

GALATIANS
Freedom in Christ
Session 6

October 21, 2020

A Tussle between

- **Church Leaders**
- **“fake news” and the facts**
- **the relationship between the old and the new**

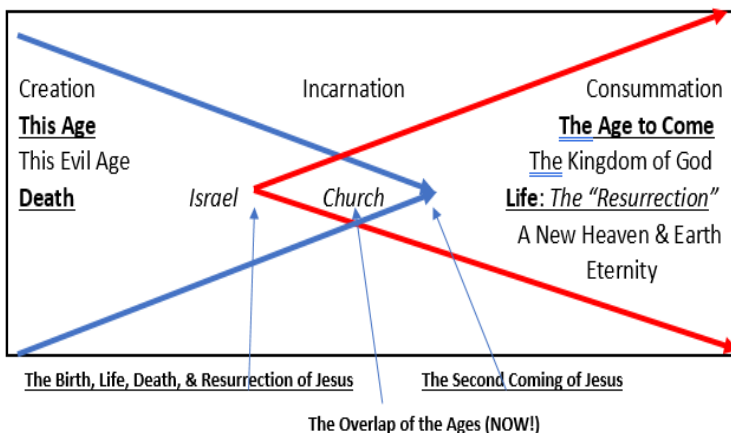
involving

- **Differing expectations about and means of access to God’s presence and blessing**
- **Differing understandings of God’s righteous and gracious actions**
- **Differing understandings of the primary human response desired by God**
- **Based on different “spheres” of thinking and allegiance within which people belong . . e.g. . .**

Spheres of Belonging

1. **Relational**
→ Family, Team, Workplace
2. **Temporal**
→ Era in History

THE TWO AGES OF ANCIENT JUDAISM

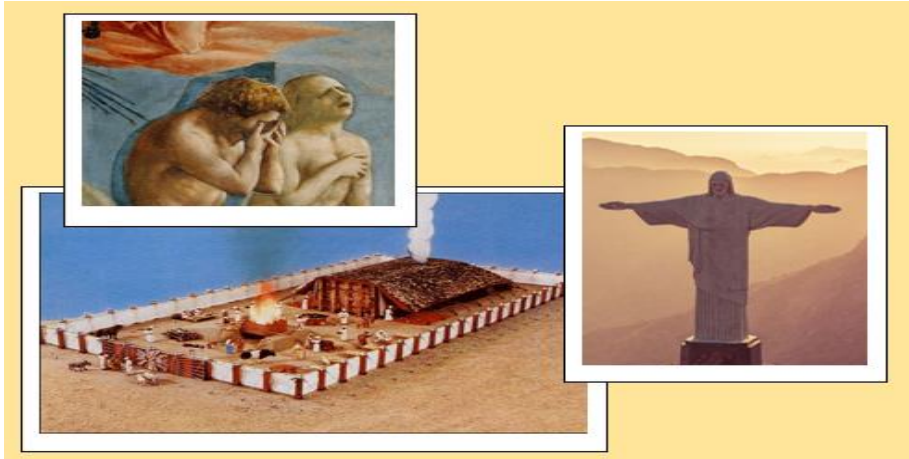


3. **Constitutional** (*Covenantal*)

→ **Nation, Profession, Religion**

- a. Standards (codes, laws)
- b. Expectations (unwritten?)
- c. Rituals (symbols, celebrations)

4. **Biblical . . Eden, Tabernacle, Jesus, Spirit, Kingdom of God**



YOUR Sphere → (esp. covenant)

- DETERMINES relationships . .
- “righteousness w/ God & People
- a. **Garden/Adam** (*thrown out*)
- b. **Abrahamic/Moses/Law (Old)**
 - **Symbol?** *Circumcision*
 - **How?** “works of the Law”
 - **Community?** Israel
- c. **Jesus (New)/Spirit**
 - **Symbol?** *Baptism*
 - **How?** Faith in Faithfulness of Jesus
 - **Community?** Church, Kingdom

CHAPTER 4

To Paul: The “sphere” of the Mosaic Law (Covenant) is slavery compared to the “new”

1. Slavery to death (*Genesis 2:17*)
2. Slavery in terms of “how it works” (*rules rather than relationship*)
– but some “laws/rules” liberate!
3. Slavery in terms of “status before God” (*slave or legitimate child, heir? minor or adult?*)

If the old is “slavery” . . .

