

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, March 7, 2018 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

freedom
THE GRACE OF CHRIST IN GALATIANS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF GALATIANS
No Longer a Slave... A Son!
Galatians 4:1-11

REVIEW: Just for review and to get back into our study of the book of Galatians, let's briefly remind ourselves of some of the background material to the book. These are important background facts to keep in mind as we navigate this important and strategic book in the Bible.

4 Important Background Facts on the Book of Galatians:

(1) **Written by the Apostle Paul** – Paul wrote a large portion of the New Testament. This particular book/letter may have been his first letter. Also interesting to note is that some scholars believe that Paul have penned this letter himself, with his own hand (all of his other letters/writings were done through/with a personal amanuensis [scribe, secretary, recorder]).

(2) **Written as a circular letter** – Most of Paul's letter that we have in the New Testament were written to individual churches (i.e. Ephesians, Philippians) or to individuals (i.e. Timothy, Titus). This letter is different because it was written to a number of churches, and was meant to be passed/shared or "circulated" to each of these churches.

(3) **Written to churches in the region of Galatia** -Galatians is written to a number of different churches that Paul established during his first missionary journey in the region of Galatia in Asia Minor, which would be located in present day Turkey. This area was particularly important in the advance of the gospel and the New Testament church because it represented the movement of the good news/gospel further toward the west and to the rest of world, something Jesus had commanded from the very beginning of the New Testament church in Acts 1:8, "8 *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*"

(4) **Written to oppose and expose false teaching of the Judaizers** – After Paul had left the region of Galatia, following his first missionary journey and the establishment of these new churches, false teachers came in and began to expose these churches and new

believers/Christians to false teaching. These false teachers were known as “Judaizers” and they taught a “work-righteousness” system of salvation. Their teaching essentially said that in order to become a Christians you must first be circumcised and become a Jew, by obeying and following Jewish laws and customs. This was in direct contradiction to the good news/gospel Paul preached, which was salvation by grace, not by works.

Paul’s sequence of thought in this section of Galatians could be summarized in two sentences and one question: “Once we were slaves. Now we are sons. How then can we turn back to the old slavery?” In these eleven verses the apostle rehearses the same history as before, contrasting man’s condition under the Law (vv. 1-3) with his condition when he is in Christ (vv.4-11). Then with much passion he appeals to the readers to live fully and completely free from the “weak and worthless elemental things” that once enslaved them. One might think that by now Paul would have adequately addressed the subject of the Law verses faith, but he hadn’t. He approached the matter from every possible angle in order to declare that we are clearly and significantly saved by grace through faith... apart from works altogether. God neither expects works from us for our salvation, nor does He desire them. Christ’s work at the cross was finished, barring all other additions. So in Paul’s mind there is a great contrast between the Law and grace, and he desperately wants the Galatians... and by implication, us to get it so that we do not depend on the Law, or works, or our deeds... what we do for our salvation.

The following chart may help us compare and contrast what the Law does and doesn’t do up against grace. Read each verse and then fill in what each may be saying about the Law verses grace/faith.

SCRIPTURE	LAW / WORKS	GRACE / FAITH
Galatians 2:16	<i>Cannot justify or make a man right before God</i>	<i>Can justify or make a man right with God</i>
Romans 3:19-22	<i>The law make us guilty or points out our guilt</i>	<i>Grace/faith we are set free from the weight and guilt of our sin</i>
Deuteronomy 27:26	<i>The law curses us as soon as we fail in one point</i>	<i>(by implication) Grace/faith delivers us</i>
James 2:10	<i>The law is unforgiving, in that if you fail at one point you fail at all</i>	<i>By grace through faith we are forgive and the slate is wiped clean</i>
Ephesians 2:8-9	<i>By works/law we can’t be saved</i>	<i>By grace we are saved</i>
Galatians 3:10-13	<i>The law places us under a curse</i>	<i>Jesus frees us from the curse of the law by grace through faith</i>
Romans 8:3-4	<i>The law/works was too weak to save us. It could only point out our error</i>	<i>God, through Jesus saved us by grace through faith.</i>
Isaiah 64:6	<i>Every our very best works/law keeping can’t measure up</i>	<i>In Jesus, by grace through faith, we don’t have to measure up because He does for us</i>
Romans 3:10, 23	<i>None of us can every perfectly keep the law. We all fall short.</i>	<i>(by implication) We don’t have to measure up because Jesus does for us by grace</i>
Matthew 7:21-23	<i>We are not saved by what we do, or doing religious things</i>	<i>We are saved by grace through faith by following Jesus alone</i>

Galatians 2:16, ¹⁶ "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."

Romans 3:19-22, ¹⁹ "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. ²¹ But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference."

