

# Sons, Not Slaves

Wiley Deason

## Introduction:

- I. Paul's letter to the Galatians is one of the most unique of his epistles that we have recorded. In this letter, there is a problem that exists. And Paul wastes absolutely no time in addressing the problem, and in doing so with urgency.
  - A. What is the problem?
    1. The Galatian brethren had deserted Jesus for a "different gospel." (1:6)
    2. False teachers attacked Paul's preaching and teaching (1:10-21).
    3. Judaizing teachers were attempting to bind the Mosaic Law on the Galatian converts. (2:16-17, 5:2-4)
      - a. They had fallen from grace. (5:4)
      - b. Apparently, somebody had made the claim that Paul preached that circumcision was necessary for salvation. (5:11)
      - c. Others were binding circumcision on the Gentiles to avoid being persecuted themselves. (6:12)
      - d. Pompous, arrogant, and boastful hearts sought glory by binding circumcision on the Gentile converts. (6:13)
    4. Brethren began to regress to the observance of specific days, months, seasons, & years. (4:9-10)
    5. Some had turned their new freedom into an opportunity for the flesh. (5:13)
  - B. How does Paul address the problem? (Notice 3 Things...)
    1. Paul addresses the problem with **urgency**.
      - a. When compared to the other inspired letters authored by Paul, one can clearly see that Paul's greeting to the Galatian brethren seems a lot shorter. (1:1-5)
      - b. Then, you get to verse 6 where Paul wastes no time in rebuking these brethren for their unfaithfulness.
      - c. Paul is dealing with the problem, and not leaving it for somebody else. If it is a salvation matter, it is an urgent matter. And Paul understood that.
    2. Paul addresses the problem with **candor**. (Notice the following statements made by Paul...)
      - a. Galatians 1:6 – *"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel..."*
      - b. Galatians 3:1 – *"You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?"*
      - c. Galatians 3:3 – *"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"*
      - d. Galatians 4:16 – *"So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?"*

- 
- e. Galatians 5:4 – *“You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.”*
  - f. Galatians 5:7 – *“You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?”*
  - g. Galatians 6:12 – *“Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.”*
  - h. Paul is very straight forward with the Galatian brethren. They need to hear the truth, not some watered-down version of it. And so... He is very bold, and candid, in his speech.
3. Paul addresses the problem with **love**.
- a. Galatians 1:3-4 – *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father...”*
  - b. Paul gave his life for lost souls. And he is quick to remind the Galatian brethren of the ultimate sacrifice that was made to “rescue us from this present evil age.”
  - c. That is the point of this letter. It is to help these Galatian brethren be rescued “from this present evil age.”
  - d. Paul addresses the problems “head-on.” Everything that is written to the Galatian brethren, in this letter, is written with a sense of love, urgency, boldness, and candor. And that’s because Paul wants the Galatian brethren to get to Heaven. And therefore, it’s time for some “straight-talk” from the word of God.
- II. Therefore, according to Jack McKinney, in his commentary on Galatians, this letter can be broken down into at least 6 main sections.
- A. Section 1: Paul’s Greeting (1:1-5)
  - B. Section 2: Paul’s Opposition to a Different Gospel (1:6-10)
  - C. Section 3: Paul’s Autobiographical Defense of The Gospel of Christ (1:11-2:21)
  - D. Section 4: Paul’s Experiential and Scriptural Defense of The Gospel of Christ (3:1-5:1)
  - E. Section 5: The Christian Walk (5:2-6:10)
  - F. Section 6: Paul’s Concluding Remarks (6:11-18)
- III. For this lecture, we will be dealing primarily with what is said at the end of Galatians 3 through Galatians 4. It is not my intent to re-examine everything that has been said in the previous lectures. However, there are some things that we need to notice before we get into Galatians 4.
- A. In Galatians 3:1-7, Paul begins his defense of the gospel by asking **a series of questions**.
    - 1. First, he posed the question, *“You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before, whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?”* (3:1)
      - a. Obviously, by the tone of this question, Paul begins this section of the letter by rebuking the Christians in Galatia.
      - b. In Goodspeed’s translation of the Bible, the first three words of this verse are rendered, “You senseless Galatians!”
-

