

## The Book of Galatians

## Chapter 4

## Background

- Written by Paul possibly as early as A.D. 49.
- The purpose of this letter is to counter the spread of false doctrines concerning salvation, especially the false teaching that believers must keep the Law for salvation.
- Outline
  - Defense of the Gospel – Chapters 1-4
  - Application of the Gospel – Chapters 5-6

## Chapter 4

## I. The Advancement of Sons and Heirs – vs. 1-7

- We begin with Paul pivoting with his object lesson using children in Chapter 3:24-29
- vs. 1-2 – even today children have lesser rights until reaching adulthood. It was more so in ancient days.
- vs. 3 – “elements of this world” – John Gill – “...the several institutions of the Mosaic economy, which were to the Jews what an A B C, or an alphabet of letters, is to one that is beginning to learn; or what an accidence [*inflections*] and grammar be to such who are learning any language, and which contain the rudiments of it...”
- vs. 4-5 – the idea is that as graduation can be a division between childhood and adulthood, so Christ came to bring those under the law into something better.
- vs. 6-7 – The law cannot produce sonship, only servitude.

## II. Paul’s Relationship with the Galatians – vs. 8-20

- vs. 8 – the pagan religions of the time were built upon rites and rituals. These were performed with great care and trepidation. To fail to perform those actions properly could, at least in their mind, anger the gods/forces of the world.
- vs. 9 – to know God or be known by God – it is greater to be known by Him – John 10:14, II Timothy 2:19
- vs. 9-10 – Paul compares their regression in following the Law to regressing back into paganism.
- vs. 12 – J. Vernon McGee paraphrases this verse as: “We are all on the same plane. We are all believers, all in the body of Christ. In view of this we ought to be very polite to one another.”

- vs. 13-15 – Some believe Paul had eye problems, based on these verses and Galatians 6:11, II Corinthians 12:7-10. Whatever the case, the Galatians had loved Paul during hardship while he was there.
- vs. 16 – Who changed? They did
- vs. 17 – “They” are the false teachers. They want to steal the hearts of the Galatians
- vs. 18 – Sometimes a good spirit and intention can go wrong
- vs. 19-20 – the harshness of the writing could be kinder words if Paul were present and knew their situation better.

### III. Example of Hagar and Sarah

- We return to using Abraham’s past as a lesson as in Chapter 3, especially 3:16
- vs. 22 – See Genesis 16 and 22 for the backstory
- vs. 23 – note the connections between slavery/flesh and free/promise
- vs. 24-25 – Hagar = Sinai = Slavery = earthly Jerusalem = bondage of Law
- vs. 26 – Sarah = freedom = heavenly Jerusalem = freedom through faith
- vs. 27 – quotes Isaiah 54:1
- vs. 28-29 – the children of promise will be persecuted and opposed by the children of bondage
- vs. 30 – quotes Genesis 21:10. There can only be one rightful heir and there can only be one way for salvation.
- vs. 31 – transitions into 5:1 and into the practical section that follows