

GALATIANS 4:21-31

REVIEW...

- **GALATIANS 1:1-2:21 - THE GOSPEL OF GRACE - A BETTER GOSPEL...**
 - The message of the Gospel - Grace and Peace through the cross of Jesus...
 - Having been saved by Grace - why try and grow in Jesus through the Law...
 - The law cannot keep you from sinning - it only show you are a sinner!
- **GALATIANS 3:1-29 - THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW...**
 - Anyone who follows the Law/works - is under a curse - **Deuteronomy 27:26**
 - The Law was given to reveal our sin - show us a need for a savior - Jesus...
 - Once we receive Grace, we no longer need the Law!
- **GALATIANS 4:1-20 - ADOPTION AS SONS...**
 - 1st - By Grace we have become heir to the Kingdom of God...
 - Just as a child who is an heir to a great fortune - looks no different than a servant...
 - It may seem like there is no benefit to believing in Jesus - look just like the world...
 - But we have an eternal inheritance waiting for us - co-heirs with Christ!
 - 2nd - You are a son - therefore do not go back to bondage...
 - We were once caught up in religion and superstitions because we did not know Jesus...
 - Now that we are the children of God - do not go back and forget Christ!
 - 3rd - Follow a good example - someone who will point you to Jesus...

BONDAGE OR FREEDOM... (3 THINGS)

- **1ST - ISHMAEL AND ISAAC... VS. 21-23**
 - Paul asks the Galatians - so you want to be under the law...
 - The Galatians assumed the Law was a better option than the Gospel of Grace...
 - The reason was it was easier - it was a well-defined set of rules they could follow...
 - It told them when - how - and where to worship / what to wear / how to talk...
 - It defined for them what the Christian faith should look like...
 - The problem was it was dependant on them - God had nothing to do with it...
 - That is death - it is an empty Christianity - void of any true saving faith....
 - To illustrate the difference - Paul tell them to listen to the example of Abraham...
 - 1st - The son of the Flesh - Ishmael...
 - God had promised to give Abraham descendants as many as the stars - **Genesis 15:4-5**
 - But Abraham was 85 years old - and he still did not have a son - **Genesis 16:1-6**
 - One of the hardest things in life is waiting on God to mature us in Christ...
 - After we are saved - we want to be perfected instantly - never struggle with sin...
 - And when we find that we are still 'human' it can be frustrating...
 - There is a danger of drifting towards legalism to try and force righteousness...
 - Set up strict rules in our life to make us holy - keep us from sinning...
 - We forget that God has promised to perfect us - by His grace in His time...
 - And God's timing is not our timing - He does not change us in a day - **II Peter 3:8-9...**
 - We think that waiting on the Lord means a couple of hours - maybe weeks...

- Following Jesus means being patient – willing to wait on the Lord - wait on Grace...
- The wife of Abraham - Sarai - had a servant named Hagar from Egypt...
 - There had been famine in the Land - so Abraham went down to Egypt (*the world*)...
 - He told everyone Sarai was his sister and she was taken into the house of Pharaoh...
 - Because of Sarai the Pharaoh blessed Abram with servants – including Hagar...
 - Abraham had trusted in the world during a hard time of the famine...
 - He went back again to someone from the world – Hagar – for help getting a son...
 - Trusting in Legalism - rules and regulations - to make us better Christians...
 - Is trusting in our abilities / flesh to make us Godly - rather than trusting in God...
 - This is the foundation for every religion in the WORLD...
 - If you try hard enough - you can become good enough for God to accept you...
 - But if we could make ourselves good - then Jesus went to the cross for no reason...
 - **Galatians 2:21** - “If the Law could save us, there was no need for Christ to die.”
- Abram and Sarai knew the Lord had promised to give them children...
 - But perhaps God just needed a little help - Sarai gave Hagar to Abram as a 2nd wife...
 - She gave birth to a son - his name was Ishmael (*God will hear*)...
 - And they thought this was a solution - but it was their solution - not God's...
 - The problem of trusting in ourselves - we end up creating are Ishmaels...
 - Rather than solving a problem – we just create a new problem...
 - Before we came to know Jesus - we were sinners - dead in our sin...
 - The problem with legalism is we convince ourselves we are ok with God...
 - We go to church every Sunday / right clothes / right words - God is happy with us...
 - But the reality is nothing has changed - we are still dead in our sin!
- Abraham was to become the father of God's people - but not through Ishmael...
 - God did not even recognize Ishmael as Abraham's son - **Genesis 22:2**
 - The descendants of Ishmael were not God's chosen people - they were not 'Israel'...
 - In fact, Ishmael is never even mentioned by name in the New Testament!
 - The picture being - God does not recognize a work of the flesh...
 - Those who try and be saved by good works 'flesh' - are not the children of God...
- o 2nd - The son of the Promise - Isaac...
 - At 100 years old - God gave Abraham the Promised Son!
 - Abraham named his son Isaac (*laughter*) – because Sarai had laughed - **Genesis 18**
 - Abram knew that what the Lord promised him was impossible...
 - But he did not consider his own body – he did not waver (*much*) in unbelief...
 - He was 100 years old – and WELL past the age when he could father children
 - Sarai was 90 years old – and WELL past the age when she could have children
 - And if he had looked at his circumstances he would have been filled with doubt
 - Abraham believed God could do the impossible!
 - He believed by faith God could do exactly what He said He would do...
 - The promise to be God's people only came through the son of Promise - Isaac!
 - We may look at our lives and think - we will never be like Jesus...
 - We struggle with sin - and wonder if God will ever finish the work in our lives...
 - Only those who receive the promise of God - 'salvation by the spirit' - are saved...
 - And part of that promise is God will finish the work He began in us!