- 
- c. The most extreme rendering of this verse comes from Phillips', who uses the phrase, "O you dear idiots of Galatia" to begin Chapter 3.
  - d. I believe "You foolish Galatians" will do just fine for our purposes.
2. Next, he posed the question, "***Did you receive the Spirit by the words of the Law, or by hearing with faith?***" (3:2)
    - a. The Galatians reception of the "Spirit", which probably means miraculous spiritual gifts (3:5; 1 Corinthians 12:8-11), came from a faith that comes from hearing the gospel.
    - b. It did not come from a "faith" that is governed by the laws of man. Remember where genuine faith comes from. (Romans 10:17)
  3. Third, he asked, "***Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?***" (3:3)
    - a. We don't need to miss the point that Paul is making here. Paul is relating "man-made legislation to "the flesh", which he condemns later in 5:19-21.
    - b. This was not the kind of faith that the Galatians had first been converted to.
  4. Fourth, Paul asked, "***Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?***" (3:4)
    - a. The Galatians had suffered for obeying the gospel, not some system of manmade rules and regulations. (Acts 14:21-22)
  5. Finally, Paul asked, "***So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?***" (3:5)
    - a. Paul is pointing out how blessed the Galatians had been because they had received and obeyed God's word, and not God's word that was altered by an addition of manmade rules and regulations from Judaizing teachers.
    - b. In fact, their faith was an obedient faith just like that of Abraham before the law of Moses was ever given. (3:6)
- B. In Galatians 3:8-14, Paul continues his defense of the gospel through **a series of citations**.
1. The problem in Galatia was that there were some who were combining legal formalities from the old covenant with the new covenant (Example: Acts 15:1ff). And Paul's usage of the Old Law proved that this should not be allowed.
  2. First, in 3:8, Paul cited **Genesis 12:3**, proving that it had been God's plan from the beginning to "*justify the Gentiles by faith.*"
    - a. It is important to stress here that Abraham's faith was an obedient faith and not some sort of hybrid, man-made faith.
    - b. That "hybrid, man-made faith" is what got the Galatians in trouble.
  3. Next, in 3:10, Paul cited **Deuteronomy 27:26**, proving that an attempt to live a perfect life under an Old Testament system was impossible.
  4. Then, in 3:11, Paul cited **Habakkuk 2:4**, proving that Christians are to "*live by faith*" and not by manmade rules and regulations.
-

- 
5. Finally, in 3:13-14, Paul cited **Leviticus 18:5**, proving that Jesus became “*a curse*” by dying on the cross, redeeming man from the Old Law, and by allowing them to receive the blessing of Abraham.
- C. In Galatians 3:15-4:7, Paul continues his defense of Christianity through **a series of illustrations**.
1. In 3:15-18, Paul began by talking about “*a man’s covenant*”.
    - a. And when a man’s covenant has been ratified, no man can add anything to it or take anything away from it. It is that man’s “covenant.”
    - b. In the same manner, God promises to justify man through the seed of Abraham — through Jesus Christ.
    - c. Therefore, since the Law of Moses came after this promise, its regulations were not to be added to the promise.
    - d. Don’t miss the point. The Judaizing teachers in Galatia had no right to supplement the gospel with Old Covenant demands.
  2. In 3:19-22, Paul illustrated his point by talking about “*a mediator*.”
    - a. In 3:19, Paul asks a rhetorical question. “*Why the Law then?*”
      - 1) In other words, “What is the purpose of the Old Law?”
      - 2) “Why did it exist?”
    - b. A “mediator” serves as a link, or a connection, between two parties.
    - c. Therefore, the Law of Moses was given to help man know and understand sin from God’s perspective.
    - d. The Law of Moses was NEVER designed to supplement the gospel. Therefore, the Judaizing teachers were wrong by trying to do just that.
  3. In 3:23-25, Paul illustrated his point by talking about “*a tutor*.”
    - a. According to Louw Nida, in classical times, a “tutor” was a man, usually a slave, whose task it was to conduct a boy to and from school and to supervise and direct his general conduct. He was not a teacher. He was charged with leading the child.
    - b. Here in Galatians 3, Paul equated the Law of Moses to “a tutor”. It was designed “*to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.*” And we are justified by an obedient faith, like the faith of Abraham.
    - c. “*But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*” (3:25) Don’t miss the point. The Judaizing teachers were wrong in demanding an obedience of the regulations under the Law of Moses along with an obedience of the gospel.
  4. In 3:26-29, Paul concludes his illustrations by talking about “*a son*.”
    - a. In contrast to those who demanded a merger of the Old & New Covenants, Paul wrote, “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*” (3:26)
    - b. It did not matter who they were. Jew or Greek, slave or free man, male or female. If they were baptized into Christ, Paul said that they were sons. And they were of the seed of Abraham. And they were heirs according to the promise.
-

