

Galations #4

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[0 : 00] Well, if you will take your scripture sheet, we are still working our way through Galatians chapter 1, and we've just scarcely gotten underway. We've already treated Paul's introduction, and we have noted how it is that he really gets down to business with the great burden that is on his heart just as soon as he gets beyond the greetings.

And you will find that beginning with verse 6, where the apostle expresses his dismay, his shock, and as some have translated it, he is amazed, he is dumbfounded, he is astonished, and he marvels.

All of these different translations are utilized to express Paul's great mental reservations on behalf of those people to whom he had earlier preached the gospel.

And no sooner had he left their presence and gone on to other areas, but what some came in after Paul, and these are going to be referred to later on in the epistle to the Galatians as the Judaizers. The Judaizers were Jews who did not accept the validity of this gospel that Paul was preaching.

[1 : 22] And they come in after Paul had been there, preached the gospel, established churches, and they come in there and say, is this what Paul taught you?

Well, that's not true. That doesn't correspond to the law of Moses. He said you didn't have to be circumcised. Oh my! I can't believe that!

Circumcision is the bedrock of Judaism. You've got to be circumcised. You've got to keep the law of Moses. You've got to do this and you've got to do that. And essentially, Judaizers were persuaded that their calling was to make Jews out of Gentiles.

And the apostle Paul is going to give the lie to that and say, no, no, no, that's not the way it works at all. Paul says, I am the apostle to the Gentiles, and God has committed unto me this new thing called the dispensation of the grace of God.

And the dispensation of the grace of God is apart from the law of Moses. It's a whole new thing. Well, you can be sure that Jews were not going to receive that.

[2 : 35] And for the most part, they didn't. For the most part, the element of Jews that rejected Jesus as their Messiah also rejected Paul as his apostle.

And they are going to remain stayed in their Judaism. So we've got a huge problem here. The apostle Paul is on the horns of a dilemma. His difficulty is in establishing the validity of his apostleship, which, by the way, the twelve apostles, originals, are going to come to recognize and put their official blessing on later.

But the problem was with the Jewish community at large. They just could not conceive of the idea that the law which Moses gave was not eternal.

Their reasoning was, God is eternal. God's law is eternal. That means circumcision is eternal. That means keeping the Sabbath is eternal. These things would never be done away with.

And yet, they were going to be done away with. Because as Jeremiah prophesied, the time is coming, Jeremiah 31, 31, when it is said that God would establish...

[3 : 51] Pardon us, Martin. We got our timing off. Oh, okay. Come right in, gentlemen. I was up. He wasn't ready. Hey, good to see you, Taryn. Good seeing you. Glad you made it. Of course not.

So, make sure that you guys get your order in. Yeah, we did. Okay. Very good. So, the problem is, the problem is with their being able to recognize that this is a fulfillment of what is actually in the Old Testament.

Because Jeremiah, one of the most revered prophets among the Jewish people, had told them, the time is coming when there is going to be a new covenant.

Well, what then is going to happen to the Old Covenant? The Old Covenant is going to be superseded. Well, when does this new covenant become available?

And here is a very important point. Remember the night our Lord Jesus was betrayed. The night of the Last Supper. When He gathered the apostles together.

[4 : 58] He took that common cup from which they were all to drink. And He held it aloof. And He made this monumental statement. He said, This cup is the new covenant in My blood.

As often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you just show forth the Lord's death until He comes. So, that was the inauguration of the new covenant.

And the book of Hebrews makes it clear that when the new covenant came, the old covenant was set aside. But most of the Jewish people were saying, No!

No! And as you read the epistle to the Hebrews, makes it very, very clear that the time for animal sacrifice is over. It's done and gone.

It fulfilled its purpose, but it is no longer required. And the circumcision is no longer required. And the Sabbath keeping is no longer required. But so many of these Jewish people, with sincerity and with good intentions, held on to that law.

[6 : 06] And they felt they were the only ones remaining faithful. And these others, with this newfangled teaching, have gone off as a bunch of renegades. The chiefest of whom is Saul of Tarsus, now Paul the Apostle.

So, this is the great difficulty that Paul had to contend with everywhere he went. It was the establishment of his apostleship. Which, by the way, as I pointed out earlier, was eventually authenticated and verified by the original twelve.

And we'll see that right here in Galatians 1 before we get out of the chapter. Did I see a hand raised? Roger and then Dan. Wasn't it mostly the Jewish leaders, the Sanhedrin, that stirred up the people all the time and guessed Paul and his message?

