

Galatians 4
July 24, 2022

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: What do you think is the danger of new believers, or any believer for that matter, trying to grow in faith through legalism? [Let people engage]

Transition: The Galatian Christians, like most believers, wanted to grow and go forward for Christ; but they were going about it in the wrong way. Their experience is not too different from that of Christians today who get involved in various legalistic movements, hoping to become better Christians. Their motives may be right, but their methods are wrong. Let's see what Paul has to say about this! Would someone volunteer to read Gal 4?

BOOK:

4 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. ² He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. ³ So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. ⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

⁸ Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. ⁹ But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? ¹⁰ You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! ¹¹ I fear for you, that somehow, I have wasted my efforts on you.

¹² I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. ¹³ As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. ¹⁴ Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. ¹⁵ What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

¹⁷ Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. ¹⁸ It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you. ¹⁹ My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰ how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

Hagar and Sarah

²¹ Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free

woman. ²³ His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

²⁴ These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. ²⁵ Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷ For it is written:

“Be glad, O barren woman,
who bears no children;
break forth and cry aloud,
you who have no labor pains;
because more are the children of the desolate woman
than of her who has a husband.” (Isa 54:1)

²⁸ Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. ³⁰ But what does the Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.” (Gen 21:10) ³¹ Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

If you follow Paul’s footsteps as a disciple maker, you will have the same experience. You too will have many spiritual children whom you feed, care for, teach, and shepherd. When they do well, you will rejoice. But when they stumble, your heart will be wrenched. Your close relationship with them will push you to pray for them and plead with them to stay on the right path.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 705-712)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

IT'S TIME TO GROW UP!

Galatians 4:1-18

One of the tragedies of legalism is that it gives the appearance of spiritual maturity when, in reality, it leads the believer back into a "second childhood" of Christian experience. The Galatian Christians, like most believers, wanted to grow and go forward for Christ; but they were going about it in the wrong way. Their experience is not too different from that of Christians today who get involved in various legalistic movements, hoping to become better Christians. Their motives may be right, but their methods are wrong.

This is the truth Paul is trying to get across to his beloved converts in Galatia. The Judaizers had bewitched them into thinking that the Law would make them better Christians. Their old nature felt an attraction for the Law because the Law enabled them to *do* things and measure external results. As they measured themselves and their achievements, they felt a sense of accomplishment, and, no doubt, a little bit of pride. They thought they were going forward when actually they were regressing.

Such people are in a situation similar to the airplane passengers who heard their pilot announce: "Our navigator has lost our position, folks, and we have been flying rather aimlessly for over an hour. That's the bad news. But the good news is that we are making very good time."

Paul takes three approaches in this section as he seeks to convince the Galatians that they do not need legalism in order to live the Christian life. They have all they need in Jesus Christ.

He Explains Their Adoption (Gal. 4:1-7)

Among the blessings of the Christian experience is *adoption* (Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). We do not *enter* God's family by adoption, the way a homeless child would enter a loving family in our own society. The only way to get into God's family is by *regeneration*, being "born again" (John 3:3).

The New Testament word for *adoption* means "to place as an adult son." It has to do with our *standing* in the family of God: we are not little children but adult sons with all of the privileges of sonship.

It is unfortunate that many translations of the New Testament do not make a distinction between *children of God* and *sons of God*. We are the children of God by faith in Christ, born into God's family. But every child of God is automatically placed into the family as a *son*, and as a son he has all the legal rights and privileges of a son. When a sinner trusts Christ and is saved, as far as his *condition* is concerned, he is a "spiritual babe" who needs to grow (1 Peter 2:2-3); but as far as his *position* is concerned, he is an adult son who can draw on the Father's wealth and who can exercise all the wonderful privileges of sonship.

We *enter* God's family by regeneration, but we *enjoy* God's family by adoption. The Christian does not have to wait to begin enjoying the spiritual riches he has in Christ. "If a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:7). Now follows Paul's discussion about adoption. He reminds his readers of three facts.

What we were: children in bondage (vv. 1–3). No matter how wealthy a father may be, his infant son or toddling child cannot really enjoy that wealth. In the Roman world, the children of wealthy people were cared for by slaves. No matter who his father was, the child was still a child, under the supervision of a servant. In fact, the child himself was not much different from the servant who guarded him. The servant was commanded by the master of the house, and the child was commanded by the servant.

This was the spiritual condition of the Jews under the age of the Law. The Law, you recall, was the “guardian” that disciplined the nation and prepared the people for the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:23–25). So, when the Judaizers led the Galatians back into legalism, they were leading them not only into religious bondage, but also into moral and spiritual infancy and immaturity.

Paul states that the Jews were, like little children, in bondage to “the elements of the world.” This word *elements* means *the basic principles, the ABCs*. For some fifteen centuries, Israel had been in kindergarten and grade school, learning their “spiritual ABCs,” so that they would be ready when Christ would come. Then they would get the full revelation, for Jesus Christ is “the Alpha and the Omega” (Rev. 22:13); He encompasses *all* the alphabet of God’s revelation to man. He is God’s last Word (Heb. 1:1–3).

Legalism, then, is not a step toward maturity; it is a step back into childhood. The Law was not God’s final revelation; it was but the preparation for that final revelation in Christ. It is important that a person know his ABCs, because they are the foundation for understanding all of the language. But the man who sits in a library and recites the ABCs instead of reading the great literature that is around him, is showing that he is immature and ignorant, not mature and wise. Under the Law, the Jews were children in bondage, not sons enjoying liberty.

What God did: redeemed us (vv. 4–5). The expression *the fullness of the time* (Gal. 4:4) refers to that time when the world was providentially ready for the birth of the Savior. Historians tell us that the Roman world was in great expectation, waiting for a Deliverer, at the time when Jesus was born. The old religions were dying; the old philosophies were empty and powerless to change men’s lives. Strange new mystery religions were invading the empire. Religious bankruptcy and spiritual hunger were everywhere. God was preparing the world for the arrival of His Son.