- 
- IV. It is this final illustration that serves as the basis for what Paul said in Galatians 4, teaching the Christians in Galatia that they are not slaves to the Old Law. They are sons of God.
- A. And they are sons of God not through faith in the Old Law. But through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Body:**

**I. Analysis of Galatians 4**

**A. Galatians 4:1-7**

1. Paul begins this chapter with an illustration that contrasts a child who is “a minor” with a child who is of full age.
  - a. As long as a child is a minor, he has no rights. In fact, he really had no more rights than a slave had. (I always hated this when I was a kid. I couldn’t wait until I turned 18.)
  - b. Even though that child may be ordained to one day be “the master of the house”, while he was a minor, he was under the control of his parents, guardians, managers, “baby-sitters”, etc. He was basically, for all practical purposes, a slave.
2. What’s the point? What is Paul saying here?
  - a. Paul is using some pretty straight forward language, speaking candidly, and I believe that he is directing his language at the Judaizing teachers in Galatia.
  - b. He is proving, by comparison, that as long as people were holding on to the Old Law, and its practices, they were nothing more than a bunch of slaves or minors. The Law of Moses held God’s people in custody until Jesus came.
  - c. In his workbook on Galatians, Randy Blackaby sums this section of Scripture up perfectly by asking a simple question: “Which is the better position?”
    - 1) Is it better to be under the Old Testament Law? Is it better to be in the position of a child with no more rights than a slave?
    - 2) Or is it better to be under the New Testament Covenant of Christ? Is it better to be an adopted son and an heir with full legal rights?
3. Paul is essentially asking, “Why would anybody want to return to the status of a little child with no rights, even when you have expectations about your future?”
  - a. “Why would you want to return to being a minor when you can have ‘majority status,’ be an heir, and possess your father’s blessings?”
  - b. Both Jews and Gentiles, before Jesus came, were nothing more than children who were legally constrained by the Law from being fully recognized as sons of God’s promises to Abraham.
  - c. Faith in Jesus which led to obedience and the forgiveness of sins was necessary for both Jews and Gentiles to be heirs of the promise, which is by faith.
4. Therefore, “*God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*” (4:4-5)

- 
- a. In *“the fullness of time”* is simply speaking of God’s appointed time for Jesus to come into the world to redeem men who were under the Law and to provide the adoption of sons.
  - b. Man has an inheritance from God, not because they were born as Jews who were under the Law. But they have an inheritance because they have been adopted as “sons” of God through faith in Jesus.
  - c. Therefore, since one’s status and inheritance as a “son” of God is far superior to that of a slave, Paul’s point is very simple: Faith in Jesus is superior to slavery under the Law.
5. It is superior because it brings us into an intimate relationship with God.
    - a. *“Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ Therefore, you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then heir through God.”* (4:6-7)
    - b. Commentators have been united, for the most part, on the meaning of these verses. They speak to our relationship with God as an adopted son.
    - c. In v. 6, the Holy Spirit is translated as “The Spirit of His Son.” That seems to indicate that He proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father. (See Romans 8:9-11)
    - d. In John 16:13, the Holy Spirit is referred to as “the Spirit of truth.” That seems to speak of the work of the Holy Spirit in revealing and confirming God’s word. Since *“faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ,”* (Romans 10:17) upon reception of the truth, the Spirit’s revelation dwells within our hearts and we receive the blessing of being God’s son. (1 John 3:1, John 20:17)
    - e. The phrase, “Abba, Father” is a repetitive phrase from the Greek and Aramaic languages and it describes the intimacy that we can have with God—through faith in His Son.

#### B. Galatians 4:8-20

1. *“But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, 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? You observe days and months and seasons and years.”* (4:9-10)
  - a. In this whole letter, Paul asks several rhetorical questions. And this is another example of that.
  - b. He essentially asks, “Galatians, do you intend to go back to the status of slaves? Do you intend to reject the freedom and inheritance that is available only through Christ?”
  - c. At one time, they had served idols. Now they are known by the God of heaven. Now they have a relationship with the God of heaven.
  - d. Are they going to abandon that relationship for the *“weak and worthless elemental things?”*
    - 1) Several good Bible students have asked what Paul is referring to when he refers to the “weak and worthless elemental things.”

