

GALATIANS

Galatians 1:1-10	ONLY ONE GOSPEL
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	TWO ANTIOCHS

Some key passages:

1:3-4	The Heart of the Gospel.
1:8-9	The Purity and Unity of the Gospel.
2:16, 20	The Life of the gospel.
3:11	The way of life for the Christian.
3:22-24	The schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.
4:4-7	The fullness of time.
4:22-31	The great allegory.
5:19-26	Works of the flesh and fruit of the Spirit.
6:7	Law of sowing and reaping.

Galatians 4:1-18

BELIEVERS - SONS or SLAVES?

You are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. 4:7

The Galatians were a privileged people. God had sent an apostle to them and he had taught them what it meant to be "in Christ." They, as much as any Jew, were "children of Abraham," by faith. They had been taught that being a Christian meant that there were no distinctions based on race, sex, economic conditions, or social position.

Somehow they were willing to return to the slavery of rules and regulations, thereby trying to please God by their works.

Paul presents a contrast between their standing as children of God and their behavior as children, still in functional slavery.

1. THE FUNCTIONAL SLAVERY of CHILDREN

4:1-3

"Now I say..." Compare 3:26; 29. Paul had just told them they were children of God, children of Abraham by faith, and now he says they are still acting like functional slaves. In their culture, and even today, a child may be an heir to an estate and be its potentially legal owner, when he comes of age. But until the heir reaches a certain age, he does not experience the reality of ownership any more than does a slave who is part of the heir's inheritance.

For the Jews, a boy became a man after age twelve. The Greeks recognized maturity at age eighteen. Whatever the age of maturity, a child was under functional slavery until freedom was permitted by his guardians.

The phrase "basic principles {elements} of the world," probably refers to the way we are all raised by some set of rules and regulations. Parents start very early telling their child "don't do that," "stop that," "you better mind me!"

Outside of Biblical Christianity, all religions are based on some form of legalism. It is Christ who makes us free and we ought to act as mature children of God and not as functional slaves.

2. THE FULL RIGHTS of SONS

4:4-7

The irony of the Galatians' slavery is that Christ had already accomplished their freedom. The evil of works salvation is the idea that you must do something more than what Christ has already done in order to make your salvation perfect.

Just at the right time, what had been in the purpose of God from eternity past, came to reality in space-time history. Christ came to redeem those who were under the law.

To "redeem" is to buy out. The "price" of freedom is the blood of Jesus Christ.

One of the great blessings of salvation is that God, through the Holy Spirit, is now "Abba Father." In our use of language, the closest translation would be "Daddy Father."

3. THE FOLLY of SONS WHO ACT LIKE SLAVES

4:8-11

Before you were saved you were in bondage to gods that didn't even exist. This is as true of modern pagans in Hueytown as it was of the Greeks who had temples built to worship their idols of wood and stone.

Be sure not to miss who took the initiative in the matter of redemption, vs. 9.

Instead of trusting God, they were observing special days and seasons. Why do some people come to church on "Easter," and ignore church for the rest of the year? They are religious by nature and probably lost. Thank God that they come at all and pray that the Gospel will be made effectual to them.

4. PAUL'S FRIENDSHIP with the GALATIANS

4:12-16

Paul refers to his personal relationship with the Galatians to remind them of how freedom once was enjoyed. At one time they had cared for Paul when he was suffering. The expression "you would have plucked out your eyes," may refer to Paul's infirmity. It is also a way that they expressed gratitude or love.

Your real friends will tell you the truth, even when it hurts.
If you are a real friend, you won't be offended when they do.

5. THE FALSE ZEAL of the LEGALISTS

4:17-18

The real problem was neither with Paul nor the Galatians, but with the Judaizers.

Zeal is not wrong if it is based on the right motive.

Galatians 4:19-31

BELIEVERS - CHILDREN of SARAH or CHILDREN of HAGAR?

Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. 4:31

What can a teacher do when those he has taught seem to be in danger of drifting into grave error? Paul knew the Galatians had been taught the truth of the Gospel that salvation is of grace without works. Yet, here they are ready to accept the latest innovation of man that would lead them away from the Gospel of Christ.

Paul sought to get their attention in Chapter Three; "O Foolish Galatians!" He introduces Abraham, who was justified by faith alone many years before the law was given to Moses. Of course the law was never intended as a way of being saved, but men invent schemes that give men the glory in salvation rather than giving the glory to God. He told them they were acting like slaves instead of children that they needed to grow up and realize their maturity and freedom in Christ.

1. PAUL'S PERPLEXITY

4:19-20

Paul had not begun his letter to the Galatians with the usual commendation. In fact, the tone is almost harsh. This is not because he did not love them, but because he loved them enough to tell them the truth. Now his deep affection begins to come out. They are to Paul, "My dear children." He wishes to be there in person. A letter can't possibly convey the same feeling as a face-to-face conversation. You can't interrupt a letter to clear up a misunderstanding.

2. TWO WOMEN, TWO SONS

4:21-23

In the Old Testament there is an account of the two women that bore sons to Abraham. Abraham had other sons, but these two are significant because of the motive behind their conception. The facts are found in Genesis chapters 16-17 and 21.

God had promised Abraham a son through whom "all the nations of the world would be blessed." After waiting many years and deciding that perhaps God had forgotten His promise, Sarai (their names were Abram and Sarai before God changed them) decides to take matters into her own hands. Perhaps if Abram had a son by Sarah's slave Hagar that would fulfill the promise. Hagar's son was not the son of the promise of God.

Years later God appeared to Abram, changed their names, and confirmed the promise. But Abraham was now 100 years old and Sarah was 90! {By the time of Abraham men did not live nearly as long as they did before the flood. The effects of sin had already affected their genetic makeup.}

3. TWO WOMEN, TWO COVENANTS

4:24-27

These two women may be taken as an allegory. An allegory is an event or story used to represent an abstract or spiritual meaning. They are factual, historical events and Moses did not record them as allegorical, but Paul says they may be used as such. We may use two "multiple equations" to represent the allegory.

Hagar = Old Covenant of law = Mt. Sinai=Ishmael = slavery = earthly Jerusalem

Sarah = New Covenant of grace = Mt. Calvary/Zion = Isaac = freedom = heavenly Jerusalem

Cf. Hebrews 12:22 & Revelation 21:2-3

4. TWO SONS, ONE INHERITANCE

4:28-31

In Genesis 21:9, Ishmael was mocking. The antagonism between those who teach salvation by works and those who teach salvation by grace continues to this day. The matter became so severe that Abraham finally listened to Sarah and put out the bondwoman and her son. There is a lot more to this story, but in the final analysis, there can be no compromise between the Gospel and legalism.

Just as Paul loved his Jewish brethren, we too should love those who are caught up in legalism and try to share the Gospel with them.