1. WHY THE LAW as Phase 1?

Answer: “Temporal”

-- In society

- we have laws for childhood
- and then for “coming of age”

4:1 My point is this:

heirs, as long as they are minors,

are no better than slaves.

-- though they are the owners of all the property; --

²but they remain under guardians and trustees *until the date* set by the father.

³So with **us** (*Jews*);

- while **we** (*Jews*) **were minors**, we were enslaved
to the elemental spirits of the world
(*the rules and regulations of the Old Covenant Law*)

- ⁴But when “*the fullness of time*” had come,

God sent his Son,

born of a woman,

born under the law (as temple/tabernacle covenant),

⁵in order to redeem those (*Jews*) who were under the law

(*under Gen 2:17? as well as temple/ tabernacle covenant*),

so that **we** (all kinds of people together) might receive adoption as children.

The “Fullness of Time” --Alexander the Great – 325BC



Roman Empire – 1st Century AD



⁶And because **you** (*Gentiles too*) are children,
God has sent the Spirit of his Son (*the Shekinah Glory!*)
into our (*Jew & Gentile*) **hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”**

⁷**So you** (*Gentiles*)

- ***are no longer a slave but a child,*** (*God is your real “Father” too!*)
- and if a child then ***also an heir,*** through God.

⁸**Formerly,** (*in the old “age” before Christ*)

when you (*Gentiles*) **did not know God,**

you (too) were **enslaved** to beings that by nature are not gods.

⁹**Now,** however, that **you** (*Gentiles*)

have **come to know God,**

or rather to be **known by God,**

how can **you** **turn back again** to the weak and beggarly “elemental spirits”?

(*see v. 10 = **principles that look religious – including “the Law” but gain nothing***)

- How can **you** want to be **enslaved** to them again? →

- e.g., ¹⁰**You** are observing *special days, and months, and seasons, and years*.

2. PAUL'S PAIN **IN THE RELATIONSHIP**

4:11-20

**4¹⁹ My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth
until Christ is formed in you (all)**

see Colossians 3:9

⁹Do not lie to one another,
seeing that
you have stripped off the old person (Adam-like) with its practices
¹⁰and have clothed yourselves with the new person (Christ-like),
which is being renewed in knowledge
according to the image of its creator.

3. Choosing Faith & Freedom over **Works & Slavery** **Because of the OT Law as Scripture**

²¹Tell me, **you** (*Gentiles*) who desire to be subject to the law (*as the temple/ tabernacle covenant*)
will you not listen to the law? (*as Scripture*)

= “e.g., Listen to the Law as Scripture in the story in **Genesis 16:**
→ ‘*Abraham has 2 wives & 2 sons*’”

- Paul Interprets this “Law as Scripture” passage *as an allegory*
- Emphasizing: **Slavery vs Freedom**

So what's the passage about? . . .

- Abraham's first wife, Sarah, is barren (and old!)
- Abraham follows an old custom of making an heir by fathering a child through a slave or servant, Hagar
- Hagar conceives and bears Ishmael
- God makes a promise to Abraham that first wife, Sarah, despite physical impossibility, will have a child
- God keeps the promise -- Sarah conceives and bears Isaac

- Sarah drives out (the slave and second wife) Hagar and Ishmael

Paul sees the story “allegorically” . .