- 
- 2) Commentators are mostly united on what this means. That phrase comes from the Greek word, “*stoicheion*”, and it is the same word used in verses 3 & 9. It seems to describe the most basic elementary principles of religious knowledge. And it seems to include more than just the Jewish Law.
  - 3) It does include the Jewish Law. But it also seems to include both Pagan religions and Natural law as well.
  - 4) Randy Blackaby says, “*Both Jews and Gentiles could see in the elementary religious principles drawn from their religious systems that men are in need of a savior.*”
  - 5) Mike Willis says, “*The word stoicheion is the same word as appeared in v. 3 where it was used to describe the condition of both Jews and Gentiles prior to the coming of Christ. It refers to the elementary principles of religious knowledge when they were worshipping those which were no gods.*”
  - 6) Jack McKinney says, “*Twice in chapter 4, Paul referred to the ‘elementary principles’ (4:3, 9, ESV). In the first instance, the term refers to the Law to which the Jews were bound. The second occurrence involves Gentiles, and it has a dual meaning. The phrase ‘turn back’ associates ‘elementary principles’ with pagan idolatry (which the Galatians had once practiced) as well as the Law (which they were embracing due to the Judaizers’ influence). Neither of these had the power to save them.*”
  - 7) Paul uses the same concept in Romans 1:18-32, Colossians 2:8-10, & Hebrews 5:12.
- e. The main point here is that Paul is concerned that Jewish Christians are going to fall back in to Judaism and that Judaizing teachers were going to hinder the faith of Gentile Christians by binding old Jewish customs and practices to their faith.
2. “*I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong...*” (v. 12)
    - a. Here Paul begins to remind them of what happened when he first came to them as an apostle. They received him and the message that he preached.
    - b. He is begging them to be like him. Paul had put aside his distinction as a Jew and is urging them to do the same in light of the false Judaizing teachers.
    - c. They had once received Paul with love and kindness. However, there seems to be an implication here that, because of the influence of the Judaizing teachers, some began to treat Paul differently.
    - d. The Judaizers had begun to treat the Galatians fondly in order to gather a following.
    - e. “*They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them.*” (4:17)
    - f. Paul’s love and concern for the brethren is genuine and obvious.

### C. Galatians 4:21-31

1. “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Throughout Galatians 3-4, Paul uses illustration after illustration to defend the gospel, and his preaching of it.

- 
- a. He emphasized the point that the demands of the Old Law, the idea of perfect law-keeping, and the keeping of all of the regulations in order to be justified, lead to bondage and slavery. However, he also shows that grace and forgiveness under the New Covenant provide man with freedom from the demands of the Law.
  - b. But having said that, the Judaizing teachers appear to keep going on and on, appealing to the Old Law. Therefore, Paul takes a historical event, in the very beginning of Jewish history, to prove his point.
2. What is an allegory?
- a. Merriam-Webster defines “allegory” as “an expression by means of symbolic figures and actions of truths or generalization about human existence.”
  - b. In other words, an allegory is an extended figure of speech. It is a comparison that helps explain a principle. It is basically a longer version of a metaphor. And it involves a story in which characters and events typify the truths to be conveyed.
  - c. In John 10:1-16, Jesus’ teaching on “The Good Shepherd” is an example of an allegory. In Ephesians 6:11-17, Paul’s discussion of “The Christian Soldier” is another example of an allegory.
3. Why does Paul use this allegory?
- a. The Galatians were being tempted to adopt a different “gospel” based on the Old Law. Therefore, Paul returns to the Old Testament for evidence against falling back into Judaism.
  - b. He takes the case of Abraham’s two sons: Ishmael, who was born to Hagar, and Isaac, who was born to Sarah. Ishmael was born to a slave woman and was born naturally. Isaac was born to a free woman and his birth was miraculous in nature.
  - c. Jews who emphasized that they were physical descendants of Abraham to prove that they were justified before God needed to address the fact that Abraham had two sons and only one of them was the heir of the promises that were made to Abraham.
  - d. The crux of this illustration is built upon what Paul had said earlier in Galatians 3:16-22 about their being only one seed of the promise. Abraham had two sons. But only one was the son of promise.
4. What are the historical facts? (Galatians 4:21-23)
- a. Son #1: Ishmael
    - 1) Born by Hagar, a bondswoman.
    - 2) He was born “according to the flesh,” which means that he was born by the natural sexual union between Abraham and Hagar, as all children are born.
  - b. Son #2: Isaac
    - 1) Born by Sarah, a freewoman.
    - 2) He was born through the promise, which means that Isaac was not a naturally born child. He was born only because of promise, which means that his birth was fulfilled miraculously.
-