Deuteronomy 27:26, ⁶ "Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them."

James 2:10, ¹⁰ "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all."

Ephesians 2:8-9, ⁸ "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast."

Galatians 3:10-13, ¹⁰ "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' ¹¹ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.' ¹² Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.' ¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')

Romans 8:3-4, ³ "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, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

Isaiah 64:6 – ⁶ "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away."

Romans 3:10, 23 – ¹⁰ "As it is written: 'There is no one righteous, not even one' ... ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Matthew 7:21-23 - ²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

CLAIMS THAT MUST BE MADE IF WORKS-RIGHTEOUSNESS SALVATION

3 Claims for A Salvation by Works-Righteousness: For those who may attached some type of works-righteousness for salvation, be that the Law, good works, morality, religious duty, etc., there must by necessity be some claims that must be made... if one is to be saved by “works” in any way.

1. **Salvation must be conditional** – That is, our salvation must be based on something that we do or have done. It makes... even must make... salvation conditional. Conditional on what you do or do not do... i.e. keeping the law, obeying customs and standards, being good enough, doing enough religious duty, not breaking certain codes or laws,
2. **One must maintain he or her own salvation** – If salvation is a matter of what we do (i.e. law keeping, rule following, adherence to a moral code of good) the onus (responsibility, burden, obligation, duty) fall us to keep ourselves saved and in good standing with God by adhering to the standard. Further, it may indicate that since God has saved us, we will maintain our salvation as we continue to match up with God’s required standard.
3. **Salvation must by implication become losable (capable of being lost)** – If it is conditional and up to us to maintain it, the implication must be that if we don’t live up to the condition and fail to maintain it we will no longer possess it. Therefore, a works-righteousness system of salvation automatically make salvation a losable proposition, at least possibly.

A Rebuttal of the 3 Claims for a Salvation by Works-Righteousness:

Claim 1: Salvation must be conditional –

Rebuttal: Scripture teaches that salvation is “unconditional” in nature and indeed doesn’t depend on anything that we do or have done.

Scripture:

- (1) **Ephesians 2:8-9** - *“⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.”*
- (2) **John 3:16** - *“¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*
- (3) **Romans 6:23** - *“²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Claim 2: One must maintain his or her own salvation -

Rebuttal: Man could never match up or be good enough to match up to God’s Holy standard according to Scripture.

Scripture:

- (1) **Isaiah 64:6** – *“⁶ All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”*
- (2) **Romans 3:10, 23** – *“¹⁰ As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one’... ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*
- (3) **Matthew 7:21-23** - *“²¹ ‘Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out*

demons and in your name perform many miracles?’²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

Claim 3: Salvation must by implication become losable (capable of being lost)

Rebuttal: This claim would be in direct violation of Scripture. Scripture clearly teaches that once saved it is forever and cannot be lost in the doctrine of “the eternal security of the believer.”

Scripture:

- (1) **John 10:27-30** - *“²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. ³⁰ I and My Father are one.”*
 - (2) **Titus 3:5-7** - *“⁵ He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”*
 - (3) **1 Peter 1:3-4** - *“³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*
 - (4) **Jude 24-25** - *“²⁴ Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. ²⁵ All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen.” (NLT)*
- John 3:16** - *“¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

MAN’S CONDITION UNDER THE LAW (Galatians 4:1-3)

“^d 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.” –Galatians 4:1-3 (NKJV)

2 Factors Affecting Man’s Condition Under the Law:

1. **Not free, but held in bondage** – Paul likened man’s condition under the Law to something that had historical significance from a Roman perspective, that the Galatians would have known of. A boy did not become a man until he reached a particular date which was predetermined by his father. Fathers arbitrarily set this date so that it would fall somewhere between the sons’ fourteenth and seventeenth year of life. The celebration, however, had to fall on March 17 of any given year. When this date for recognizing the son’s maturity arrived, a sacred family festival (called a “Liberalia”) was held and the father publicly adopted his son, acknowledging him to be a man and recognizing him to be his rightful heir. Until this time the child lived under “guardians and managers” (v.2). William Barclay writes, “As a sacred festival in the family called the ‘Liberalia’ he took off the ‘toga praetexta,” which was a toga with a narrow purple band at the foot of it and put on the ‘toga

virilis.” Which was a plain toga which adults wore. He was then conducted by his friends and relations down to the forum and formally introduced to public life... When he became a man he entered into his full inheritance and into the liberty of manhood.” (For more information, refer to ‘The Daily Study Bible.’ Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958. ‘The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians, p. 37) Up until this time a child was viewed in the same way as a slave (v.1), except it was known that the son would one day be granted this special recognition – where a slave would not. Paul indicated that under Mosaic Law a person was like a child before his ‘Liberalia’... under guardians and managers “until the time appointed by the father.” (Perhaps by analogy this refers to the date of our salvation.) Man was held under the yoke of the Law... cursed.