ISHMAEL/HAGAR

→ Paul links Hagar/Ishmael’s descendants to the Jews & to “the Law-Based access to God” in the present “Earthly Jerusalem”

= Son of Slave Woman, Hagar

= *Natural Child of “the flesh”*

= *Physical descendant of Abe*

(Hagar, literally is from Mt Sinai, the place where the Old Covenant Law with Moses was established)

ISAAC/SARAH

→ Paul links Isaac/Sarah’s descendants to the true Jerusalem
(the experience of God’s presence in heaven – available NOW by faith in God’s promises – through Jesus)

= Son of → Free Woman, Sarah

= *Child of Promise*

Unexpected Miracle Descendant!

Reading Ch.4

²⁶**But the other woman** (Sarah)

corresponds to the Jerusalem above;

she is free, and she is our mother.

²⁷**For it is written**, (in the Law in Is.54:1)

“Rejoice, you childless one,

*for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous
than the children of the one who is married.”*

²⁸Now **you** (Gentile) brothers & sisters **are children of the promise, like Isaac.** (along with those of physical descent)

²⁹But (let this sink in!) just **as at that time** . . .

the child who was born according to the flesh persecuted

the child who was born according to the Spirit,

so it is now also.

³⁰But **what does the scripture say?**

(as the Law says in Genesis 21:10; Note – IT’S Sarah speaking!)

“Drive out the slave and her child;

*(= “Drive out these false teachers and their teaching! There’s
only one ‘true son’”)*

for the child of the slave will not share the inheritance

with (“my son Isaac”) the child of the free woman.”

³¹So then, friends, **we** (non-physically descended Gentiles)

are children not of the slave woman
but of the free woman.

4. Warnings about the Use and Abuse of Christian Freedom/Liberty CHAPTER 5:1-4

(5:1-12) Warning about not using your freedom to go back in time to the Old Covenant

5¹ For **freedom** Christ has set us **free**. Stand firm, therefore, and do not (*use your freedom to*) submit again to a yoke of **slavery**.

(5:13-26) Warning about not using your freedom to abandon the “moral life”

5¹³ For you were called to **freedom**,
brothers and sisters;
only **do not** use your **freedom**
as an opportunity for ‘the flesh’ (= not just self-indulgence)

ABUSING FREEDOM I: Gal.5:2-12

→ Remember the charge laid against Peter? (Gal. 2:18)?
= **Do not “build up again what you once tore down”**

²Listen! I, Paul, am telling **you** that

- if you let **yourselves** be circumcised, (*= carry the “flag” of the old covenant*) Christ will be of no benefit to **you**.

³Once again I testify to

- every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire law.
(= rebuild the tabernacle/temple + all its associated rules)

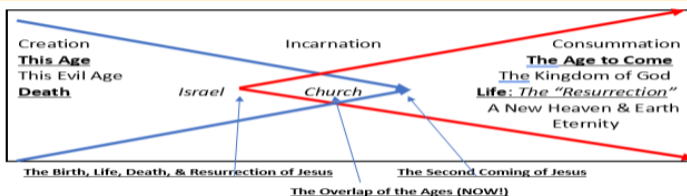
⁴**You** who want to be put in a right relationship with God (*justified /made righteous*) by the law (*as the temple/ tabernacle covenant*)

- *have cut yourselves off from Christ (the new temple);*
- *you have fallen away from grace (gift).*

⁵**For -- through the Spirit,**

(the new intimate experience of God who assures us of who/whose we are)
by faith,

we (Jews and Gentiles all of us) eagerly wait for the hope of right-relatedness. (*righteousness;*)



There is more to come in God's Future:

→ the final right-relationship, face-to-face, comes with resurrection

⁶For in Christ Jesus

neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything;

- **the only thing that counts is faith working through love.**

→ Our faith/love? OR God's?

→ What I have done for God? OR What God has done for me?

PERSONAL AGAIN

⁷You were running well; **who** prevented you
from obeying the truth?

⁸Such persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.
(Let me remind you of Jesus on the Pharisees):

⁹*"A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough."*

¹⁰I am confident about you in the Lord that you will not think
otherwise.

But **whoever it is that is confusing you** will pay the penalty.