Oh yeah, absolutely. It wasn't the Gentiles. It wasn't the Gentiles. It was the Jews who rejected Paul and they rejected his message. Because it did not include... And we'll see when we get further into this chapter, the really big item was over whether these Gentiles who had come to faith in a Jewish Messiah, Jesus, didn't they also have to be circumcised?

And that's what the council of Jerusalem was all about. If you remember, we studied that back in Acts 15. This became such a hot-button issue that they called a council and had the apostles and everybody there.

[7 : 33] And the verdict they reached was that no, the Gentiles do not have to be circumcised. They do not have to keep the law of Moses. That's an entirely different thing.

And that's going to be the crux of this issue from all through the book of Acts through the rest of the New Testament. Dan and then Bob. I wonder if Paul's credibility from his previous name, the Saul of Tarsus, had any impact on his credibility with them.

Probably some negatively and some positively. Yeah. Yeah. Because he made it very clear when he wrote to the Philippians in chapter 3 that he was as Jewish as you could be.

He was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. My mother was a Hebrew. My father was a Hebrew. I was born of the tribe of Benjamin. I was circumcised on the eighth day. As concerning the law, I was blameless.

Nobody could lay a finger on me as violating the law, etc., etc. And then he goes on to say, but all of those things, all of those things that would have been pluses in the minds of most people, I regard them but refuse compared to the excellency of knowing Christ.

[8 : 44] So all of these things that people are really impressed with don't compare with actually knowing Christ. Bob? You're saying that the New Covenant superseded Mosaic Law, so would that mean it also superseded like the Ten Commandments?

Well, in a sense it did supersede the Ten Commandments because what it did was, and this is, I don't want to get bogged down here, but that's a very good point. What it did was it elevated the law and the Ten Commandments to an entirely different level that even the Jew who was keeping the law was not familiar with.

And this is borne out in Romans chapter 8, when Paul said, for what the law, and he's talking about the law of Moses, this is Romans 8, he says, for what the law could not do, because it was weak through the flesh.

Whose flesh? Our flesh. Man did not have the ability to systematically keep the law of Moses. And the law constantly revealed man's shortcoming.

And he said, for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did. In the person of his Son, sending Christ in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin was condemned for sin in the flesh.

[10:11] And then he goes on to say that we are under the law of liberty in Christ Jesus, which has set us free from the law of sin and death.

And it's an entirely different kind of thing. Joe? The law just shows us our need for the new covenant. By the law. It shows us our need. It does. And Romans 3 says, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

So the law reveals sin. It declares sin. It proves our sin. But it can't do anything about sin. All it can do is condemn you.

Condemn you. Condemn you. So the law, Paul will later say in Galatians 3, the law is our schoolmaster. The law is our teacher to lead us to Christ.

And when you really look at the law and examine it, whether you're a Jew or a Gentile, all you can say is, oh me, I can't do that. I can't do that. I'm undone.

[11:16] Where is there help for me? And that's why we need a Savior. And that's why Christ is available. Yeah. It's getting a little confusing here, though. These are not, if I'm saying this right, these are not just Jews.

These are converted Jews. Aren't they? I mean, they believe in Christ. But they believe that they should stay with the Jewish.

Well, there was a mix. There was a mix. Let me put it this way. There's a passage in Acts. I think it's around chapter 19, something like that.

It said, yeah, it was in connection with Paul taking that vow. And I think it was around 19 or 20, 18, something like that.

And some of the Jewish believers, and these were Jews who had come to embrace Jesus as the Messiah of Israel. And he said to Paul, they said, You see, brother, you see, Paul, how many Jews there are that believe.

[12:26] He's talking about believing in Christ as the Messiah. And he goes on to say, You see how many Jews there are that believe, and they are all zealous for the ball.

What's that mean? I mean, they haven't turned loose at all. They haven't realized that they are really free in Christ. They're still clinging to the law. And he said, And what's more, they are suspicious of you and your motives.

So what you need to do to reinforce them, and this is what Paul was talking about when he said, To the Jew I became as a Jew, to the Gentile and the Greek as a Greek, and so on. And to reinforce this and show them that you are not against the law of Moses.

And Paul wasn't. He wasn't against the law of Moses. He was just against their rigid insistence upon it for being rightly related to God.

That's what Paul was against. And he said, You need to take this vow and pay for these young men to have their vows and their heads shorn and all of this nonsense to prove that you are not anti-law.

