

OUR LIBERTY IN CHRIST

BIBLE TEXT : Galatians 4:1-31; 5:1-15

LESSON 399 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Galatians 4:1-31

1 Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are*: ye have not injured me at all.

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached

Bible References:

I Heirs of Christ

1. An heir is under bondage until he is of age, Galatians 4:1-3;

Luke 2:51

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

2. Christ was sent to redeem us from bondage, Galatians 4:4-7;

John 8:36

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Romans 10:3

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

3. After being set free, why return to servitude? Galatians 4:8-10;

Romans 6:2

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

2 Peter 2:19-22

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

4. The Gospel preached by Paul was joyfully received, Galatians 4:11-15.

5. The false teachers confuse the Galatians, Galatians 4:16-21;

Galatians 1:6

6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Galatians 1:7

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

II Two Covenants

1. Abraham's two sons are used as an allegory, Galatians 4:22-24;

Genesis 17:15-21

15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall* her name *be*.

16 And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother* of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him.

the gospel unto you at the first.
 14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.
 15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.
 16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?
 17 They zealously affect you, *but* not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.
 18 But *it is* good to be zealously affected always in *a good thing*, and not only when I am present with you.
 19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,
 20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.
 21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?
 22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.
 23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise.
 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.
 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.
 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
 27 For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break

20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.
 21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

Genesis 21:9-13

9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.
 10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *even* with Isaac.
 11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.
 12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.
 13 And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he *is* thy seed.

2. Ishmael is a type of the natural Jew, Galatians 4:25, 29.
3. Isaac is a type of the spiritual Jew, Galatians 4:26-28;

Romans 2:28

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

Romans 2:29

29 But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

4. The spiritual Jew is free, Galatians 4:30, 31;

Romans 6:22

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Romans 8:15

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Romans 8:16

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

III A Call to Freedom

1. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, Galatians 5:1-6.
2. False teachers hinder freedom, Galatians 5:7-12.
3. Love fulfils the Law, Galatians 5:13-15;

Romans 13:8-10

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.
 9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

4 Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;
 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Notes:
Heir

forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now.

30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Galatians 5:1-15

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

8 This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

10 I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be

Oftentimes when a fortune is left to a son, he is not allowed to touch it until he becomes of age. While he is a child he goes to school, just as other children who might be very poor. As children there is no difference between them. Thus we find the Apostle setting forth the fact that when Christ came, we were as children becoming of age and realising the liberties of our inheritance. What liberties the son now enjoys! No longer does he hear: "Don't touch that!" "Leave that alone!" "You can't have that!" The old restraints are now removed; the inheritance is his; he has become of age.

Bondage of the Law

The Law with its many ordinances brought the people into bondage. This is because they did not know justification by faith. They went about to establish their righteousness by the works of the Law. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3). Some people today are also taking this course by not coming to Christ for forgiveness. They try to live up to the Golden Rule. They even force themselves to abstain from some of those things that are evil. All this but brings them into bondage. If they would come to Christ and be saved, their very nature would be changed and they would know the liberties of being sons of God.

This means that a Christian does not do the things that are sinful, for the desire for sin is taken out. The bondage of Satan is removed, and he finds himself at liberty to live, as he desires. This is true liberty. A sinner is in bondage to sin. He may find himself bound by the habit of drink. He wants to quit but is unable to do so. When he comes to Christ the chains of sin are broken. Thus being set free a man is able to live the way he wanted to when he was under Satan but could not because he was bound. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Should one whom Christ has set free be desirous of being in bondage again? Should one who has been bound by drink and set free desire again to try to live right in his own strength after knowing the liberty from evil desires?

False Prophets

"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years." Could we not say this of those who observe the Jewish Sabbath today? They would bring us back under the bondage of the Law from which Christ has set us free. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:4).

When Paul first preached the Gospel to the Galatians they were very enthusiastic about it. They received him as an "angel of God." They were willing to pluck out their eyes and give them to him. Why the change now?

False prophets had come in and turned their hearts from the truth. Those who were zealous for the Law of Moses wanted to bring these Galatians into the bondage of the Law. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." But how sad it is to see one turned aside from the Truth and be zealous in a false movement! Jehovah's Witnesses are turning out their false literature by ton's-loads. Communism has printed enough of its devilish propaganda to put pages in the hand of every man, woman, and child in the world. Should not we as children of the King be zealously affected by and for the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Isaac and Ishmael

Abraham had two sons. Isaac was by Sarah and was a child of promise, being of miraculous birth. Ishmael was by Hagar

none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

QUESTIONS

1. What is Christian liberty?
2. To what are the Jews under the Law likened?
3. How were they freed from bondage?
4. What was turning them again into bondage?
5. To what are Abraham's two sons likened?
6. How can the term "Christian liberty" be misconstrued?
7. Explain how all the Law is fulfilled in one word.
8. What happens to those who attempt to be justified by the Law?
9. Tell how zeal can be both good and bad.
10. What was Paul's attitude toward those who tried to get the Galatians to keep the Law?

(Agar), a bondwoman, and was by natural birth. This is a symbol of the natural and spiritual Jews. They, which are born of the flesh and are under the bondage of the Law are symbolical of the children of Ishmael. The spiritual children of Abraham are those under grace and are children of the heavenly Jerusalem and are not in bondage. "What saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." How thankful we should be for the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free! This freedom comes from a miraculous spiritual birth -- the new birth.

God said to Abraham: "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Genesis 22:17). The spiritual children of Abraham have been likened to the stars of the heaven, while the natural children of Abraham have been likened to the sands of the sea shore.

No Middle Ground

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." The Bible makes it very clear that we cannot "straddle the fence." If we are under grace we are not under the Law. If we are justified by the Law we have fallen from grace. Some people today are trying in their own strength by their own works to make Heaven. They need to be justified by faith -- that is, be born again -- in order to be saved.

"Ye did run well." What a pity that a good start should be fouled up by false teachers! We today must be on guard against any deviation from the true Gospel that was planted in our heart by those who have sown the seed of the Apostles' doctrine. On the Day of Pentecost God gave the Holy Ghost to those 120 who were of one accord. This was the beginning of the "early rain." He also poured out His Spirit upon a group of believers in Los Angeles in 1906, which was the beginning of the "latter rain." God set His seal of approval upon the doctrines of the Word of God as set forth by the Apostolic Faith. Since that time false teachers have endeavoured to set aside some of the cardinal truths contained in the Scripture. God has not changed, the Bible has not changed, neither has the Apostolic Faith changed its original tenets of faith.

Paul had no time for compromise. He said, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). Paul preached, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," but he did not extend a hand to the devil or any of his emissaries. Christian love and fellowship are wonderful but do not extend to false prophets or those who fail to give heed to the whole Word of God.

Love

True liberty is marvellous, but it is not a licence to walk after the flesh or earthly desires. With salvation comes not only liberty, but love. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour." "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Romans 13:8, 9).