From the historical point of view, the Roman Empire itself helped prepare the world for the birth of the Savior. Roads connected city with city, and all cities ultimately with Rome. Roman laws protected the rights of citizens, and Roman soldiers guarded the peace. Thanks to both the Greek and Roman conquests, Latin and Greek were known across the empire. Christ’s birth at Bethlehem was not an accident; it was an appointment: Jesus came in “the fullness of the time.” (And, it is worth noting, that He will come again when the time is ready.)

Paul is careful to point out the dual nature of Jesus Christ (Gal. 4:4), that He is both God and man. As God, Jesus “came forth” (John 16:28); but as man, He was “made of a woman.” The ancient promise said that the Redeemer would be of “the woman’s seed” (Gen. 3:15); and Jesus fulfilled that promise (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18–25).

Paul has told us *who* came—God’s Son; he has told us *when* He came and *how* He came. Now he explains *why* He came: “to redeem them that were under the Law” (Gal. 4:5). *Redeem* is the same word Paul used earlier (Gal. 3:13); it means “to set free by paying a price.” A man could purchase a slave in any Roman city (there were about 60 million slaves in the empire), either to keep the slave for himself or to set him free. Jesus came to set us free. So, to go back into the Law is to undo the very work of Christ on the cross. He did not purchase us to make us

slaves, but *sons!* Under Law, the Jews were mere children, but under grace, the believer is a son of God with an adult standing in God’s family.

Perhaps at this point a chart will help us understand better the contrast between being a “child of God” and a “son of God.”

<i>The Child</i>	<i>The Son</i>
by regeneration	by adoption
entering the family	enjoying the family
under guardians	the liberty of an adult
cannot inherit	an heir to the Father

What we are: sons and heirs (vv. 6–7). Once again, the entire Trinity is involved in our spiritual experience: God the Father sent the Son to die for us, and God the Son sent His Spirit to live in us. The contrast here is not between immature children and adult sons, but between *servants* and *sons*. Like the Prodigal Son, the Galatians wanted their Father to accept them as servants, when they really were sons (Luke 15:18–19). The contrasts are easy to see. For example:

The son has the same nature as the father, but the servant does not. When we trust Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us; and this means we are “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). The Law could never give a person God’s nature within. All it could do was reveal to the person his desperate need for God’s nature. So, when the believer goes back into Law, he is denying the very divine nature within, and he is giving the old nature (the flesh) opportunity to go to work.

The son has a father, while the servant has a master. No servant could ever say “Father” to his master. When the sinner trusts Christ, he receives the Holy Spirit within, and the Spirit tells him that he is a child of the Father (Rom. 8:15–16). It is natural for a baby to cry, but not for a baby to talk to his father. When the Spirit enters the heart, He says, “Abba, Father” (Gal. 4:6); and, in response, the believer cries, “Abba, Father!” (Rom. 8:15) The word *Abba* is an Aramaic word that is the equivalent of our English word “papa.” This shows the closeness of the child to the Father. No servant has this.

The son obeys out of love, while the servant obeys out of fear. The Spirit works in the *heart* of the believer to quicken and increase his love for God. “The fruit of the Spirit is love” (Gal. 5:22). “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy [Spirit]” (Rom. 5:5). The Judaizers told the Galatians that they would become better Christians by submitting to the Law, but the Law can never produce obedience. Only love can do that. “If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

The son is rich, while the servant is poor. We are both “sons and heirs.” And since we are adopted—placed as adult sons in the family—we may begin drawing on our inheritance right now. God has made available to us the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7; 2:7), the riches of His glory (Phil. 4:19), the riches of His goodness (Rom. 2:4), and the riches of His wisdom (Rom. 11:33ff)—and all of the riches of God are found in Christ (Col. 1:19; 2:3).

The son has a future, while the servant does not. While many kind masters did provide for their slaves in old age, it was not required of them. The father always provides for the son (2 Cor. 12:14).

In one sense, our adoption is not yet final, because we are awaiting the return of Christ and the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23). Some scholars think that this second stage in our adoption corresponds to the Roman practice when a man adopted someone outside his family to be his son. First there was a *private* ceremony at which the son was purchased; then there was a *public* ceremony at which the adoption was declared openly before the officials.

Christians have experienced the first stage: we have been purchased by Christ and indwelt by the Spirit. We are awaiting the second stage: the public declaration at the return of Christ when “we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:1–3). We are “sons and heirs,” and the best part of our inheritance is yet to come (see 1 Peter 1:1–5).

He Laments Their Regression (Gal. 4:8–11)

What really happened when the Galatians turned from grace to Law? To begin with, they abandoned liberty for bondage. When they were ignorant sinners, they had served their false gods and had experienced the tragedy of such pagan slavery. But then they had trusted Christ and been delivered from superstition and slavery. Now they were abandoning their liberty in Christ and going back into bondage. They were “dropping out” of the school of grace and enrolling in the kindergarten of Law! They were destroying all the good work the Lord had done in them through Paul’s ministry.

The phrase *weak and beggarly elements* tells us the extent of their regression. They were giving up the power of the Gospel for the weakness of Law, and the wealth of the Gospel for the poverty of Law. The Law never made anybody rich or powerful; on the contrary, the Law could only reveal man’s weakness and spiritual bankruptcy. No wonder Paul weeps over these believers, as he sees them abandon liberty for bondage, power for weakness, and wealth for poverty.

How were they doing this? By adopting the Old Testament system of religion with its special observations of “days, and months, and times, and years” (Gal. 4:10).

Does this mean that it is wrong for Christians to set aside one day a year to remember the birth of Christ? Or that a special observance of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, or the blessing of the harvest in autumn, is a sin?