2. **Not in authority, but held under slavery by the world** – The key phrase to observe is “under the elements of the world” (v.3). The term for “the elements” (Greek, “stoikeia”) has two meanings.

2 Meanings for “The Elements” (“Stoikeia”):

- (1) **ABC’s of our Christian faith** – In Hebrews 5:12 (NIV) we read, “¹²In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!” The words “the elementary truths” is the same Greek work, “stoikeia,” and refers to the basic, ABC’s of our faith... basic or foundational teachings and knowledge.
- (2) **The building blocks of the world** – The second way this word is used is in reference to the building blocks of the world, especially the planets and stars. A popular believe in Paul’s day, influenced by astrology, suggested that these were held under demonic control. The second usage appropriately fits the text of verse 3 of Galatians 4 and could be rendered, “... we were held in bondage under the slavery of the system.”

GOD’S ACTION THROUGH HIS SON (Galatians 4:4-7)

⁴But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” ⁷Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” – Galatians 4:4-7 (NKJV)

Paul identifies two separate acts which God carried out (“... when the fullness of time had come...”) that made sonship with Him a possibility... “... no longer a slave but a son...” (v.7)

2 Acts of God that Made “Sonship” Possible for Us:

1. **He (God) sent forth His Son (vv.4-5)** – Here is Paul’s words in verse 4-5, “⁴But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.” God interrupted this earth’s activity with His coming. He sent Jesus Christ “... born of a woman,

born under the law...” (v.4). Why? Underscore the reason in verse 5, “... to redeem those who were under that law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

2. **He (God) sent for His Spirit (v.6)** – Paul says in verse 6, “⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” The Spirit of His Son was sent “... into your (our) hearts...” with an accompanying cry or appeal to God. We could call this “infant talk form a crib.” That cry, “Abba,” was a term an Aramaic... speaking child used to first address his “daddy.” So intimate was the term that in the English text it was left untranslated. (*A footnote on page 1774 of Charles Caldwell Ryrie’s “The Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Translation,” Chicago: Moody Press, 1978 indicates, “The Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer shows his acceptance with God as a son and heir.”*) **OBSERVATION:** At the time the Lord Jesus Christ enters a believer’s heart... so does the Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 12:13). Never are we commanded to receive the Holy Spirit, but only to be filled with Him... that is, “controlled” by Him (Ephesians 5:18). We cannot later receive the One who has already been sent into our hearts as the moment of conversion. And just a word of warning here. Paul tell us this in Romans 8:9, “⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” Paul’s statement is that if you don’t have the Holy Spirit you don’t have Christ Jesus... you don’t know Him.

PAUL’S APPEAL TO THE CHRISTIAN (Galatians 4:8-11)

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.” – Galatians 4:8-11 (NKJV)

Observe several sets of contrasts which form the basis of Paul’s entreaty to the Galatians, “However at that time...” (v.8), “But now...” (v.9), also “... When you did not know God...” (v.8), “... Now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God...” (v.9). Paul make a strong “before-and-after” comparison to encourage the Galatians to return to their senses. Note the appeal itself, “How is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?” (v.9b). The Galatians’ “turning back” was symptomatized by their observance of certain days, months, seasons, and years. They had succumbed to certain Jewish observances which, in light of salvation by faith, Paul apparently viewed in the same way as he did pagan festivals associated with demons, James Montgomery Boice explains the celebrated occasions, “Days would refer to Sabbaths days, including all those feasts that fell on specified dates in the calendar. Months refers o celebrations tied to the reoccurring monthly cycle, such as those connected with the appearances of the new moon and which Isaiah ridiculed (see Isaiah 1:14). Seasons refers to the seasonal events of more than one day’s duration... the feasts of Tabernacles, Passover, etc. Years most naturally refers to the reoccurring years of Jubilee, (*Galatians,” The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, vol. 10. Edited by Frank E. Gaelbelein, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980, p. 476.*)”

The people had taken up the ways of the past for the purpose of trying to please God and to guarantee their eternal home with Him. Paul’s comment in verse 11 reveals the weight of his concern... “I am afraid for you...”

TRUTHFUL ANSWERS WE MUST ACCEPT**2 Truthful Answer We Must Accept:**

- 1. The answer to spiritual bondage is to receive the redemption that's in the Lord Jesus Christ** – This will result in sonship... heirship with Him.
- 2. The answer to legal bondage is to refuse to “turn back again”** – This will result in a life of liberty... freedom with Him.