¹¹*But my friends, why am I still being persecuted if I am still
preaching circumcision?*

In that case the offense of the cross has been removed.

¹²I wish **those who unsettle you** would castrate themselves!
(mmmm!?)

FREEDOM II: Gal.5:13ff

→ **do not mistake "freedom" for moral "license"**

¹³**For you were called to freedom**, brothers and sisters;

only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for "the flesh"

*(not just self-indulgence, but all activities that seem to humans to be right
but do not good)*

but through love

become slaves to one another. (thE only legitimate slavery!)

¹⁴For the whole law is summed up

(by Jesus) in a single commandment,

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

¹⁵If, however, *(what has Paul heard about the fellowship within the church?)*

you bite and devour one another,

take care that **you** are not consumed by one another.

¹⁶ **BUT I say, Live (= walk) by the Spirit,**

(assume you are fully in God's presence, NOW!)

and do not gratify the desires of the flesh.

THAT IS: Even with The Spirit

→ There is a Spiritual/Moral Battle

- ¹⁷*For what the flesh desires -- is opposed to the Spirit,*
- *and what the Spirit desires -- is opposed to the flesh;*
- *for these are opposed to each other,*

to hinder (prevent) you from doing what you want.

¹⁸But *(even if there is still a battle)*

if **you** are led by the Spirit, *(you have a great advantage – the possibility of real change and freedom because)*

You are not under the law – Now . .

(let me put it like this):

¹⁹the works of the flesh

(the world limited by human horizons and human power/ability)

are obvious:

- Sexuality: *fornication, impurity, licentiousness,*
- Relationship with God: ²⁰*idolatry, sorcery,*
- Relationship with others: *enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹envy,*
- Relationship with Self: *drunkenness, carousing,*

and things like these.

I am warning you, as I warned you before:

-- those who do such things

-- will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²By contrast . . . the fruit of the Spirit is

love, joy, peace,

patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³gentleness,

and self-control.

There is no law *(rule? scripture? covenant?)*

against such things.

= *Unlimited Possibilities!*

= *True Freedom!*

= *We're back in the Garden of Eden (see Gen. 2:16; 3:2)*

= all kinds of fruits – including the “tree of life” -- are open to us

²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus

have crucified **the flesh** (see v.19)

(with its passions and desires).

Colossians 3:5-17 (*parallels Galatians*)

⁵Put to death (“crucify”), therefore, whatever in you is earthly: *fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry).*

⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient.

⁷These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life.

⁸But now you must **get rid of** all such things —*anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth.* **⁹Do not lie** to one another, **seeing that**

- you have stripped off the old self/person (Adam) with its practices
- ¹⁰and have clothed yourselves with the new self/person (Christ) which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.

A. ¹¹In that renewal there is **no longer**

- Greek and Jew,
- circumcised and uncircumcised,
- barbarian, Scythian,
- slave and free;

(*some of the transformation accomplished by the Spirit is in the “fleshly” way we see other people*)

but **Christ is all and in all!** (*our lens*)

B. ¹²As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved,

clothe yourselves with *compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.*

¹³Bear with one another and,

if anyone has a complaint against another, ***forgive each other***; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. (*see Lord’s Prayer ending*)

¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

¹⁵And ***let the “peace of Christ rule in your hearts,”*** to which indeed you were called in the one body. And ***be thankful.***

How?

1. ¹⁶Let the **word of Christ** dwell in you richly;
 2. **teach and admonish one another** in all wisdom;
 3. and with **gratitude** in your hearts
 4. **sing** psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs **to God**.
- ¹⁷And *whatever you do, in word or deed,*
5. do everything **in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Chapter 5 concludes . .

²⁵If **we** live (= have found eternal life)
by the Spirit,

let us also be *in line w/ the elementary principles of*
(*guided by*) the Spirit.

²⁶Let **us** not

- become conceited,
- competing against one another,
- envying one another.

(see -- Jesus: James & John?)