Not necessarily. If we observe special days like slaves, hoping to gain some spiritual merit, then we are sinning. But if in the observance, we express our liberty in Christ and let the Spirit enrich us with His grace, then the observance can be a spiritual blessing.

The New Testament makes it clear that Christians are not to legislate religious observances for each other (Rom. 14:4–13). We are not to praise the man who celebrates the day, nor are we to condemn the man who does not celebrate. But if a man thinks he is saving his soul, or automatically growing in grace, because of a religious observance, then he is guilty of legalism.

Our evangelical churches have many different kinds of observances, and it is wrong for us to go beyond the Word of God in comparing, criticizing, or condemning. But all of us must beware of that legalistic spirit that caters to the flesh, leads to pride, and makes the outward event a substitute for the inward experience.

He Seeks Their Affection (Gal. 4:12–18)

Paul was a wonderful spiritual father; he knew just how to balance rebuke with love. Now he turns from “spanking” to “embracing” as he reminds the believers of their love for him and his love for them. At one point they were willing to sacrifice anything for Paul, so great was their love; but now he had become their enemy. The Judaizers had come in and stolen their affection.

Bible students wish Paul had been more explicit here, because we are not sure just what events he is talking about. When Paul had originally visited them, he was suffering from some physical affliction. If, as noted in Galatians 1, Paul wrote this letter to the churches of South Galatia, then he is referring to his first missionary journey, recorded in Acts 13–14. Apparently Paul had not intended to visit these cities, but was forced to do so because of some bodily infirmity. We can only speculate as to what this was. Some have suggested malaria; others, an affliction of the eyes (see Gal. 4:15). Whatever it was, it must have made Paul somewhat repulsive in appearance, because he commends the Galatians for the way they received him in spite of the way he looked. To them, he was an angel of God. It is a wonderful thing when people accept God’s servants, not because of their outward appearance, but because they represent the Lord and bring His message.

Now Paul asks them: “What has happened to that love? What has happened to the blessedness—the happiness—you experienced when you heard the Gospel and trusted Christ?” Of course, Paul knew what had happened: the Judaizers had come in and stolen their hearts.

One of the marks of a false teacher is that he tries to attract other men’s converts to himself, and not simply to the truth of the Word or to the person of Jesus Christ. It was not the Judaizers who originally came to Galatia and led them to Christ; it was Paul. Like the cultists today, these false teachers were not winning lost sinners to Christ, but were stealing converts from those who were truly serving the Lord. Paul had proved to be their loving friend. He had “become as they were” by identifying himself with them (Gal. 4:12). Now they were turning away from Paul and following false shepherds.

Paul told them the truth, but the Judaizers told them lies. Paul sought to glorify Christ, but the Judaizers glorified themselves and their converts. “Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them” (Gal. 4:17, NIV).

A true servant of God does not “use people” to build himself up or his work; he ministers in love to help people know Christ better and glorify Him. Beware of that religious worker who wants your exclusive allegiance because he is the only one who is right. He will use you as long as he can and then drop you for somebody else—and your fall will be a painful one. The task of the spiritual leader is to get people to love and follow Christ, not to promote himself and his ministry.

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Prov. 27:6). Paul had proved his love to the Galatians by telling them the truth; but they would not accept it. They were enjoying the “kisses” of the Judaizers, not realizing that these kisses were leading them into bondage and sorrow. Christ had made them sons and heirs, but they were rapidly becoming slaves and beggars.

They had not lost the *experience* of salvation—they were still Christians; but they were losing the *enjoyment* of their salvation and finding satisfaction in their works instead. Sad to say, *they did not realize their losses*. They actually thought they were becoming better Christians by substituting Law for grace, and the religious deeds of the flesh for the fruit of the Spirit.

Is *your* Christian life moving forward into liberty or backward into bondage? Think carefully before you answer.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MEET YOUR MOTHER

Galatians 4:19–31

We parents never seem to outgrow our children. “When they’re little, they’re a handful; but when they’re grown, they’re a handful!” I remember hearing my mother say, “When they’re little, they step on your toes; but when they’re grown, they step on your heart.”

This is what Paul was experiencing as he tried to help the Galatian believers with their confused spiritual lives. When he had first come to them with the Gospel, he had “travailed” spiritually to see them turn to the Lord. But, after all, the Lord Jesus had travailed on the cross to make possible their salvation (Isa. 53:11), and Paul’s travail was nothing in comparison. But now the Galatian Christians were falling back into legalism and a “second childhood” experience; and Paul had to travail over them again. He longed to see Christ formed in them, just as we parents long to see our children mature in the will of God.

Since the Judaizers appealed to the Law, Paul accepts their challenge and uses the Law to prove that Christians are not under the Law. He takes the familiar story of Ishmael and Isaac (Gen. 16–21) and draws from it basic truths about the Christian’s relationship to the Law of Moses.

The events described actually happened, but Paul uses them as an allegory, which is a narrative that has a deeper meaning behind it. Perhaps the most famous allegory in the English language is John Bunyan’s *A Pilgrim’s Progress*, in which Bunyan traces Christian’s experiences from the City of Destruction to heaven. In an allegory, persons and actions represent hidden meanings, so that the narrative can be read on two levels: the literal and the symbolic.

Paul’s use of Genesis in this section does not give us license to find “hidden meanings” in all the events of the Old Testament. If we take that approach to the Bible, we can make it mean almost anything we please. This is the way many false teachings arise. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to discern the hidden meaning of the Genesis story. We must always interpret the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament, and where the New Testament gives us permission, we may search for hidden meanings. Otherwise, we must accept the plain statements of Scripture and not try to “spiritualize” everything.

The Historical Facts (Gal. 4:19–23)

Perhaps the easiest way to grasp the historical account is to trace briefly Abraham’s experiences as recorded in Genesis 12 through 21. Using his age as our guide, we will trace the events on which Paul is basing his argument for Christian liberty.

