

Galatians 4¹ *Cast Out the Bondwoman*²

In chapters three and four Paul uses six arguments to prove that salvation is by grace through faith and not by works of law. In this lesson, we will look at the final three³.

The Historical Argument: Galatians 4:1-11

¹ Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, ² but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. ³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. ⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. ⁸ But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. ⁹ But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? ¹⁰ You observe days and months and seasons and years. ¹¹ I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

1. A child is an immature son. Even though a child's parents are wealthy, a child is the same as a slave in that he technically doesn't have anything yet and must obey the restraints put upon him.
 - a. Paul is showing them that if we remain under law, we are immature children.
2. "The tutor was the guardian of the child's person, the governor, the guardian of the child's property.-WWS⁴
 - a. We are not immature children. We are mature sons of God (huios). It is ridiculous for us to be guarded and governed by law.
3. Before Christ both Jew and Gentile were controlled by the elements of the world.
 - a. The "elements of the world" refer here therefore to the first principles of non-Christian humanity; in the case of the Jew; to the symbolic and ceremonial character of Judaism and its legal enactments, and in the case of the Gentiles, to the ceremonial and ritualistic observances of the pagan religions.-WWS
 - b. God does not want us controlled by ceremonial rituals.
4. When the right time had come, God sent Jesus.
 - a. All of history, language, and even infrastructure was preparing for the coming of Christ.

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all scripture is taken from the *New King James Version (NKJV)* Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

² In this lesson, the number of the point corresponds with the number of the verse.

³ Titles of arguments and their divisions are from *Be Free* by Warren Wiersbe. Commentary is by SGF.

⁴ WWS-Wuest Word Studies

This point of time marked some outstanding events in the history of the human race. First, it was the moment which God had ordained for Messiah's coming. To Daniel was given the date of His coming, 483 years after the edict of the Medo-Persian government to rebuild Jerusalem. Second, the Mosaic law had done its educational work, showing to the world that the most highly-favored nation on earth, the Jewish nation, was, despite all of God's blessings and mercy, totally depraved, giving the Gentile portion of the race a picture of its own totally depraved heart. Third, the Mosaic law in its three sections, the ten commandments, the laws governing social relationships, and the Levitical system of sacrifices, was done away with as a legal system, to be superseded by the gospel of grace centering faith in an historic Saviour. Fourth, the Roman Empire maintained world peace. Roman roads made travel for missionaries easy. The universal use of the Greek language made the speedy propagation of the gospel possible.' The earth-stage was all set for the greatest event in the history of the human race, the incarnation, sacrificial death, and bodily resurrection of God the Son.-WWS

b. He was born under the law which meant that he was subject to law.

Not only was He sent forth from Heaven, but He became incarnate in the human race through virgin birth, as the words "made of a woman" indicate. Not only did He become incarnate, but He was born and lived His life previous to His Cross under the Mosaic law, yes, under law as such, for the definite article is absent before the word *law* in the Greek text. He was subject to the Jewish legal economy just as any Jew was subject to it.-WWS

5. God didn't send Jesus to earth to establish the law. He sent Him to redeem those who were under the law FROM the law (the guardian and governor) that they might receive the adoption as full sons.

a. Redeem means "to buy back for the purpose of setting free". We were not redeemed in order to be put back under bondage!

The word *redeem* is from *exagorazo* "to buy out of the slave market." The word law is not preceded by the definite article, hence law in general is referred to here. Paul conceived of the Gentiles as possessing a law, and that law being of divine origin. He speaks of the law written in the hearts of the Gentiles (Rom. 2:14,15). This law written upon the Gentile heart could easily become externalized and be made into a legalistic system. In 1 Corinthians 9:20, Paul refers first to the Jews, and then to those who are under the law, including in the second expression, anyone who was living under a system of legalism, Jew or Gentile.-WWS

6. "Abba Father"⁵

a. "Abba" was the Aramaic address of intimacy used in a Jewish home.

⁵ From "Galatians" Gordon D. Fee

- b. Jesus' use of the term was unique in known Jewish literature.
- c. Jesus understood His unique relationship to the Father.
- d. As adopted sons, His disciples are invited to use the term Abba as His extension of grace to them.
- e. We address God in the same intimate term Jesus used.
- f. Some falsely believe that Jesus and the Father are the same person, and yet Jesus conversed often with His Father.

“Crying out”

Krazo: A primary verb; properly to “croak” (as a raven) or scream, that is, (generally) to call aloud (shriek, exclaim, entreat): - cry (out).⁶

Romans 8:15

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

Mark 14:36

And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."

Ephesians 1:4-6

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

g. Who is crying out “Abba Father”? It is the Spirit of Jesus in us that cries out that we are full intimate son’s of God!!

h. Since we are full sons, we are full heirs of God. All that Jesus received for us on the cross is ours.

