

BELIEVERS BIBLE FELLOWSHIP
November 6, 2011

Lesson No.8

The Study of Galatians



The Defense of Justification by Faith
Galatians 4:8-31

- The Sentimental Argument
- The Allegorical Argument



Japan (Shinto)



Greek (Zeus)



Egypt (Fertility)



India (Hindu)

Key Verses: Galatians 4:8-9 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

INTRODUCTION: Prior to their conversion the Galatians were in bondage to false gods, such as Zeus *“the chief god”* and Hermes *“the messenger”* (Acts 14:11-13) i.e. Roman gods Jupiter and Mercury vv.8-9. Under the influence of the Judaizers the Galatians had begun to observe the Mosaic calendar. They observed these special times thinking that it would gain them additional merit before God: Christianity is not a religion but a relationship with God. [read more](#)

- They kept (1) special days, *“weekly Sabbaths”* (2) months *“new moons”* (3) seasons *“seasonal festivals”* i.e. Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles and (4) years *“sabbatical and jubilee years”* v.10
- The strict observance of such days and festivals has nothing to do with securing divine favor. Neither should they be viewed as a foundation to which to build your hope of being justified in the sight of God.
- Paul expresses his fear, that if the Galatians attachment to legalistic practices continued, his labor would be in vain *“wasted and for nothing”* v.11 and **Romans 4:14; Philippians 2:16**

V. The Sentimental Argument: vv.12-18 The Galatians had received Paul with joy, but that had all changed. How fickle were these Galatians! They were turning against the Lord, the gospel of grace, and the messenger who brought them the news of justification by faith.

- Brethren, I beseech you! v.12 and **1 Corinthians 11:1; Ephesians 5:1** This appeal is like a father addressing his spiritual children. During his first visit Paul became as one of them.
- Paul reminds them that during his first visit he suffered from a physical affliction: i.e. it could have been Malaria or an eye disease. chp.6:11 and **Acts 9:18**. Swamps and eye disease were known in the area of Pamphylia. vv.13-15
- The Galatians treated Paul like an enemy because he was telling them the truth. v.16
- In the double use of the verb *“be zealous”* Paul said that (1) the Judaizers were *“zealous to win over”* the Galatians so that (2) they would *“be zealous for the Judaizers”* vv.17-18
- The Judaizers made a show of their love for the Galatians *“zealously affect you”* but their motives were not pure.

- They also wanted to alienate “to lock out” the Galatians from Paul and his teaching so that the Galatians would be “shut up” instead to their false teachings.
- Paul longed for these believers to be transformed “to take on the form of” the image of Christ v.19-20 and **Philippians 2:6-7**

VI. The Allegorical Argument: vv.21-31 Paul uses the story of Abraham’s two sons (Isaac and Ishmael) to show that the new covenant of grace has superseded the old covenant of law.

An allegory is an event or story that has a hidden meaning. **Genesis 16:1-6** and **Genesis 21:1-21**



Abram to Abraham
Genesis 17:5

The Old Covenant of Law

1. Symbolized by Hagar, the slave-girl
2. Ishmael, a son born after the flesh
3. Represents Jerusalem in Paul’s day, still in spiritual and political bondage

The New Covenant of Grace

1. Symbolized by Sarah, the free woman
2. Isaac, a son born miraculously by God’s promise
3. Represents the heavenly Jerusalem which is free and glorious

The Personal Application: vv.28-31 Paul makes three comparisons:

1. Paul compared the birth of Isaac to that of Christians. v.28 as Isaac experienced a supernatural birth and was a child by means of a promise, so each believer experiences a supernatural birth and is a recipient of the promise of salvation. chp. 3:9, 22, 29 and **John 3:3-5**
2. Paul compared Ishmael’s persecution of Isaac to the Judaizers opposition to believers. Ishmael mocked Isaac by laughing at him. v. 29 and **Genesis 21:8-9**
 - The early animosity has been perpetuated in the two peoples who descended from the two sons of Abraham and is seen in the current Arab-Israel tensions.
 - Paul likened the Judaizers to Ishmael as those who were born out of legalistic self-effort, he charged that they continued to persecute the true believers who were “born by the power of the Spirit”
3. Paul compared the action of Abraham to the obligation of the Galatians. v.30
 - When Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac, she asked Abraham to “cast out” Hagar and Ishmael, forbidding Ishmael from becoming a joint-heir with Isaac. God granted Sarah’s request.
 - The Law observance brought no inheritance to the Galatians; therefore, they like Sarah were to excommunicate “cast out” the Judaizers and those who accepted their false doctrines.
 - A fundamental incompatibility remains between Law and grace, between a religion based on works and Christianity based on faith.

Paul affirms that the Galatians were not children of “the slave woman” who was driven away and was denied a share in the inheritance; but rather, all believers are children of “the free woman” heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. v.31 and **Romans 8:17**