



## **Previously in Galatians**

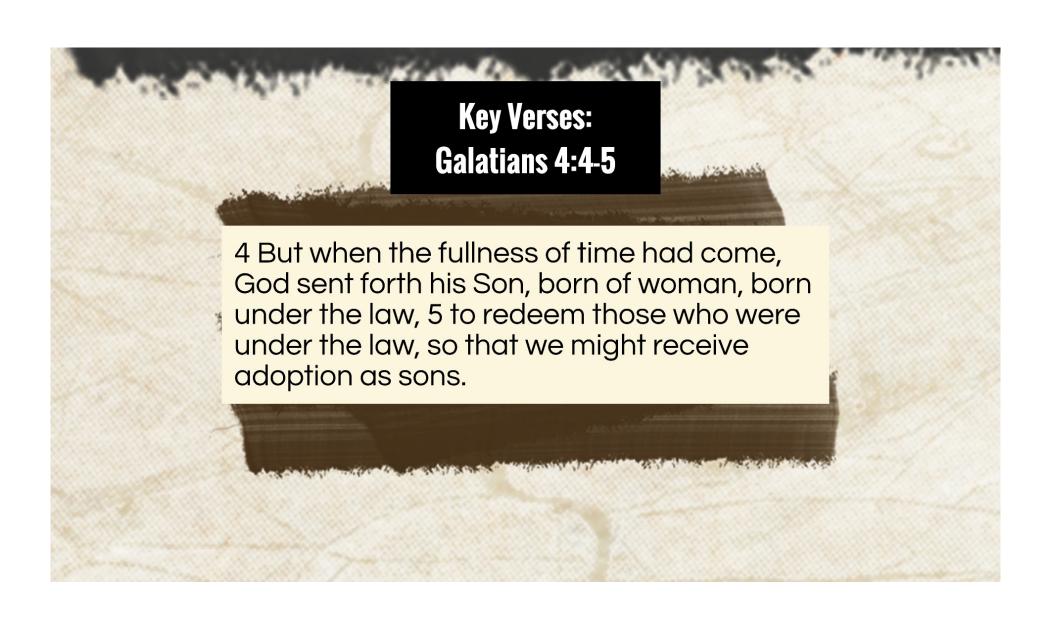
- Paul has been dealing with the impact of false teachers that came to be known as the Judaizers.
- They crept into churches that he and Barnabas planted on their firsts missionary journey.
- Their goal was to get the new Gentile converts to embrace Jewish laws and customs in all the details.
- Paul's has been reminding the churches that his gospel is the same one preached by the apostles in Jerusalem.
- In fact, it is a message that goes all the way back to Abraham that God declares us righteous by faith.



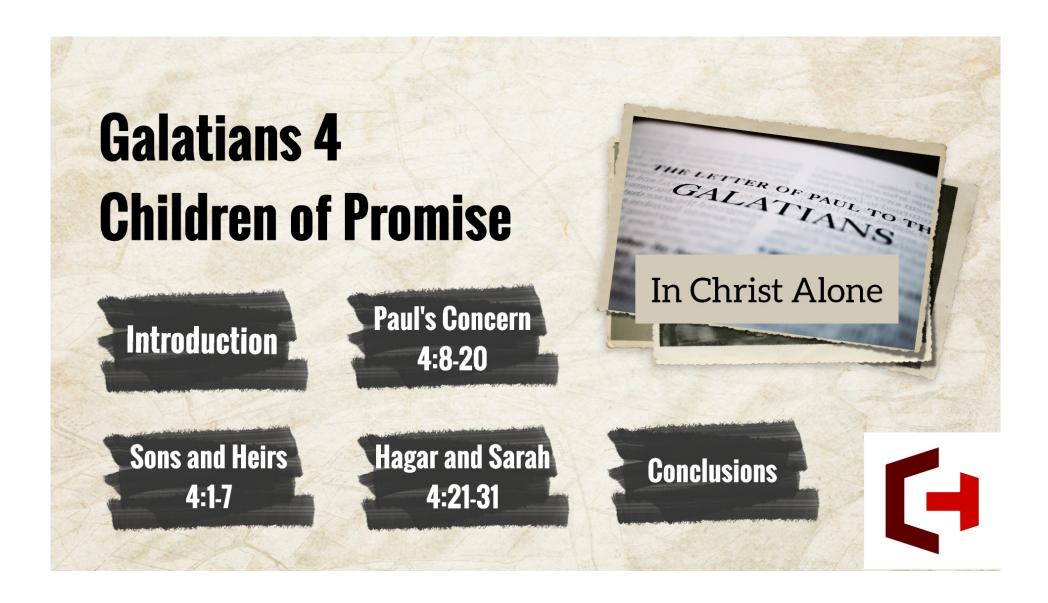
## What's in Galatians 4?

- In Galatians 4 Paul points out that prior to the gospel, we were all like children, with no more rights than slaves.
- Now that Christ has come, it is as if we have grown up and taken our place with Christ as sons and heirs.
- Paul will go on to express his grat concern for the Galatian believers who are obviously being deceived.
- Finally he gives and illustration using the two wives of **Abraham**, **Hagar and Sarah** and their sons, Ishmael and Isaac.









