am going to go 100 miles per hour!"

Now you can do that, but you broke the law and you will get a ticket if you get caught. The law is the law, you don't have an option to obey it or not!

And that is true with the Law of God. In fact, if you again are struggling with this, listen to what James tells us, “**For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.**” James 2:10.

In other words, if you are keeping the Law, you have to keep it all – *PERFECTLY!* And even if you say you don’t keep that one, you are still responsible to obey it. That is the Law, and its job is to show us how we are doing and draw us to the Savior because none of us can keep it perfectly! And, in keeping the Law, if you stumble at one of them, you are guilty of breaking them all!

Not only that but please understand that Hagar and Sarah could not live in the same house. (Genesis 21:8-14)

In fact, God told Abraham to send Hagar away.

Folks, we as Christians must also send away the idea of relating to God on the principle of the Law, what we can do for God.

Instead, we must live on the principle of what God has done for us.

It is as Morris tells us, “Barclay makes the point that anyone who makes law central is ‘in the position of a slave; all his life he is seeking to satisfy his master the law.’ But when grace is central, the person ‘has made love his dominant principle . . . it will be the power of love and not the constraint of law that keeps us right; and love is always more powerful than law.’”

Amen to that!

Now, what does the name “*Isaac*” mean?

His name means *laughter* and think about it. As children of God by faith, not by the Law, we can have joy, we can have laughter in our lives.

But the Law brings about no joy, no laughter, only condemnation, fear, misery!



The choice seems so obvious and yet, many still fall prey to the lies of legalism.

Next week, as we get into Galatians chapter 5, we will see Paul continue this thought.

And here in Galatians 5:1 listen to what Paul says, “**Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.**”

May we live in the freedom we have in Christ and not be placed in the bondage of the Law!

As Paul said, “**So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.**” Galatians 4:31.