- **Philippians 1:6** - “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it...”
- **2ND - TWO COVENANTS - TWO CITIES... VS. 24-27**
 - These two sons of Abraham are an allegory...
 - *Allegoreo* - only used here in all of the New Testament...
 - It is a word that means to give an alternate / deeper meaning to a story...
 - The Same idea as a parable - a simple story used to instruct deeper truth...
 - Difference between an Allegory and Parable - a Parable is never a true story...
 - Whereas an Allegory can be based on a real historical event...
 - *Parable of the Seed & Sower (not a true story) - is about preaching the Word of God...*
 - *Paul here uses the true story of Abraham's sons (allegory) to teach about Grace...*
 - The use of allegory in teachings is a common practice in many churches today...
 - Unfortunately, it can be a very dangerous way to interpret the Bible...
 - Ignoring the plain interpretation of a passage - teachers seek a ‘deeper meaning’
 - Abandoning boundaries - the passage is left to mean anything the teacher wants...
 - This had led to many false teachings - heresies being taught in churches...
 - As much as possible it is best to teach a passage of the Bible without Allegory...
 - The allegory of the Law of Moses - bondage...
 - Hagar represents Mt. Sinai - the place where the God gave Israel the Law...
 - Ishmael represents the child of the Law - a work of the flesh...
 - The City of Jerusalem - represented the Judaizers - who were in bondage to the Law
 - The Judaizers developed a system of 613 laws - 365 negative / 248 positive laws...
 - It produced a heartless / cold / and arrogant / flawed brand of righteousness...
 - 1st - New laws continually need to be invented for new situations (*movies / smoking*)
 - 2nd - Accountability to God is replaced by accountability to men...
 - 3rd - It reduces a person's ability to personally discern between right and wrong...
 - 4th - It creates a judgmental spirit - if anyone dared not to follow the rules...
 - 5th - The Judaizers confused their personal preferences with divine law...
 - 6th - It produces inconsistencies - the Judaizers could not follow their own rules...
 - 7th - It created a false standard of righteousness - self-righteousness...
 - 8th - While it seemed to produce good works in the lives of those who follow it...
 - Trying to obey the Law is a work of the flesh - based on our efforts - so it fails...
 - We can only temporarily change our actions - we cannot change the heart...
 - So inevitably we end up miserable - in bondage to rules that we cannot follow!
 - The Allegory of the Gospel of Grace - freedom...
 - Isaac was born of the Promise of God - represents the Gospel of Grace...
 - Jerusalem above - heaven - is full of those who follow Grace!
 - Only the things that God does have lasting results - **John 15:16...**
 - Only those who have faith in Jesus will receive the free gift of salvation...
 - Heaven will be full of those who have believed in the Gospel of Grace...
 - Those who believed God would be faithful to His promise - to save us from our sin!
 - **Isaiah 49:13** - Rejoice a barren - you who did not have a child...
 - Grace may not seem to work as fast - you might think it is ‘barren’...
 - The reason is because by Grace Jesus changes the inside first - then the outside...

- **3RD - THE CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE - WILL BE PERSECUTED... vs. 28-31**

- o And just as the child of the flesh persecuted the child of the Spirit - **Genesis 21:8...**
 - On the day the Isaac was weaned (*perhaps 2 years old*) Abraham threw a great feast...
 - Ishmael (*between 14-16 years old*) – the ½ brother – mocked Isaac...
 - Even though Ishmael was older – he was not the true son of the Promise...
 - He was the child of a bondwoman – Isaac was the true son of Abraham and Sarah...
 - Now that Isaac was born – Ishmael was no longer important or needed!
 - Expect when we preach the Gospel of Grace - to face persecution...
 - Those who are bound up in religion / rules - are not going to be happy with us...
 - We live in a community where many are very hardened towards the Gospel...
 - Because they have been indoctrinated in a lifetime of traditions and superstitions...
 - And they are proud and think 'religion' is enough to get them into heaven...
 - When you dare to challenge those beliefs - you immediately come under fire...
- o Cast out the bondwoman... vs. 30
 - Sarah demanded that Abraham cast out the bondwoman (*Hagar*) and her son...
 - Sarah was not about to see her son mocked by Hagar's son...
 - God sided with Sarah – told Abraham to listen to his wife – 'Isaac is your seed'...
 - The reference here is that through Isaac would come the promised Seed...
 - **Galatians 3:16** – "God gave the promise to Abraham and his Seed. And notice that it doesn't say the promise was to his seeds, as if it meant many descendants. But the promise was to his Seed—and that, of course, means Jesus."
 - The promised savior – Jesus – would not come through Ishmael – but Isaac...
 - Therefore Isaac would stay – and Ishmael had to go...
 - None of Abraham's inheritance – nothing was passed on to Ishmael...
 - This may seem harsh – but the picture is nothing good comes from the flesh
 - **I Corinthians 15:50** - "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God..."
 - In the end our best attempts to earn our own righteousness end up as nothing...
 - Literally it is as if we never did anything - no lasting results from all our efforts!
 - So when people come to you with Religion / rules - toss the rules out...
 - Do not let religion or rules replace your relationship with Jesus...
 - Only through the power of the Spirit – can we have a change our heart!
 - Jesus changes our desires so we do not want to do the things that are wrong...
 - Instead we want to do those things that please the Lord!
 - Only Jesus can bring lasting change - a transformed heart and new life...
 - As we look to Jesus - we are changed from the inside out!