- 
5. What does this allegory mean? (Galatians 4:24-27)
    - a. As Paul explains the allegory, he cites Isaiah 54:1, which depicts Jerusalem as a barren and desolate woman who would in the future rejoice.
    - b. Isaiah 54 also predicts a restoration of Zion, an enlargement of its borders, and an increase of its people.
    - c. All of this would come to pass because of the promise of God and not because of some sort of natural process. Jerusalem was going to be fruitful, as Sarah who was once barren, had rejoiced in her old age when she was made fruitful by God.
  6. What is the intended application for the Galatian readers? (Galatians 4:28-31)
    - a. Isaac represents Christians.
      - 1) Christians are like Isaac. They are children of promise.
      - 2) God had promised to restore joy to Israel, and to revive Jerusalem, through the Suffering Servant.
    - b. Ishmael represents the Jews & Judaizing teachers.
      - 1) They persecuted the child of promise.
      - 2) They persecuted Isaac first and then the church.
    - c. God demanded that Hagar and Ishmael be cast out. And God insists that the system which enslaves be cast out too.
    - d. Christians are free, not enslaved to the Law.
  7. What is the symbolism of this allegory? (See PowerPoint.)

## II. Misuses of Galatians 4

- A. There are several misuses of Galatians 3-4 that deserve our time and diligent study. However, due to time constraints, there is one misuse that I feel needs to be addressed more than others. And that misuse comes from those who are “hyper-preterists”, who falsely teach what has become known as the A.D. 70 Doctrine.
  1. What is the A.D. 70 Doctrine (Realized Eschatology, Hyper-Preterism, Etc.)?
    - a. A doctrine that claims that all Bible prophecy was fulfilled by the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
    - b. A doctrine that teaches the following:
      - 1) The 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus happened in A.D. 70.
      - 2) The resurrection of the dead occurred in A.D. 70.
      - 3) The end of the world (age) came in A.D. 70.
      - 4) The final judgment day transpired in A.D. 70.
      - 5) The new heaven and new earth came about in A.D. 70.
      - 6) The period between A.D. 30 – A.D. 70 is known as the “Eschaton” and advocates claim that it is an overlapping period between the Old & New Covenants.
    - c. If this is true, then it means that:

- 
- 1) There will be no future 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Jesus.
  - 2) There will be no future resurrection.
  - 3) There will be no future end of the world.
  - 4) There will be no future Judgement Day.
2. Who are some of the main contributors to the A.D. 70 Doctrine?
    - a. Max King: *The Spirit of Prophecy*
    - b. Samuel Dawson: *Essays On Eschatology*
    - c. Several Christians including preachers and elders have fallen for this false doctrine.
  3. What does the A.D. 70 Doctrine have to do with Galatians 4?
    - a. Joe Price says the following about the focal point of the A.D. 70 Doctrine: “*I submit that the underlying reason for this doctrinal error rests upon a perverted interpretation of the allegory found in Galatians 4:21-31. In this allegory, the A.D. 70 advocate believes that he finds comfort and support for this doctrine. Instead, he finds a refutation of it!*”
    - b. Consider what Max King says in *The Spirit of Prophecy*: “Christianity is a fulfillment of the prophecies, types and shadows of the law and not merely a , ‘fill-in’ between Judaism and another age to come. Abraham had two sons, and there was no gap between them. They overlapped a little, but Isaac ‘came on’ when Ishmael ‘went out.’ The son born of the spirit was given the place and inheritance of the son born of the flesh. Hence, this simple allegory (Gal. 4:21-31) establishes the ‘Spirit of Prophecy,’ confirming prophecy’s fulfillment in the spiritual seed of Abraham through Christ (Gal. 3:16,26-29), and beyond the fall of Jerusalem these prophecies cannot be extended.” (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 239)
    - c. Consider Joe Price’s response to Max King: “According to King (and others), this allegory establishes his view of the end times. This doctrine teaches that ‘out of the decay of Judaism arose the spiritual body of Christianity’ (*Ibid.*, p. 200). We are told that this occurred during the forty-year period of 30-70 A.D. Therefore, an overlapping of the old and new covenants is believed to have occurred and becomes crucial to this doctrine’s defense. By having us believe that the old and new covenants overlapped from 30-70 A.D., this heresy would have us believe that Christians were ‘given the place and inheritance’ of the Jews. These two allegations (an overlapping of the covenants, and Christians being given the inheritance of the Jews) constitute two fatal mistakes in this false doctrine. So then, let us first look at whether or not the old and new covenants overlapped from 30-70 A.D. Then, we will consider the inheritance obtained by Christians.”
    - d. Just to be clear, advocates of the A.D. 70 Doctrine claim that there was an overlapping of the Old & New Covenants between A.D. 30 – A.D. 70.
    - e. They also state that the allegory in Galatians 4 teaches that there was an overlapping period because the lives and stories of Ishmael and Isaac overlapped a little.
  4. Does Galatians 4 affirm the A.D. 70 Doctrine’s view of an overlapping timeframe between the Old & New Covenants?
-