75—Abraham is called by God to go to Canaan; and God promises him many descendants (Gen. 12:1–9). Both Abraham and his wife, Sarah, wanted children, but Sarah was barren. God was waiting until both of them were “as good as dead” before He would perform the miracle of sending them a son (Rom. 4:16–25).

85—The promised son has not yet arrived, and Sarah becomes impatient. She suggests that Abraham marry Hagar, her maid, and try to have a son by her. This act was legal in that society, but it was not in the will of God. Abraham followed her suggestion and married Hagar (Gen. 16:1–3).

86—Hagar gets pregnant, and Sarah gets jealous! Things are so difficult in the home that Sarah throws Hagar out. But the Lord intervenes, sends Hagar back, and promises to take care of her and her son. When Abraham is 86, the son is born, and he calls him Ishmael (Gen. 16:4–16).

99—God speaks to Abraham and promises again that he will have a son by Sarah and says to call his name Isaac. Later, God appears again and reaffirms the promise to Sarah as well (see Gen. 17–18).

100—The son is born (Gen. 21:1–7). They name him Isaac (“laughter”) as commanded by God. But the arrival of Isaac creates a new problem in the home: Ishmael has a rival. For fourteen years, Ishmael has been his father’s only son, very dear to his heart. How will Ishmael respond to the presence of a rival?

103—It was customary for the Jews to wean their children at about the age of three, and to make a great occasion of it. At the feast, Ishmael starts to mock Isaac (Gen. 21:8ff) and to create trouble in the home. There is only one solution to the problem, and a costly one at that: Hagar and her son have to go. With a broken heart, Abraham sends his son away, because this is what the Lord tells him to do (Gen. 21:9–14).

On the surface, this story appears to be nothing more than a tale of a family problem, but beneath the surface are meanings that carry tremendous spiritual power. Abraham, the two wives, and the two sons represent spiritual realities; and their relationships teach us important lessons.

The Spiritual Truths (Gal. 4:24–29)

Paul now explains the meanings that lie behind these historical events; perhaps they are best classified as shown in the chart at the top of page 710.

Paul begins with the two sons, Ishmael and Isaac (Gal. 4:22–23), and explains that they illustrate our two births: the physical birth that makes us sinners and the spiritual birth that makes us the children of God. As you think about this, and read Genesis 21:1–12, you discover some wonderful spiritual truths about your salvation.

<i>The Old Covenant</i>	<i>The New Covenant</i>
Law	Grace
Hagar the slave	Sarah the freewoman
Ishmael, conceived after the flesh	Isaac, conceived miraculously
Earthly Jerusalem in bondage	Heavenly Jerusalem which is free

Isaac illustrates the believer in several particulars.

He was born by God’s power. In fact, God deliberately waited twenty-five years before He granted Abraham and Sarah their son. Isaac was “born after the Spirit” (Gal. 4:29), and, of course, the Christian is “born of the Spirit” (John 3:1–7). Isaac came into the world through Abraham (who represents faith, Gal. 3:9) and Sarah (who represents grace); so that he was born “by grace ... through faith” as is every true Christian (Eph. 2:8–9).

He brought joy. His name means “laughter,” and certainly he brought joy to his aged parents. Salvation is an experience of joy, not only to the believer himself, but also to those around him.

He grew and was weaned (Gen. 21:8). Salvation is the beginning, not the ending. After we are born, we must grow (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18). Along with maturity comes weaning: we must lay aside “childish things” (1 Cor. 13:11). How easy it is for us to hold the “toys” of our earlier Christian days and fail to lay hold of the “tools” of the mature believer. The child does not enjoy being weaned, but he can never become a man until it happens. (Read Ps. 131 at this point.)

He was persecuted (Gen. 21:9). Ishmael (the flesh) caused problems for Isaac, just as our old nature causes problems for us. (Paul will discuss this in detail in Gal. 5:16ff.) Ishmael created no problems in the home until Isaac was born, just as our old nature creates no problems for us until the new nature enters when we trust Christ. In Abraham’s home we see the same basic conflicts that we Christians face today:

Hagar versus Sarah = Law versus grace

Ishmael versus Isaac = flesh versus Spirit

It is important to note that *you cannot separate these four factors*. The Judaizers taught that Law made the believer more spiritual, but Paul makes it clear that Law only releases the opposition of the flesh and a conflict within the believer ensues (see Rom. 7:19). There was no Law strong enough either to change or to control Ishmael, *but Isaac never needed any Law*. It has well been said, “The old nature knows no Law and the new nature needs no Law.”

Having explained the significance of the two sons, Paul now turns to an explanation of the two wives, Sarah and Hagar. He is illustrating the contrasts between Law and grace and is proving that the believer is not under Law but is under the loving freedom that comes through God’s grace. Notice, then, the facts about Hagar that prove that the Law no longer has power over the Christian.

Hagar was Abraham’s second wife. God did not *begin* with Hagar; He began with Sarah.

As far as God’s dealings with men are concerned, *God began with grace*. In Eden, God provided for Adam and Eve by grace. Even after they sinned, in His grace He provided them with coats of skins for a covering (Gen. 3:21). He did not give them laws to obey as a way of redemption; instead, He gave them a gracious promise to believe: the promise of a victorious Redeemer (Gen. 3:15).

In His relationship with Israel also, God first operated on the basis of grace, not Law. His covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15) was all of grace, because Abraham was in a deep sleep when the covenant was established. When God delivered Israel from Egypt, it was on the basis of grace and not Law, for the Law had not yet been given. Like Hagar, Abraham’s second wife, the Law was “added” (Gal. 3:19). Hagar performed a function temporarily, and then moved off the scene, just as the Law performed a special function and then was taken away (Gal. 3:24–25).

