



~THE BOOK OF GALATIANS, PART 3~
~AN OVERVIEW AND SURVEY~
~ROUTE 66~



Book: The Book of Galatians is a defense of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and a challenge to legalists, individuals who add to the Good News or try to hinder people's walk by setting up manmade rules. Paul spends time refuting Judaizers, legalistic Jews, who were trying to bring believers under the OT Law.

Author: The author is Paul. That is rarely debated.

Breaking Down Galatians – The Defense Of The True Gospel is seen in **1:1-2:21**. The next section is **Freedom From Legalism** in **3:1-4:31**. The last section is **Freedom To Love And Serve** in **5:1-6:18**.

2. Freedom From Legalism – Gal. 3:1-4:31

F) Gal. 4:21-31 is Paul's example of law and grace. Paul explains that they are incompatible and that we as followers of Christ are children of the promise, the promise given through Isaac. The law enslaves (**vs. 24**) but we are free in Christ.

H.L. Willmington summarizes this text well,

“Hagar and Sarah, law and grace. Paul presented Hagar and Sarah, with their sons Ishmael and Isaac, as types of the contrast between the bondage of legalism and the liberty of grace. Hagar, like those who depend on the law, was a slave; and her son, who was naturally born, was also a slave. Sarah, like those who depend on grace, was free; and her son, whose birth was miraculous, was Abraham's heir (Galatians 4:21-27; see Genesis 16:1-18:15; Genesis 21:1-21).

Christians, like Isaac, are the true heirs of God's promise to Abraham (Galatians 4:28, 31). Just as Sarah asked Abraham to "get rid of that servant," Christians should have no desire to be in bondage to the law (Galatians 4:30; see Genesis 21:10). Just as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, the Judaizers were persecuting Paul (Galatians 4:29; see Genesis 21:8-9).”

– Willmington's Bible Handbook.

3. Freedom To Love And Serve – Gal. 5:1-6:18

A) Gal. 5:1-12 is Paul sharing with us the fact that if we live under the law we are denying the work of grace in our lives. He tells them to “stand firm” (**vs. 1**) in their freedom and do not get caught under a yoke of slavery (the law).

In **vss. 2-6** Paul reminds them that if you try to live under the law you are obligated to keep the entire law. You cannot pick and choose what you are going to follow. In regard to **vs. 4**,

“Anyone deciding to be justified by law has fallen away from God’s grace. Christ cannot save those who persist in saving themselves. Paul’s words should not be taken out of context to mean that salvation can be lost. Grace did not mean salvation, but refers to the means of salvation. To decide on legalism as the way of salvation is to “fall away” from grace. It’s like throwing away the life preserver when lost at sea.” – Life Application New Testament Commentary.

Vs. 4 does not mean we can lose our salvation. If someone tries to be justified by the law as the means of salvation they cannot be saved. A believer who decides to get caught up in legalism after becoming a Christian will not enjoy the wonders of grace and all that it entails.

In **vss. 7-13** Paul continues to challenge them regarding their going back to legalism. They were obviously being influenced by some false teacher (**vss. 7-10**). The singular pronoun “who” in **vs. 7** as the one that hindered the Galatians indicates that Paul has a particular individual in mind – probably the head of the legalists.

The “yeast” as mentioned in **vs. 9** is also seen in Jesus’ warnings regarding false teachers in **Mt. 16:5-12**.

Paul states that the cross that he preaches is what offends, and if he preached the law as a means of salvation, why is he being persecuted (**vss. 11-12**). Some may have accused Paul of still preaching the law which leads him to ask why he would still be persecuted if he was preaching something besides grace through faith alone.

B) In Gal. 5:13-15 Paul reminds us that we have been freed to serve one another, to love others. We do not have the freedom to sin. We are to love others, and love God. If we are not careful, **vs. 15** tells us what can happen. We can easily mistreat each other when we don’t show love.

C) Gal. 5:16-26 is the challenge for us to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Romans 7:14-25** tells us of the conflict that we have within us. But that passage, along with **Romans 6** and **Romans 8** and here in **Galatians 5**, to name a few passages, give us the help to not live according to the flesh.

The command in **vs. 16** to “walk by the Spirit” is a present tense command. Paul is telling them to keep on walking in the Spirit. They were to conduct their life under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We see the inner battle we face in **vss. 17-18**.

We must note **Gal. 5:19-21**. Paul makes it clear that though Christians may do these types of sins they cannot “practice” these types of things. If a person’s life is wrapped up in these things Paul makes it clear that they will not inherit the kingdom of God (**vs. 21**). They are not saved.

Gal. 5:22-23 tell us what the evidence is in the life of a person who is controlled by the Holy Spirit. There is love, joy, peace, patience, etc. Note that these are called the “fruit” (singular) of the Spirit. When we are walking under the control of the Holy Spirit all of these are evident in our life depending on the situation before us. We may be in a position to show love, or patience, to someone depending upon the circumstance. If controlled by the Spirit we will do that.

Gal. 5:24-25 reminds us that our old flesh has been crucified with Christ. If we are living by the Spirit we will be in step with Him allowing His leading in our life. When we do this we will not be arrogant, cause problems or envy others. These attitudes would be contrary to the Scripture.

D) Gal. 6:1 tells us that if we see a fellow believer overtaken in a fault (either by deliberate choice or caught off guard and then falling into a sin) we are to attempt to restore them. Note that it is those who are “spiritual” (referring back to **Gal. 5:16-26**) who are to approach these people. Our goal is to restore (which is a command to us) them and we are to do so in kindness and humility.

Legalists would never do this. See **John 8:1-11** to see how legalism responds to someone who is living a sinful life or has fallen into sin.

E) Gal. 6:2-5 tells us we are to bear one another’s burdens. We are to be here for each other. There may seem to be a contradiction between **vss. 2 and 5**. **Norman Geisler**, in his "**When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook of Bible Difficulties**", explains these two verses this way regarding a seeming contradiction,

"The word for “burden” is different in each case. In the first passage, Paul urges *sympathy for others*. In the other, he is speaking of taking *responsibility for ourselves*. There is no conflict between being *accountable for our own lives* and being *helpful to others*." - p. 474

Warren Wiersbe notes,

"There is no contradiction between Galatians 6:2 and 5, because two different Greek words for *burden* are used. In Galatians 6:2 it is a word meaning "a heavy burden," while in Galatians 6:5 it describes "a soldier's pack." We should help each other bear the heavy burdens of life, but there are personal responsibilities that each man must bear for himself. "Each soldier must bear his own pack." If my car breaks down, my neighbor can help drive my children to school, but he cannot assume the responsibilities that only belong to me as their father. That is the difference. It is wrong for me to expect somebody else to be the father in our family; that is a burden (and a privilege) that I alone can bear."

F) Gal. 6:6-10 is a reminder that there are consequences for our actions and that we are never to weary in doing good, especially to God’s family but also to everyone. **Vs. 6** may be dealing with supporting those who teach the Word of God. But it can also mean sharing the good things God has done in our life with others.

G) Gal. 6:11-18 are Paul’s closing thoughts and warnings.