[13:31] And of course, Paul went along with that. And he was criticized for that too. Joe?

Because we're still supposed to try to keep the Ten Commandments, aren't we? Well, we have an entirely different motivation for keeping the Ten Commandments.

And that is, we seek to be obedient to God, not in order to gain our salvation or relationship with Him.

We seek to be obedient to God simply out of love and gratitude to Him for the redemption we have in Christ. And that's the law of liberty and the law of liberty and freedom in Christ that makes us free.

That's the Romans 8 thing again. So our motivation is entirely different. We respond with a heart of obedience to the Lord because of what He's done for us, not in order to get Him to do something for us.

He's already done. Yes? So, am I hearing you right in that, and I'm not sure how the phrase is right, but Moses' importance is the wrong word, but really he affected the Jews in life up until Christ, and Christ pretty much replaced Moses.

[14:53] From there, from the resurrection on forward. Yeah, yeah, in essence, that's correct.

Think of it this way, because maybe this will help.

And let me say that as Moses was to the nation of Israel with the Old Covenant, the Apostle Paul was to the church, which is the body of Christ, and the New.

In other words, the Apostle Paul was the Moses of the New Testament, and Christ was the very foundation for both the old and the new.

And He is the epitome, and He is what both are getting at. And this is what He meant when He wrote to Romans and said that Christ, Christ is the end of the law.

He is the completion of the law. That Jesus Christ is what the law of Moses is really pointing to and is all about. It is fulfilled in Christ.

[16:03] And that's what He meant when He said, I didn't come to destroy the law, but to fulfill the law. Christ was the completion of the law. He was the embodiment of it. And this is reflected in John 1 when John says, For the law, the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Fellas, you don't find grace in the law. There is not grace in the law. The law is law.

The law makes its demands, and buddy, you better fulfill it, or you're done. And the problem is, nobody fulfills it, and everybody's done. And that's what Paul meant when he said that we are all condemned by the law.

And that's why we need a Savior. Because, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. It reveals sin. It shows us our undone condition. That's why we need a Savior. So, this epistle to the Galatians is a barn burner.

I mean, this is, you haven't heard anything yet. This is really powerful stuff that is upcoming. Mark? Yes? How do you suppose the Catholic Church came up with... I'm sorry? How do you suppose the Catholic Church came up with that you've got to come in and confess your sins to an emissary?

[17:27] Well, I would say that the question was, how did the Catholic Church come up with things like confession and so on?

And, my suggestion... Confession the way they saw it. Yeah. I do not, I do not, in hardly any way, agree with some of the conclusions that the Catholic Church has arrived at.

I don't agree with a lot of conclusions that the Protestants have arrived at either. But, and I suspect that the conclusions that men reach regarding theology and doctrine, for the most part, I think, are well intended.

I think they are promulgated out of sincerity. And, a desire to do the right thing and teach the right thing. But, that's no guarantee for truth. And, I'm not questioning the motives of those who come up with things like confession and the confessional booth and all of that.

I question the wisdom of it. But, I think that for the most part, these people were trying to do the right thing. It's just that it's a whole lot easier to do the wrong thing and to come to wrong conclusions.

[18:42] And, there's going to be more eyes opened as we go through Galatians than you can imagine because this is, this is why this epistle is called the Charter of Christian Liberty.

And, the vast majority of people who are real born-again believers, whether they are Protestant or Catholic, if they are real born-again believers, they have almost no idea of what has really been provided for them that they could be wonderfully enjoying and utilizing in their life and they're still hanging on to legalism and the law and you've got to do this and you've got to do that and so on.

And, it's tragic. It's tragic because this content is designed to free up people internally and externally and this, this, this information will provide what Jesus called the abundant life when He said, I am come that man might have life and have it more abundantly.

And that, it's not talking about physical life. It's talking about spiritual life. If the Son of Man sets you free, you shall be free indeed.

That scares some people. They can't handle freedom. They want parameters. They want borders. They want restrictions. They want laws that they can keep so they can check them off.

[20:09] I did this. I did that. I did that. And by the way, guys, this is one reason that Islam has such popular appeal throughout the world. You stop and think about it.

According to Islam, there are five things you need to do. And if you do those, you've got to make it. So you can check off those five things. The Shahada, the alms, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and praying five times a day facing Mecca, and fasting, and you do those things and you've got it made. And of course, if you die in jihad, then you've really got it made. That's an absolute guarantee. So people find comfort and solace in being able to check off the people.