Hagar was a slave. Five times in this section she is called a “bondmaid” or “bondwoman” (Gal. 4:22–23, 30–31). Sarah was a freewoman, and therefore her position was one of liberty; but Hagar, even though married to Abraham, was still a servant. Likewise, the Law was given *as a servant*. “Wherefore then serveth the Law?” (Gal. 3:19) It served as a *mirror* to reveal men’s sins (Rom. 3:20) and as a *monitor* to control men and ultimately lead them to Christ (Gal. 3:23–25); but the Law was never meant to be *a mother!*

Hagar was not meant to bear a child. Abraham’s marriage to Hagar was out of the will of God; it was the result of Sarah’s and Abraham’s unbelief and impatience. Hagar was trying to do what only Sarah could do, and it failed. The Law cannot give life (Gal. 3:21), or righteousness

(Gal. 2:21), or the gift of the Spirit (Gal. 3:2), or a spiritual inheritance (Gal. 3:18). Isaac was born Abraham's heir (Gen. 21:10), but Ishmael could not share in this inheritance. The Judaizers were trying to make Hagar a mother again, while Paul was in spiritual travail for his converts that they might become more like Christ. No amount of religion or legislation can give the dead sinner life. Only Christ can do that through the Gospel.

Hagar gave birth to a slave. Ishmael was "a wild man" (Gen. 16:12), and even though he was a slave, nobody could control him, including his mother. Like Ishmael, the old nature (the flesh) is at war with God, and the Law cannot change or control it. By nature, the Spirit and the flesh are "contrary the one to the other" (Gal. 5:17), and no amount of religious activity is going to change the picture. Whoever chooses Hagar (Law) for his mother is going to experience bondage (Gal. 4:8–11, 22–25, 30–31; 5:1). But whoever chooses Sarah (grace) for his mother is going to enjoy liberty in Christ. God wants His children to be free (Gal. 5:1).

Hagar was cast out. It was Sarah who gave the order: "Cast out this bondswoman and her son" (Gen. 21:9–10), and God subsequently approved it (Gen. 21:12). Ishmael had been in the home for at least seventeen years, but his stay was not to be permanent; eventually he had to be cast out. There was not room in the household for Hagar and Ishmael with Sarah and Isaac; one pair had to go.

It is impossible for Law and grace, the flesh and the Spirit, to compromise and stay together. God did not ask Hagar and Ishmael to make occasional visits to the home; the break was permanent. The Judaizers in Paul's day—and in our own day—are trying to reconcile Sarah and Hagar, and Isaac and Ishmael; such reconciliation is contrary to the Word of God. It is impossible to mix Law and grace, faith and works, God's gift of righteousness and man's attempts to earn righteousness.

Hagar was not married again. God never gave the Law to any other nation or people, including His church. For the Judaizers to impose the Law on the Galatian Christians was to oppose the very plan of God. In Paul's day, the nation of Israel was under bondage to the Law, while the church was enjoying liberty under the gracious rule of the "Jerusalem which is above" (Gal. 4:26). The Judaizers wanted to "wed" Mt. Sinai and the heavenly Mt. Zion (Heb. 12:22), but to do this would be to deny what Jesus did on Mt. Calvary (Gal. 2:21). Hagar is not to be married again.

From the human point of view, it might seem cruel that God should command Abraham to send away his own son Ishmael, whom he loved very much. But it was the only solution to the problem, for "the wild man" could never live with the child of promise. In a deeper sense, however, think of what it cost God when He gave His Son to bear the curse of the Law to set us free. Abraham's broken heart meant Isaac's liberty; God's giving of His Son means our liberty in Christ.

The Practical Blessings (Gal. 4:30–31)

We Christians, like Isaac, are the children of promise by grace. The covenant of grace, pictured by Sarah, is our spiritual mother. The Law and the old nature (Hagar and Ishmael) want to persecute us and bring us into bondage. How are we to solve this problem?

We can try to change them. This must fail, for we cannot change either the Law or the old nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6), and, we might add, *it always will be flesh*. God did not try to change Ishmael and Hagar, either by force or by education; neither can you and I change the old nature and the Law.

We can try to compromise with them. This did not work in Abraham’s home, and neither will it work in our lives. The Galatians were trying to effect such a compromise, but it was only leading them gradually into bondage. False teachers today tell us, “Don’t abandon Christ; simply move into a deeper Christian life by practicing the Law along with your faith in Christ.” Invite Hagar and Ishmael back home again. But this is a path back into slavery: “How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal. 4:9)

We can cast them out. This is what we are supposed to do. First, Paul applies this to the nation of Israel (Gal. 4:25–27); then he applies it to the individual Christian. The nation of Israel had been in bondage under the Law, but this was a temporary thing, preparing them for the coming of Christ. Now that Christ had come, Law had to go. Jesus Christ, like Isaac, was a child of promise, born by the miraculous power of God. Once He had come and died for the people, the Law had to go.

Paul quotes Isaiah 54:1, applying his words to Sarah who was barren before the birth of Isaac; but also applying it to the church (Gal. 4:27). Note the contrasts.

Israel

The Church

earthly Jerusalem

heavenly Jerusalem

bondage

freedom

barren legalism

fruitful grace

Sarah had been barren, and she tried to become fruitful by having Abraham marry Hagar. This failed and brought only trouble. *The Law cannot give life or fruitfulness; legalism is barren.* For the early church to go back into bondage would mean barrenness and disobedience to the Word of God. Because it held fast to grace, the church spread across the world in fruitfulness.

But individual churches and Christians can make the same mistake the Galatians were making: they can fail to cast out Hagar and Ishmael. *Legalism* is one of the major problems among Christians today. We must keep in mind that *legalism* does not mean the setting of spiritual standards; it means worshiping these standards and thinking that we are spiritual because we obey them. It also means judging other believers on the basis of these standards. A person can refrain from smoking, drinking, and attending theaters, for example, *and still not be spiritual.* The Pharisees had high standards; yet they crucified Jesus.