- 
- a. Absolutely not. The notion that the Old Covenant lasted until A.D. 70 is completely false.
  - b. Consider Colossians 2:13-15. The focal point in the fulfillment of the Old Covenant is the cross. It is not A.D. 70.
    - 1) Here Paul emphasizes the cross as the means by which one was released from the “certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us.”
    - 2) The Old Covenant could not forgive (Hebrews 10:1-4). Yet the cross triumphs over sin (Colossians 2:15).
    - 3) At the cross, according to Colossians 2:14, there were three things that happened to the Old Covenant...
      - a) It was cancelled (blotted) out.
      - b) It was taken out of the way.
      - c) It was nailed to the cross.
    - 4) Remember: Victory over sin did not occur in A.D. 70. It occurred at the cross.
  5. Consider 2 Corinthians 3:14. The Old Covenant is done away in Christ, not in A.D. 70.
    - a. The Old Covenant was already nailed to the cross when Paul wrote 2 Corinthians.
    - b. To deny that fact is to be dishonest.
  6. Consider Hebrews 7:11-14. An overlapping of the covenants would mean that there were two priesthoods in place at the same time.
    - a. Under the Old Testament, the Levitical priesthood was in place (v. 11).
    - b. However, Jesus is not a priest like Aaron (v. 11). He is one who is “according to the order of Melchizedek.”
    - c. Jesus came from the tribe of Judah, not Levi. He could not serve as a priest under the Old Covenant. The law had to change in order for that to happen.
    - d. Jesus did not wait until A.D. 70 to become a high priest. He began serving as High Priest when he sat down at the right hand of God (Consider Hebrews 8:1-2).
    - e. If Jesus was the High Priest before A.D. 70, the law changed before A.D. 70.
  7. Consider Ephesians 2:13-18. Jesus made peace between the Jews and Gentiles when He died. This in no way refers to A.D. 70.
    - a. The cross is the focal point of God’s plan for peace and for redemption. *“For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.”* (Ephesians 2:14)
    - b. Jesus accomplished peace between the Jews and Gentiles, not A.D. 70.
  8. Were Christians given the place and inheritance of the Jews?
    - a. A.D. 70 Doctrine Advocates teach that Christians were given the place and inheritance of the Jews. Max King said, “They overlapped a little, but Isaac
-

- 
- ‘came on’ when Ishmael ‘went out.’” He goes on to say, “The son born of the spirit was given the place and inheritance of the son born of the flesh.”
- b. The fundamental problem is that A.D. 70 Doctrine Advocates assume that Paul was using this allegory to argue that Christians were given the Place and inheritance of the Jews.
  - c. The purpose of the allegory is to prove that Abraham had two sons who existed together in the same household for a time. This is very important to our understanding of the text.
  - d. Realized Eschatologists have redefined this allegory to conclude that Ishmael was the rightful heir of Abraham until he was cast out.
    - 1) Now... Here is where they take that... They go on to say that we should believe that the Jews were under the Old Covenant and were the rightful heirs of the inheritance but were “cast out” at A.D. 70 when Christians took their place and received the Jew’s inheritance.
    - 2) Here is the problem with that: The Bible teaches that Ishmael was NEVER the heir of Abraham’s promises. Isaac was. Ishmael was Sarah’s answer when Sarah tried to take matters into her own hands.
    - 3) And since Ishmael never was the heir to these blessings, he could not be “disinherited” of them. Isaac did not take Ishmael’s place. And Christians never took the Jews place as heirs of God’s inheritance.
    - 4) Consider this quote from Joe Price: “The old covenant did not contain the inheritance of God’s Abrahamic promises. Righteousness and justification are not through the law, but through faith in Christ (Gal. 2:16,21; 3:7-14,21-23; Rom. 3:20-22). The law gave a knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20), but no release from it (Gal. 3:10,12,22-23). It produced ‘children of bondage’ (Gal. 4:24). It contained no inheritance (Gal. 3:18-19), only a curse (Gal. 3:10-14). The ‘righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ’ (Rom. 3:22) is ‘apart from the law’ (Rom. 3:21). Therefore, the ‘children of promise’ (Gal. 4:28 Christians) did not receive their inheritance from the Jews of the old covenant. If they did, the inheritance would be ‘no more of promise’ (Gal. 3:18). To suggest that Christians were given the place and inheritance of the Jews is to demonstrate a woeful misunderstanding of God’s promise to Abraham and how it is received. Its blessing are received through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16-19,23-29), not through the law. Our inheritance is ‘according to promise,’ not according to the law!”
9. Paul’s allegory in Galatians 4 actually denies the A.D. 70 Doctrine.
- a. Why was the allegory used by Paul?
    - 1) Remember that, according to Galatians 3:23-29, the law of Moses was in force, and men were under it, before faith came.
    - 2) Remember that the law was a tutor to bring men to Jesus. And since Jesus came and died and reigns, we no longer need that tutor.
    - 3) Remember that we are sons of God and heirs according to the promise, through our faith in Jesus—NOT the Old Law.
-