7. **THEREFORE....based on what Paul has just said.... WE ARE NOT, NOT, NOT, NOT, NOT SLAVES BUT FULL SONS. WE ARE NOT UNDER LAW. WE ARE UNDER GRACE. If we seek to return to law it is the same as a free son becoming His father’s slave or a mature son going back to needing governors and tutors.**

The Lord Jesus was born under the law, lived under the law, and died under the penalty of the law which we broke, and in paying our penalty, He delivered us from any claims which the law had against us. He died under law, and in His resurrection, was raised into a realm where law as a legalistic system does not exist. This He did, in order that He might not only deliver us from the law but also raise believers with Himself into a realm where law does not operate. Instead therefore of being children (immature ones, nepios) under law, we became adult sons (huios) under grace. We received the adoption of sons. This expression in the Greek is literally, "in order that we might receive the adult son-placing." We could paraphrase it "in order that we might be placed as adult sons." Thus, we have presented to us the status of a person under grace as compared to that of a person under law. The latter is in his minority, the former in his majority, the latter treated like a minor, the former like an adult. -WWS

8. **In verse 8, Paul reminds them that they used to serve pagan gods. “Serving” is meant to imply that they obeyed the laws and religious obligations of their pagan gods.**

⁶ Unless otherwise stated Greek definitions are from Strong’s Concordance.

9. Paul is still reasoning with them powerfully...why would you who are now full mature sons of God go back to the weak elements of following laws and rituals? This would only bring them back into bondage. He is showing them that they wouldn't think of going back to the religious rituals of their pagan religion, so why would they want to come under the Jewish laws?
- a. The implication is not that the Law of Moses and the false pagan God's are equals, but that they are both based on law. God does not want our relationship with Him as our Abba Father based on laws, but on grace.
 - b. It does appear, however, that Paul thinks that going back to their former heathen laws is just as useless as adopting the law of Moses. Both the heathen laws and the Jewish law are now "weak and beggarly" contrasted to grace.

Romans 8:3a

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.

10. Apparently, the Gentiles were already observing Jewish feasts (days, times, years).
11. Imagine what Paul is feeling here. He had ministered to the Galatians in detail, explaining the simple and pure gospel to them, and now they were adding to it. If after teaching the gospel of grace to a group of people for two years, they just quickly turned around and began to follow the next teacher who came along and inserted law, anyone would be shocked. I think this is why he calls them foolish (slow witted...stupid) and asks who has bewitched them. He was astounded that they were so quickly being removed from the true gospel. HAD HE WASTED HIS TIME ON THEM?

The Sentimental Argument: Galatians 4:12-18

Paul now appeals to the love and friendship the Galatians have for him that they not submit themselves to the Law. He begs them to become as he is: FREE FROM THE LAW AND RELIGIOUS REQUIREMENTS.

¹² Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you. You have not injured me at all. ¹³ You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. ¹⁴ And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? ¹⁷ They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. ¹⁸ But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you.

12. Paul is not concerned about how they might have injured him, but how they are being injured. He became as a Gentile and now he begs them to be as he is, free from the bondage of the law.

13. Paul arrived in the region of Galatia after having been stoned. The Galatians had received him and cared for him (Acts 14:19-20).
14. The Galatians had received him as an angel, even though he probably looked awful.
15. Paul is remembering how much love they showed him. What happened to that blessing? They loved him so much they would have given him their own eyes if possible. He is asking them to remember this tender love they showed so that they will again listen to him⁷.
16. Paul had knowledge from some source that the Galatians might not readily receive this letter because he asks them if he has become their enemy by telling them the truth. Speaking the truth in love does not guarantee a loving response.
17. The Judaizers apparently were putting on the charm with the Galatians. He says that it isn't for the good of the Galatians, but to build themselves (the Judaizers) up.
- a. Paul expressed similar dismay with the Corinthians.
2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 19-20
For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.¹⁹ For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise! ²⁰ For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face.
 - b. Thus, the idea is that the Judaizers were zealously paying court to the Galatians, attempting to shut them out from the benefits of the gospel in order that they (the Galatians) might have to pay court to the Judaizers, since they would have no refuge for their souls elsewhere. -WWS
 - c. Warning! There are false teachers who will come in among us and teach law. They might sound like ministers of righteousness, behave lovingly, and seem to be teaching grace, but actually they are false apostles. We need to be aware of this and guard our hearts and minds.
Acts 20:29-32
For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. ³¹ Therefore watch, and remember

⁷ Some commentators use this passage in Galatians to “prove” that Paul’s thorn in the flesh had to do with a sickness in his eyes that God refused to heal. This is stretching almost every rule of Bible hermeneutics⁷. Here are some FACTS to consider:

1. Paul does not mention his “thorn in the flesh” in this context.
2. Before Paul came to the Galatians, he had just been stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19-21). Even if “gouged out your eyes and given them to me” literally referred to Paul having trouble with his eyes, the most likely cause of this would be that he had just been STONED (by professional stoners).
3. When Paul speaks of his “thorn in the flesh” in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, he doesn’t refer to it as a sickness or refer to all to his eyes and he doesn’t say that God refused to heal, but clearly refers to the intense persecutions and troubles he faced as a minister of the gospel.
4. Jesus NEVER REFUSED TO HEAL ANYONE WHILE ON EARTH. To not heal Paul would be to deny to Paul the provision of healing given at the cross, thus making God a breaker of His promise and a liar, both of which are impossible (Hebrews 6:19; 2 Corinthians 1:20, 1 Peter 2:24).

that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. ³² So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

18. “Paul has addressed the false teachers’ gospel, and now he is addressing their motives. He is stating that they are zealous, but not in a good way or for a good purpose. Their intention is to alienate the Galatians from the true gospel and from those who teach it, so that instead of the Galatians going to Christ they will come to them (the Judaizers).”-Andrew Wommack’s Living Commentary.