The old nature loves legalism, because it gives the old nature a chance to “look good.” It costs very little for Ishmael not to do certain bad things, or to do certain religious deeds, just so long as he can remain Ishmael. For seventeen years Ishmael caused no trouble in the home; and then Isaac came along, and there was conflict. Legalism caters to Ishmael. The Christian who claims to be spiritual because of what he doesn’t do is only fooling himself. It takes more than negations to make a positive, fruitful spiritual life.

No doubt the Judaizers were attractive people. They carried credentials from religious authorities (2 Cor. 3:1). They had high standards and were careful in what they ate and drank. They were effective in making converts and liked to advertise their accomplishments (Gal. 4:17–18; 6:12–14). They had rules and standards to cover every area of life, making it easy for their followers to know who was “spiritual” and who was not. But the Judaizers were leading the

people into bondage and defeat, not liberty and victory, *and the people did not know the difference.*

In the closing chapters of this letter, Paul will point out the greatest tragedy of legalism: it gives opportunity for the flesh to work. The old nature cannot be controlled by Law; eventually it has to break out—and when it does, watch out! This explains why legalistic religious groups often have fights and divisions (“ye fight and devour one another,” Gal. 5:15), and often are plagued with the defiling sins of the flesh (Gal. 5:19ff). While every church has its share of these problems, it is especially prominent in those groups where there is an atmosphere of legalism. When you invite Hagar and Ishmael to live with Sarah and Isaac, you are inviting trouble.

Thank God, the Christian is set free from the curse of the Law and the control of the Law. “Cast out the bondwoman and her son.” It may pain us deeply, as it did Abraham; but it must be done. To attempt to mix Law and grace is to attempt the impossible. It makes for a frustrated, barren Christian life. But to live by grace, through faith, gives one a free and fulfilling Christian life.

What is the secret? The Holy Spirit. And it is this secret that Paul will share in the closing “practical” chapters of the letter. Meanwhile, you and I need to beware lest Ishmael and Hagar have crept back into our lives. If they have—let us cast them out.

Campbell, D. K. (1985). *Galatians*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 601-604) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

B. Illustration of the doctrine (chap. 4)

1. A LEGAL ILLUSTRATION (4:1–7)

4:1–2. To illustrate the spiritual immaturity of those who lived under the Mosaic Law, Paul reminded the Galatian believers of certain characteristics of an **heir** as a minor **child** (*nēpios*, “infant, young child”; in contrast with *huios*, “son,” in 3:7, 26). Though by birthright **he** owned **the whole estate**, nevertheless he was kept in subservience like **a slave** in that he enjoyed no freedom and could make no decisions. In fact the heir as a child was under **guardians** (*epitropous*, different from the *paidagōgos* in 3:24–25) who watched over his person, **and trustees** who protected his estate. This was true until he came of age as a son, an age that varied in the Jewish, Grecian, and Roman societies. Under Roman law the age of maturity for a child was **set by his father** and involved a ceremonial donning of the *toga virilis* and his formal acknowledgement as son and heir.

4:3. Paul applied the illustration in order to show the contrast between the believers’ former position and what they now enjoyed. Formerly, in their state of spiritual immaturity (**when we were children**, *nēpioi*), they were like slaves. The scope of that **slavery** was described as being **under the basic principles** (*stoicheia*, “elements”) **of the world**. Though often interpreted as a reference to the Mosaic Law, this view does not fit the Galatians, most of whom were Gentile pagans before conversion and were never under the Law. It seems better to understand the “basic principles” to refer to the elementary stages of religious experience, whether of Jews under the Law or Gentiles in bondage to heathen religions (cf. “weak and miserable principles” in v. 9, and “basic principles of this world” in Col. 2:20) Thus all were enslaved until Christ came to emancipate them.

4:4. **But ... God** marks the fact that divine intervention brought hope and freedom to mankind. As a human father chose the time for his child to become an adult son, so the heavenly Father chose **the time** for the coming of Christ to make provision for people's transition from bondage under Law to spiritual sonship. This "time" was when the Roman civilization had brought peace and a road system which facilitated travel; when the Grecian civilization provided a language which was adopted as the *lingua franca* of the empire; when the Jews had proclaimed monotheism and the messianic hope in the synagogues of the Mediterranean world. It was then that God **sent His Son**, the preexistent One, out of heaven and to earth on a mission. The "Son" was not only Deity; He was also humanity as the expression **born of a woman** indicates. The exclusive reference to His mother harmonizes with the doctrine of the virgin birth as taught in the Gospels (cf. Matt. 1:18). Further, Christ was **born under Law** as a Jew. He kept the Law perfectly, fulfilled it (cf. Matt. 5:17), and finally paid its curse (cf. Gal. 3:13).

4:5. The reasons "God sent His Son" are twofold (again both reasons are introduced by *hina*, "in order that"; cf. 3:14). First, He came **to redeem** (*exagorasē*) **those under Law**. This is not a redemption from the curse of the Law (as in 3:13), but from a slavery to the entire Mosaic system. The emphasis is not on the penalty of the Law as in 3:13, but on its bondage. Since Christ redeemed and set free those who were under the Law, why should Gentile converts now wish to be placed under it? Second, Christ's Incarnation and death secured for believers **the full rights of sons** ("the adoption of sons," KJV). All the enjoyments and privileges of a mature son in a family belong to those who have entered into the benefits of Christ's redemptive work.

4:6. God the Father not only "sent His Son"; He also sent **the Spirit**. Thus, the full Trinity is involved in the work of salvation. The Holy Spirit is a gift of God to every believer because of sonship. No sons or daughters lack the Spirit. Further, He is present within each believer's heart to give evidence of that one's position in God's family. The Spirit moves the believer to pray to God, addressing Him as **Abba, Father** (cf. Rom. 8:15). The word "Abba" is the Aramaic word for "Father." It is the diminutive form used by small children in addressing their fathers. It is appropriate to see its similarity to the English word "Daddy." Used by Christ (cf. Mark 14:36), this familiar form indicates intimacy and trust as opposed to the formalism of legalism.

