

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians

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Chapter Nine -

The Bondage of the Law

Verses 1-3: **"Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we (Jews - Paul and his Jewish brethren), when we were children (that is, when the Dispensation of Law was running its course), WERE IN BONDAGE UNDER THE ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD."**

Face it, beloved: The saint in the Old Testament era was a babe . . . immature, not realizing the glory and the fulness of his future inheritance in CHRIST. The Old Testament saint looked forward to the coming of the LAMB of GOD. We on this side of Calvary know that He HAS come and we have the precious written Word to prove it. We also have the testimony in our hearts, because the HOLY GHOST abides in the bosom of every born again child of GOD (Romans 8:9).

The Old Testament saint was like a child who, though heir to a large estate, is unable during his infancy to exercise his heirship or lordship. The Old Testament saint lived in shadows . . . he lived in the dimness of the Law. He was a child of GOD in his relationship, for: he was born from above and born of GOD; but he did not yet have the relationship of sonship. He was in slavery under "**the elements of the world,**" or the Law. We have the glorious light of CHRIST who said, "**I am the Light of the world**" (John 8:12). Today under Grace the shadows are gone, and we enjoy the revelation given to Paul and the other writers of the marvelous books of the New Testament.

WE DIFFERENCE? Verses 4 and 5 explain: **"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."**

The Cross of the Lord JESUS stands between the Law of Moses and the grace of GOD. BEFORE the Cross of JESUS . . . before the shedding of the Blood of the LAMB without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, there was no such thing as putting away sin. GOD pardoned the sinner, He suspended the judgment against the sinner, He covered the sin of the sinner; but this all pointed to the anticipated coming of THE REDEEMER, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Before Calvary, GOD pardoned the sinner and forgave his sin only upon the promise of the coming of the LAMB of GOD, the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Before the Cross there was no FULL AND COMPLETE FORGIVENESS FOR THE SINNER;

but AFTER the Cross of JESUS, sin is put away; sin is blotted out in the Blood, washed away in the Blood . . . and our robes are made white in the Blood (Revelation 1:5; Hebrews 9:22; I John 1:7).

Before the Lord JESUS died, was buried, and rose again "**according to the Scriptures,**" all saints were placed in Sheol when they died. They remained there until JESUS was crucified and spent three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. On the third day He arose - and when He arose He led captivity captive . . . He brought the spirits of the saints out of Sheol and carried them to the Paradise far above all Heavens (Ephesians 4:7-11). Please read Psalm 16:9-10.

Since Calvary, the believer goes (at death) directly into the presence of GOD in Heaven " . . . **to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.**" The beggar Lazarus died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. To the thief on the Cross, JESUS said, "**Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.**" The SPIRIT of the believer does not go to Sheol in this day, but to be absent from the body is to be instantaneously, immediately, with the Lord JESUS.

In Genesis 3:15 GOD promised the seed of the woman. From that moment until the day JESUS was born, all hell did everything possible to prevent the seed that would bruise the serpent's head. Nevertheless, JESUS was born as prophesied. A virgin conceived (in spite of what Bishop Pike and others say) and brought forth a son, and called His name JESUS. The HOLY GHOST overshadowed Mary and she brought forth a son named Emmanuel, interpreted "**God with us.**"

The coming of JESUS was declared in Genesis 3:15. The promise was fulfilled on schedule " . . . **WHEN THE FULNESS OF THE TIME WAS COME.**" The birth of JESUS was also as prophesied - or promised - by Jehovah GOD in the Garden. "**GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON, MADE OF A WOMAN, MADE UNDER THE LAW.**" GOD was the Father of JESUS. No man had any part in His birth. The virgin Mary conceived when she was overshadowed by the HOLY GHOST. (Luke 1; Matthew 1). GOD always does exactly what He promises, exactly as He promised. So - When the fulness of time was come, GOD sent forth His only begotten Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, sent to redeem them that were under the Law, that we "**might receive the adoption of sons**" (The "we" in this verse refers to the Jew, because it was the Jew who was under the Law of Moses. The Law was never given to Gentiles, but only to Israel.)

JESUS came to redeem those who were under the Law, that these people who were in bondage might receive the adoption of sons.

In this glorious Dispensation of the marvelous grace of GOD, Jews, Gentiles, rich, poor, bond, free, learned or unlearned become sons of GOD when they put their faith and trust in the finished work of the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Verse 6: "**And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His SON into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.**"

There are those who teach that it is possible to be saved and yet not possess the HOLY GHOST; but such teaching is false and foreign to the Word of GOD.