- 4) Since there are Judaizing teachers in Galatia advocating for Christians to continue Old Covenant practices, Paul shows them that they are misguided. And he goes back to the Old Testament to prove that through this allegory.
- b. This allegory in no way affirms an overlapping of the covenants. The A.D. 70 Doctrine is a false doctrine and one that needs to be strongly refuted.

### III. Practical Applications

#### A. It is possible for new converts to fall back into denominationalism.

1. Let me illustrate that for you. A friend of mine converted a girl who was a devout Catholic. After a few weeks, they went out on their first date. And today, they have been married for over 12 years.
  - a. When they first got married, he called me to discuss whether or not he should say something to her about going to Catholic Mass with her family on Christmas.
  - b. My question was, “Why does she want to go?” and, “Is she participating?”
  - c. His answer was, “She wants to follow tradition with her family.” And, “Yes, she is participating.”
  - d. Do you see the problem with that?
2. A few years ago, I had the privilege of a 10-hour round trip car ride with Brother Paul Earnhart. It was just me and Brother Earnhart. I was driving. And we talked about a lot of stuff. But there is one thing that he said to me that I’ll never forget.
  - a. He said, “Wiley, we have baptized a lot of people. But we have failed to make disciples.”
  - b. It kind of reminds me of the song that says, “Believe, obey, the work is done...”
  - c. Brothers, the work is never done!
3. We must quit merely getting people wet. We must make disciples!
  - a. *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...”* (Matthew 28:19)
    - 1) Now... We recognize that baptism is a big part of that. You can’t be a disciple of Jesus without having your sins washed away.
    - 2) But making disciples involves a lot more than just baptism. It involves *“teaching them to observe all that I command you...”*
  - b. *“And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.’”* (Luke 9:23)
    - 1) Being a disciple is not always easy. And a big reason for that is due to the fact that, most of the time, when we teach someone the gospel of Jesus, we have to first unteach them the things that they have learned in the religious world that are false.
    - 2) And then, our prospects have a decision to make.
      - a) “Do I want to follow Jesus?”
      - b) Or, “Do I want to follow mom and dad?”
      - c) Or, “Do I want to continue to believe that God just cares about my happiness right here and now?”

- 
- d) Or, “Do I want to continue to believe that religion is not that big of a deal?”
  - e) Or, “Do I want to believe whatever I want to believe?”
4. If we love them, we will be honest with them.
- a. New converts need to know what is wrong with Calvinism.
  - b. New converts need to know what is wrong with denominationalism.
  - c. New converts need to know what it means to be lost and what it means to be saved.
  - d. New converts need to know what is right about being a true disciple of Jesus.
  - e. New converts need to know what is right about being a member of Jesus’ church.
    - 1) That Jesus has a church. (Matthew 16:18)
    - 2) That Jesus’ church is not some denomination.
    - 3) That God didn’t just call us to believe in Him, but to BELONG to His church.