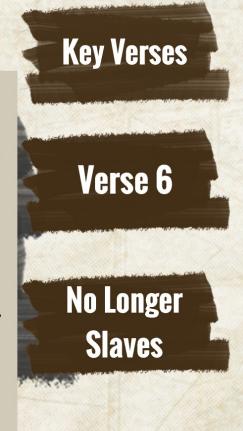
# **Sons and Heirs 4:1-7**

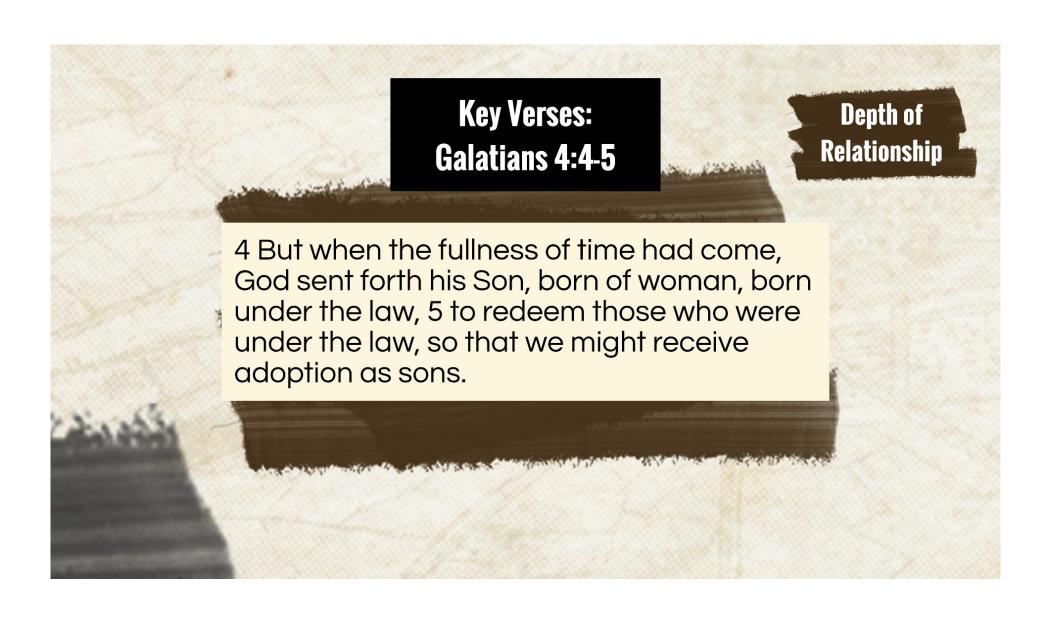
# 4:1-2 A child is no different from a slave ... under guardians and managers

• The legal heir to the largest fortune cannot, while still a minor, exercise the authority of an adult.

#### 4:3 enslaved to the elementary principles

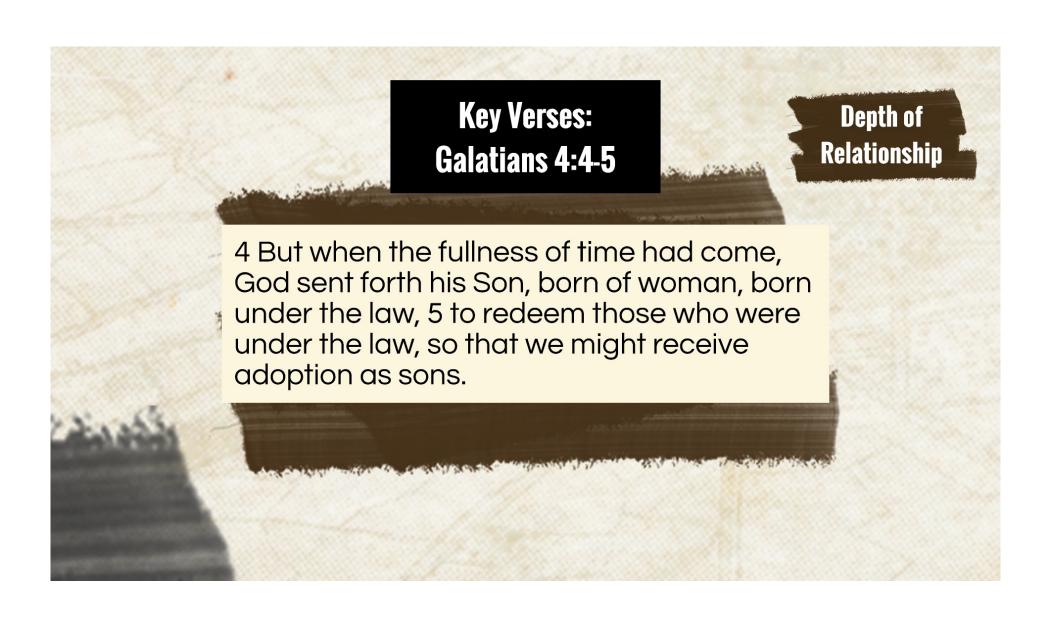
- The wording Paul uses here refers to "basic elements" - like letters of the alphabet, the ABCs.
- It also refers to basic philosophical and religious teachings or elementary religious experiences.
- Finally, in the spiritual realm, it can refer to lower-level spiritual beings - meaning demons.