- It is the HOLY GHOST who indwells us. Please read I Corinthians 6:19-20. It is the HOLY SPIRIT who enables us to realize our position in CHRIST . . . sons, heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST.

- It is the HOLY SPIRIT who brings us into such a place of intimacy and closeness with GOD that we cry unto Him, "**Abba, Father!**" The word "**Abba**" comes to us from Hebrew, untranslated.

Hebrew authorities tell us that the pure translation of the word means "Papa." I do not know whether or not you called your dad "Papa," but I was reared in an old-fashioned home and we children (nine of us) always referred to our parents as "mama" and "papa." I never called my daddy by the name of "father" or "daddy." I always referred to him as "papa."

Just as the first word a baby learns is either "papa" or "mama," the HOLY SPIRIT would have us also to call upon GOD in the Spirit of sonship, crying, "Papa, Father." The word "papa" is an endearing term, it is tender . . . and the Lord JESUS Himself used the same expression in Gethsemane when He prayed to the Heavenly Father: "**Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt**" (Mark 14:36).

The same HOLY GHOST who abides in our bosom certainly directed the prayer of the Man CHRIST JESUS as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, helping Him to trust Himself unreservedly and wholeheartedly to the Heavenly Father, "Papa, Father"; and to totally depend upon and trust in GOD's will and GOD's judgment.

The HOLY GHOST would have us place our total dependence upon the Heavenly Father, and would lead us tenderly to trust GOD with all of our heart, to call upon the Heavenly Father as a son would speak to his papa. GOD wants us to think of Him as a Father, a Papa, who is concerned about each and every minute detail of our living. Read Romans 8:15.

Verse 7: "**Wherefore thou art no more a servant, BUT A SON; and if a son, then an heir of God through CHRIST.**"

Those who are under Law are servants; but thank GOD, those who are under Grace are sons - born sons of GOD through the finished work of the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

Anyone knows that a servant works for wages. A son works because of love and personal interest in the papa of the family. There is a gigantic difference between working for a boss and working for papa. Under the boss we certainly work with a different spirit; we have a different attitude toward him as compared with our own dear parent. Under the Law (as a boss) the service was commanded - and of course the threat of penalty went along with the command. Under Grace it is our love for our Father that causes us to do what we do joyfully and gladly . . . even to the giving of our money. "**God loveth a cheerful giver,**" and whatever we do we should do diligently from a heart full of cheerfulness for the very privilege of doing what we do to the glory of GOD.

A servant could never call his master "papa" . . . that endearing term is reserved for the children; but Paul uses the expression when referring to sons of GOD praying to the Heavenly Father as

sons . . . **"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear (THAT IS, THE FEAR OF THE LAW OF MOSES); but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"** (Romans 8:15).

In Romans 8:16 Paul reveals a tremendous truth: **"The Spirit (Himself) beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."** The word **"Abba"** is used only by the children of GOD who are saved by grace through faith plus nothing . . . and who live under Grace.

Verses 8 and 9: **"Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 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?"**

Note in the first part of verse 8 the word **"YE."** Paul does not mean the Jews. It is plain that he means the Gentiles. Had he meant the Jews he would have said, **"WE."** The Jews had head-knowledge of GOD under the Law, but Paul says, **"When YE knew not God,"** and certainly he was speaking of the Gentiles. It amazed Paul that these Gentiles would turn again to the beggarly elements after having experienced the marvelous liberty of the grace of GOD (and the peace that Grace brings to the individual heart) after they had been set free from bondage.

Paul could not understand their desire to return to the bondage of the Law.

I imagine these Gentile believers at Galatia were a bit shocked when Paul made the statement that they were turning again to idolatry. I am sure they must have asked among themselves, "How could returning to the Law be idolatry?" They probably made it clear to Paul that they were only taking up the principle of the Law - and surely he would not call this **"weak and beggarly elements."** Paul reminded them that before they were converted, they worshipped false gods and idols. He stated to the believers in Thessalonica, **"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come"** (I Thessalonians 1:9-10).