**B. When it comes to handling doctrinal error, we need to take our cue from Paul.**

1. As I stated earlier, Paul addressed the Galatian brethren with urgency, with candor, and with love.
2. Consider 1 Thessalonians 2:1-5. Brothers, our job is not to please everybody.
  - a. Now... Let’s be balanced in our approach. Our job is not to try to rub everybody the wrong way either.
  - b. But there are going to be times, as we preach, when brethren get mad at us. And there will be times when brethren view us as an enemy.
  - c. And it’s not because we are trying to be an enemy. It’s because we are trying to love people and help people get to Heaven. But unfortunately, some people just do not want to be helped.
3. “*So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?*” (Galatians 4:16)
  - a. Sometimes the answer is “yes”. Sometimes, no matter how hard we fight it, we have created enemies because of our stand for what is right.
  - b. And I hate that. I hate it when somebody doesn’t like me. It bothers me and sometimes it keeps me up at night.
  - c. But, as preachers, our job is to boldly address problems as they arise with God’s word.
4. My fear is that sometimes, as preachers, we might judge each other according to appearance rather than with righteous judgment.
  - a. My fear is that sometimes we are a little critical of one another.
  - b. And that happens especially when we are struggling with a situation in our local congregations.

- c. Or it happens when there is division in the local church. A malcontented brother/sister will leave one church and hop to the next and we will take their side and criticize the preacher and elders of the church they just left.
  - d. We need to support one another. Because at the end of the day, we all love the Lord, we all love the people, and we are all trying to do our best.
5. I also fear that when a preacher leaves a work to move on to another work, and another preacher calls him to ask questions about the congregation, that the preacher may not be forthright about any problems that may exist.
- a. It's almost as if some think that the appearance of problems is an indictment on their work and could hurt their reputation.
  - b. We should address problems and should be honest about them.
  - c. Paul did just that. He never hid the fact that problems existed. And we shouldn't either.
6. But even when we are not getting the support that we feel we need, we still have to preach the word.
- a. We still have to "be instant in season and out of season."
  - b. We still have to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort."
  - c. We still have to "speak the truth in love."

**C. We should preach with passion.**

- 1. That is what Paul did. He appealed to the emotions of the people to get them to repent.
- 2. He did not just recite a bunch of Old Covenant facts or prophecies. But he applied them to the situation in Galatia.
- 3. Thus, passionless preaching that does not appeal to the emotions of the hearer, and that is not correctly applied, is not good gospel preaching.
- 4. What emotions are we appealing to? Joy, Indignation, Anger, Grief, Lamentation, Compassion, Love, and even Hate. And the list goes on and on...

**Conclusion:**

- I. One of the joys of being a Christian is to know that we are not slaves. We are sons of God through Christ Jesus.
  - A. *"See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."* (1 John 3:1-3)
- B. In these verses, there are three blessings that come from the God that we serve.
  - 1. As God's children, we have been blessed with **honor**. We are children of God.
  - 2. As God's children, we have been blessed with **help**. Look at John's usage of the words "we" and "us". God has blessed us with the opportunity to belong to His people — to have help in this life.

3. As God's children, we have been blessed with **hope**. If we keep ourselves pure, one day, we will dwell with God forever.
- II. Here's the point: The book of Galatians, much like 1 John 3, emphasizes the need for a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.
    - A. It is a relationship that we need.
    - B. It is a relationship that we need to tell others about.

Wiley Deason  
148 E. Oak Hill Drive  
Florence, AL 35633  
jwdeason@gmail.com

---

**Selected Bibliography**

- Blackaby, Randy (2014). "Galatians" (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Athens: Guardian of Truth Foundation.
- Dawson, Samuel G. (2015). *Essays on Eschatology: An Introductory Overview of the Study of Last Things*. Bowie: SGD Press.
- Fung, Ronald Y. K. (1988). *The Epistle To The Galatians*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Harkrider, Robert (2003). *Galatians and James: Legalism versus Liberty*. Russellville: IIP.
- King, Max (2016). *The Spirit of Prophecy* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Colorado Springs: Bimillennial Press.
- McKinney, Jack (2017). *Truth For Today Commentary: Galatians*. Searcy: Resource Publications.
- Price, Joe (1989). The Second Coming of Christ: Did It Already Occur. Bowling Green: *Guardian of Truth* XXXIII: 20, pp. 618-620
- Wharton, Edward C. (2009). Freed For Freedom: *Studies In Galatians* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Nashville: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christian.
- Willis, Mike (1994). *Truth Commentaries: Galatians*. Bowling Green: Guardian of Truth Foundation.
- Winkler, Wendell (2006). *A Time For Defense: A Study of 2 Corinthians & Galatians*. Tuscaloosa: Winkler Publications, Inc.