4:7. To conclude, Paul declared that the Galatians were no longer slaves, but were sons and heirs. The plural forms in verse 6 were replaced by the singular forms in verse 7 thus making the application to the reader direct and personal. In God's family, sonship carries with it heirship (cf. Rom. 8:17).

2. A PERSONAL PLEA (4:8–20). THE APOSTLE TURNED FROM A FORMAL ARGUMENT TO A PERSONAL APPEAL FOR THE GALATIANS NOT TO RETURN TO A SLAVERY SIMILAR TO THEIR FORMER BONDAGE IN PAGANISM.

a. *An appeal not to turn to legalism (4:8–11).*

4:8–9. Prior to conversion the Galatians, in their ignorance of the one true **God**, were in bondage to false **gods** such as Zeus and Hermes (cf. Acts 14:11–13). But a great change took place, and they came to **know God** (salvation from the perspective of man), **or to be known by God** (salvation from God's perspective). Yet having come to know (*gnontes*, from *ginōskō*, lit., "to know intimately and on a personal level") the true God, the Galatians were **turning back**. Paul was amazed and dismayed. Did they understand that they would be going back to a state of religious slavery? Was this their desire? If so, why would they be attracted to a system that was **weak** (it could not justify or energize for godly living) **and miserable** (it could not provide an

inheritance). The **principles** (*stoicheia*) of that system are “of the world,” as Paul had already said in verse 3.

4:10. Under the influence of the Judaizers the Galatians had at least begun to observe the Mosaic calendar. They kept **special days** (weekly sabbaths), **and months** (new moons), **and seasons** (seasonal festivals such as Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles), **and years** (sabbatical and jubilee years). (Cf. Col. 2:16.) They observed these special times, thinking that they would thereby gain additional merit before God. But Paul had already made it clear that works could not be added to faith as grounds for either justification or sanctification.

4:11. Reflecting concern for the Galatians, Paul expressed the **fear** that his **efforts** (*kekopiaka*, lit., “I have labored to the point of exhaustion”) would be **wasted** (*eikē*, “in vain”; cf. the same word rendered “for nothing” in 3:4, “Have you suffered so much for nothing?”) if their attachment to legalistic practices continued. The apostle’s words disclosed his strong antipathy toward legalistic religion.

b. An appeal to remember their relationship (4:12–16).

4:12. Intensifying his appeal, Paul challenged the Galatians, **Become like me, for I became like you**, that is, “Become free from the Law as I am, for after my conversion I became like the Gentiles, no longer living under the Law.” The irony, however, was that the Galatian Gentiles were putting themselves under the Law *after* their conversions.

4:13–14. The last clause of verse 12 belongs with these and the following verses in which Paul related how he was received by the Galatians on his first visit to them (cf. Acts 13–14). At that time he labored under the handicap of **an illness** but remained until he had **preached the gospel** to them. Whatever his infirmity, the Galatians **did not treat Paul with contempt or scorn** as a weak messenger but rather received him as one would receive **an angel** or even **Christ Jesus Himself**.

4:15–16. They had received Paul with **joy**, congratulating themselves that the apostle had preached in their midst. Their appreciation knew no limits; they would even have made the sacrifice of their **eyes** for Paul. While some think this is an indication that Paul had a disease of the eyes (his “thorn” in his “flesh,” 2 Cor. 12:7), the evidence is not conclusive. This may simply be a bold figure of speech to convey the high esteem the Galatians had had for the apostle—they would have **given** him their most precious possession.

But that had all changed. They no longer contemplated his presence among them with “joy.” Rather, they now acted as though he had **become** their **enemy**, for the simple reason that he had been **telling them the truth**. 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.

c. An appeal to consider Paul’s attitude toward them (4:17–20).

4:17–18. While Paul’s attitude toward the Galatians was guileless, the legalists had improper motives. The apostle spoke the truth (cf. v. 16); the Judaizers used flattery. They wanted **to alienate** (*ekkleisai*, lit., “to lock out”) the Galatians from Paul and his teaching so that they would be shut up instead to the false teachers and their influence. In an interesting double use of the verb “be zealous” Paul said that the Judaizers were **zealous to win ... over** the Galatians so that the latter would **be zealous for** the Judaizers! Acknowledging that it was good for anyone to be sought after, Paul nonetheless insisted that the intention must be honorable, but in the case of the Judaizers it was not.

4:19–20. The apostle, on the other hand, had always had good motives regarding the Galatians. Addressing them tenderly as **my dear children** (*tekna mou*, an expression found only here in Paul’s epistles), Paul compared himself to a mother in the throes of birth pangs. He had experienced this once for their salvation; he was in travail **again** for their deliverance from false teachers.

But a sudden change in metaphors occurred with the expression **until Christ is formed in you**. Paul longed for these believers to be transformed into (*morphōthē*, lit., “take on the form of”; cf. *morphē* in Phil. 2:6–7) the image of Christ. This expression describes the Christian life as a kind of reincarnation of Christ in a believer’s life. This is in fact God’s ideal and purpose—for Christ to live His life in and then through each believer (cf. Gal. 2:20). Yet the apostle was **perplexed about** the Galatians because he felt their spiritual development was being arrested. He had a deep desire to be **with** them so that he could speak gently, though firmly, concerning his grave concerns.

3. A BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATION (4:21–31)

In a masterful stroke the apostle turned to a scriptural illustration to conclude his theological defense of justification by faith. An Old Testament story from the life of Abraham enabled Paul to review what he had already declared about contrasts between the Mosaic Law and grace, between works and faith. It also provided an opportunity for him to verbalize the pointed charge to the Galatians that they should cast out the legalizers (cf. v. 30).

a. *The historical facts (4:21–23).*

4:21. The Galatians had not yet submitted to the bondage of **the Law**, but they desired to. Paul desperately wanted to stop them and turn them back to a life under grace. As a transition to what would immediately follow, he challenged the Galatians to be **aware of** or to understand what the Law really said.