AMPLIFIED: It is always a fine thing [of course] to be zealously sought after [as you are, provided that it is] for a good purpose and done by reason of purity of heart and life, and not just when I am present with you!

The Allegorical⁸ Argument: Galatians 4:19-31

¹⁹ My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰ I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you. ²¹ 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.

19. Throughout all of his argument, Paul uses many personal references.

a. Here he refers to them as “my little children”. This is to say that he had a parental right over them in the Lord and speaks of his deep affection for them.

⁸ An *allegory* is a literary device in which a story or narrative is used to convey truths about reality. The word “allegory” is taken from two Greek words: *alla* (other) and *agoreuo* (to proclaim). An allegory conveys something other than its literal meaning (Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary).

He does this not to lord over them, but to show them how deeply he loves them.

1 Corinthians 4:15

For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

- b. Paul had labored in birth for them to be born again. He is laboring again that they will forsake any thought of embracing the law.
- c. Paul isn't suggesting they be once again reborn. The Galatians were still Christians for he refers to them as "brethren" nine times.
- d. Yet, he is laboring in prayer with the same intensity because they had fallen from grace and had become estranged from Christ.

Galatians 5:4

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

20. It is likely that verse 20 expresses Paul's desire to verbally communicate with the Galatians.
- a. Wuest suggests that he wanted them to hear his passion and the love in his voice. Perhaps he was concerned that his written words were not clear enough.
 - b. He is sincerely concerned for their spiritual well-being. He was baffled about why the Galatians would turn from liberty to legalism. When we try to serve God by acts of our own righteousness, a sort of "balance" of law and grace (mixture), we depart from the true gospel
21. Now Paul begins his allegorical argument. If you want to be under the law, then you need to hear what the law has to say.
22. Abraham was given the promise of the Son. Sarah got tired of waiting and told Abraham to go into her servant, Hagar. He did. This resulted in Ishmael. Later, God fulfilled his promise to them and Abraham and Sarah had Isaac. Ishmael scoffed at Isaac, and therefore Sarah told Abraham to send the bondwoman away. Abraham was not pleased with this, but the Lord told him to listen to Sarah and sent Hagar and Ishmael away (Genesis 16, 21). Sarah is called the freewoman, and Hagar is called the bondwoman.
23. Isaac was of Promise (a gift from God). Ishmael of the flesh (human effort).
24. In Paul's argument, Hagar symbolizes the covenant at Mount Sinai, the Old Covenant.
25. Her "children in earthly Jerusalem" likely refer to the Jews who have rejected the Messiah and remain in bondage to the law.
26. The New Jerusalem is not of the earth but of heaven.
- a. *The phrase "Jerusalem which is above," was familiar to the rabbinical teachers who thought of the heavenly Jerusalem as the archetype of the earthly. The heavenly Jerusalem which is free, therefore represents Sarah; and finally, grace, and the faith way of salvation, for it is contrasted to the earthly Jerusalem which represents legalistic Judaism.-WWS*
27. This quote from Isaiah 54:1 is used by Paul to refer to Sarah and thus to those who are of faith not the law.
- a. This is a great statement of living in "faith" there is rejoicing and shouting long before the promise arrives.

28. Paul states clearly that all believers are children of promise. Believers are the seed and heirs according to promise (not law).
29. Just as Hagar disdained Sarah when Hagar became pregnant, and just as Ishmael scoffed at Isaac, so those of the law persecute those of the Spirit. In Paul’s day this was referring to the non-believing Jews persecuting the believers. Today this is being seen by those who oppose the message of “grace not law” persecuting those who teach we can only be saved and sanctified by grace through faith alone.
30. Paul is telling the believers to cast out the bondwoman. This is referring, of course to Hagar who represents here those still in bondage to the law. Paul is telling us to cast away the law given at Mount Sinai.
- a. We are not only to cast away the law, or any law in order to be right with God, but we also cast out the bond woman’s son, the fruit of “law”, which is guilt, condemnation, dominated by sin, “fear” of God, and slavery to religion.

The Law	Grace/Faith
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hagar, bondwoman • Ishmael, work of the flesh • Slave • No inheritance • Mt. Sinai-Earthly Jerusalem • Legalism • Bondage • Persecutes those of the spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah, free woman • Isaac, son of promise • Son • Inherits all • Heavenly New Jerusalem • Grace/Faith • Freedom • Children of Promise, seed of Abraham, Adopted sons of God

31. We are not children of Hagar (flesh, law, dead works). We are children of promise (spirit, grace, faith). God continues to speak to us and Paul declares:

*“Cast out the bondwoman and her son,
for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir
with the son of the freewoman.”*

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

Cast out law. For law has no place with grace.