Paul goes on to warn, "If you Christians go back to Jewish principles, feast days, and the rituals of Judaism, you are certainly, in principle, idolators again! Why would you turn back to idolatry from which GOD has delivered you? How could you do this?" Do not entertain the idea that Paul was saying that the Law was unholy or idolatrous . . . not so at all; but he makes it very clear to the believers, writing in the book of Hebrews:

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:26). Just what does that verse mean . . . "If we go on sinning wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth"? JESUS said, **"I am the truth."** Again He said, **"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth"** (John 14:6; John 17:17).

JESUS is truth, the Word is truth, JESUS and the Word are one. **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made flesh . . ."** The truth is the Word. After we have received the good news of the Gospel, **"there**

remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." In other words, JESUS offered His Blood "**once for all... for ever.**" No other sacrifice can be made . . . He made the supreme sacrifice . . . He satisfied the heart of GOD, the holiness of GOD, the commandments of GOD; therefore, "**there remaineth no more sacrifice.**" After the Galatians had heard about the shed Blood of JESUS, the good news of the Gospel, if they turned from that Gospel back to Judaism they were idolators.

You need not go to Africa, China, Japan, India . . . or to the jungles of Brazil to find idol-worshippers. America is full of them! Thousands of them belong to fashionable denominational churches. There are thousands of church members who worship the building . . . some even worship the steeple. Some worship the pipe organ; some worship the rugs on the floor; some worship the pews. Anything that is foremost in your mind, anything that you spend the most time thinking about and loving, is your idol, regardless of what it is. So - if the Galatians returned to the rituals of Judaism, they were idolators.

Today, when professing Christians take up the Law, with its external ceremonies and shadows, when they adopt the practice of the Law in supposed-to-be Christian worship, it is idolatry.

We are saved by GOD's grace, through faith. We are kept by the power of GOD. "**The just shall live by faith**" . . . and "**whatsoever is not of faith is sin.**" This business of placing articles in the church or in the home to help in worship, is idolatry, regardless of what you think of it or what your preacher has to say about it. Such practice is not only in the Catholic church, but it is being taken up by thousands of Protestant churches. Any trinket, any image, anything - regardless of what it is - if it has any religious element at all, it is idolatrous.

Supposing a person were to say, "I find myself very cold in worshipping GOD, and I want something to arouse my soul; what more proper thing could I have than a picture of my SAVIOUR, that as I look upon Him and upon His crown of thorns, I may feel more deeply His love and have my heart's affections more drawn out to Him?" That is idolatry. To make use of anything in worship to increase feelings or religious awe, or to see with the eye or to hear with the ear, to assist in worship using the fallen nature to produce religious feelings or to help in religious worship is certainly idolatry.

Certainly it is opposed to naked faith. Faith accepts GOD because He is GOD. Faith accepts JESUS because of what GOD tells us about Him in the Bible. Faith believes without seeing, feeling, tasting, or smelling. Faith does not ask for proof. Faith accepts without proof. The Bible begins thus:

"**IN THE BEGINNING GOD. . .**" (Genesis 1:1). I have written in the margin of my first Bible, these words: "I believe all the rest!" Why not write something like that in your Bible? If GOD said it, you can believe it. You may not understand it . . . you may never understand it . . . but "**the just shall live by faith**" - not by wisdom nor by understanding. "**The just shall live by faith**" . . . not by proof nor by feelings. "**The just shall live by faith!**" We do not need any little trinkets in the home, on the dashboard in our automobile, around our neck or in our purse or billfold. All we need is the HOLY GHOST in our heart by faith - and if He abides in our bosom we are more than conquerors through the Lord JESUS who loved us, because we are kept by the power of GOD; and "**this is the victory that overcometh the world, EVEN OUR FAITH!**"

It is an insult to Almighty GOD to use the weak and beggarly elements to assist in worshipping a holy GOD who is an eternal Spirit and who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

Verse 10: **"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years."**

The Galatians were swiftly returning to formal religious systems; and cold, formal religious systems can produce only dead services and superficial worship. GOD hates such "carryings on"; GOD longs for true worship from the heart. It is a sad thing when a church has a name of being alive because of the beautiful edifice, the great crowds, the robed choir, the pipe organ and the chimes in the steeple! But John tells us in Revelation 3:1 that a certain group had a name that they were alive - although they were dead. I am sure we have many of those groups with us today - sad but so. Beautiful buildings, beautiful services, an educated minister with all of his religious garb and program; all of the risings and sittings, all of the beautiful sayings and the "singing in" and "singing out" of the services is not necessarily pleasing to Almighty GOD. He wants to be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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