4:22. By turning again to **Abraham** (Gen., as one of the Books of Moses, was considered a part of the Law) Paul was appealing to the founder of the Jewish nation from whose physical descent the Jews traced their blessings. John the Baptist and Jesus declared that physical descent from Abraham was not enough, however, to guarantee spiritual blessing (cf. Matt. 3:9; John 8:37–44). Paul reminded his readers that Abraham **had two sons** (those born later are not important to his illustration), and that they should consider which of the two they were most like. One son, Isaac, was born of Sarah, **the free woman**; the other, Ishmael, was born of Hagar, **the slave woman**. According to ancient law and custom the status of a mother affected the status of her son.

4:23. A second contrast concerned the manner in which the sons were conceived. Ishmael **was born in the ordinary way**, that is, in the course of nature and requiring no miracle and no promise of God. Isaac, on the other hand, **was born as the result of a promise**. Abraham and Sarah were beyond the age of childbearing, but God miraculously fulfilled His promise in bringing life out of the deadness of Sarah’s womb (cf. Rom. 4:18–21).

b. *The allegorical interpretation (4:24–27)*

In order to emphasize the contrast between Law and grace Paul next used the historical events above as an allegory, that is, he treated those two mothers figuratively (*allēgoroumena*).

He did not in any sense deny the literal meaning of the story of Abraham, but he declared that that story, especially the matters relating to the conception of the two sons, had an additional meaning. Thus he compared the narrative to the conflict between Judaism and Christianity.

(This “allegorizing” is a far cry from the practice of “allegorical interpretation”—followed by Origen, Augustine, and many others down through the ages and into the present day—in which the historical facts are relegated to a lower, less significant level and fanciful, hidden meanings unrelated to the text, are considered vastly more important.)

4:24. First, the apostle pointed to **two covenants**. One, the Mosaic, had its origin at **Mount Sinai**. Those under this legal covenant were **slaves**. As **Hagar** brought forth a slave, so does the Law. At this point the reader is expected to understand and supply the implicit reference to the Abrahamic Covenant, a gracious system represented by Sarah which through its messianic promise brought forth children who are free.

4:25–26. Next, Paul pointed to two Jerusalems. **Hagar** also stood for the first-century **city of Jerusalem**, a city enslaved to Rome and **in slavery** to the Law. Sarah, on the other hand, corresponded to the **Jerusalem ... above**, the **mother** of all the children of grace. This heavenly city, which one day will come to earth (cf. Rev. 21:2), is now the “city of the living God” (cf. Heb. 12:22), the home of departed believers of all ages.

4:27. The quotation from Isaiah 54:1 prophesied the changing fortunes of Israel, which Paul applied to Sarah’s history. Israel before her Babylonian Captivity was likened to a woman with **a husband**. The **barren woman** was Israel in Captivity. The woman bearing **more ... children** may have pictured Israel restored to the land after the Exile, but more particularly it portrays her millennial blessings. Paul applied this passage (he did not claim it was fulfilled) in this context to Sarah, who though previously barren, was later blessed with a child, and who would ultimately enjoy a greater progeny than Hagar.

c. The personal application (4:28–31)

In applying the truth from the biblical illustration, Paul made three comparisons.

4:28. First, Paul compared the birth of **Isaac** to that of Christians. As “Isaac” experienced a supernatural birth and was a child by means of a promise, so each believer experiences a supernatural birth (John 3:3, 5) and is a recipient of the promise of salvation (Gal. 3:9, 22, 29). As **children of promise** Christians are in a distinct category and should not live as children of bondage.

4:29. Second, the apostle compared Ishmael’s persecution of Isaac to the false teachers’ opposition to believers. Abraham celebrated the weaning of Isaac with a banquet. On that occasion Ishmael mocked Isaac, laughing derisively at the younger boy, since Ishmael was the elder son and assumed he would be heir to his father’s estate (cf. Gen. 21:8–9). That early animosity has been perpetuated in the two peoples which 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**. With few exceptions Paul’s persecution came from the Jews, the people in bondage to the Law.

4:30. Third, Paul compared the action of Abraham to the obligation of the Galatians. When Sarah observed Ishmael mocking Isaac, she asked Abraham to expel **the slave woman and her son** lest Ishmael become a joint heir with Isaac. And God granted Sarah’s request (cf. Gen. 21:10, 12). This reminded the readers that Law observance brought no **inheritance** in the family of God, and it also charged them to excommunicate the Judaizers and those who accepted their

false doctrines. A fundamental incompatibility remains between Law and grace, between a religion based on works and a religion based on faith.

4:31. In conclusion, Paul affirmed that he and the Galatian believers were **not children of the slave woman** who was driven away and was denied a share in the inheritance. Rather all believers are children **of the free woman**, “heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17).

Dockery, D. S. (1998). The Pauline Letters. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (pp. 571–572). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

As the capstone of his argument concerning justification by faith from the Old Testament, Paul created an allegory from the two sons of Abraham: Ishmael and Isaac. In this twist on the method of the false teachers, Paul paralleled Ishmael, the child of a slave, to the covenant of the law made at Mount Sinai and the current spiritual slavery of Jewish legalism. He presented Isaac, the child of free Sarah, in line with the promise to Abraham and the New Jerusalem, the Jewish future hope. He concluded by implying that persecution of those in line with the promise by those in spiritual slavery is to be expected. But that will not last because those in spiritual slavery will be banished by the “father.” Paul intended to leave little doubt that the doom of the false teachers and their message is certain before the Lord.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Galatians 4). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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