## **Depth of Relationship**

- When we consider that we were lost in our sins, we have to admit that God saving us at all is already a remarkable benefit.
- He did not have to adopt us as sons.
- We might have been saved individuals, free to serve him, much as the holy angels serve him right now.
- But God did more.
- He saved us from the punishment we deserved and then went one step farther.
- · He made us his own children.
- We can now call him Father, even as Jesus did.



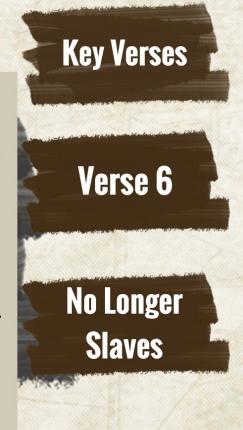
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### Verse 6

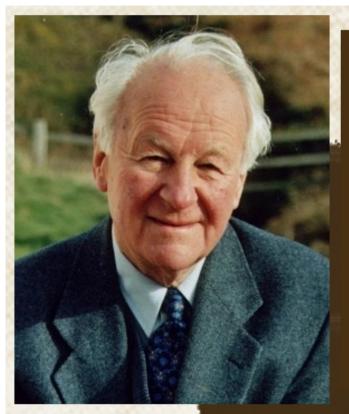
And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

- God's Holy Spirit gives us the assurance that we have been adopted into the family of God.
- We need not worry about being rejected by God because he has changed our legal status.
- We now belong to him as his dear children.

From John Stott

From Timothy George

From Chuck Smith



God's purpose was not only to secure our sonship by His Son, but to assure us of it by His Spirit. He sent His Son that we might have the status of sonship, and He sent His Spirit that we might have an experience of it.

- John Stott , in The Message of Galatians: Only One Way

John Stott (1921 - 2011)

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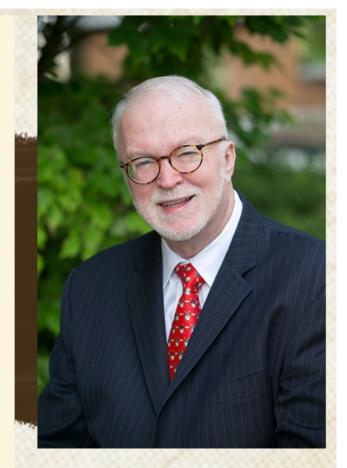
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The Holy Spirit is the sign and pledge of our adoption so that by his presence in our hearts we are truly convinced that God is for us, not against us, that indeed he is our Heavenly Father. The evidence Paul gave for this wonderful assurance is not that through the Spirit we are empowered to do miraculous works, receive ecstatic visions, speak in tongues, or any other kind of sensational phenomena. Rather, the first, most basic indication of our adoption is that we have a new form of address for God ... "Abba, Father"



Timothy George, Beeson Divinity School

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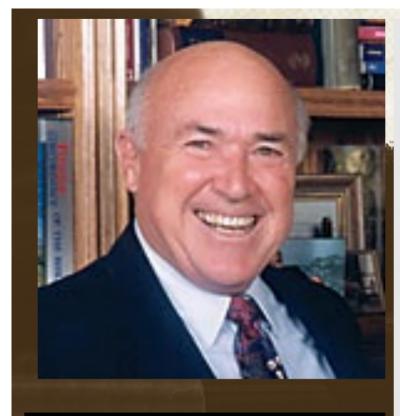
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Chuck Smith (1927-2013), founding pastor of the Calvary Chapel Movement

The word *Abba is the Hebrew* word for father. But it's more like our English word, "daddy," because it's a term of endearment. It's a term of closeness. it's a term of coziness ... God desires to have a close relationship with us, where He touches us and can be touched by us. But, also, realizing who God is - the awesome power, authority, the eternal, omnipotent, omniscient God - there is always that reverence and respect ... It's a fine balance.

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## **No Longer Slaves**

- The Jews learned the basics of religion through the elementary principles of the law.
- The Gentiles would have had their pagan beliefs or the teachings of the philosophers.
- In either case, now that Christ has come, it is vital not to remain subservient to these elementary principles.
- To do so now is in reality to be held captive to demonic forces.
- You can bet the enemy of our souls does not want us enjoying the benefits of God's grace.

Bondservants of Jesus

## **Bondervants of Jesus**

- If we are no longer slaves, why do Paul and the other apostles consistently refer to themselves as "bondservants [as in servants or slaves] of Jesus Christ"? (For example Romans 1:1)
- The answer can possibly be found in the concept of voluntary slavery found in **Deuteronomy 15**.
- In this instance, when the master was required to let the Hebrew slave go free, the slave had the option to stay for life.
- In a situation where there is love and security, we can imagine that sticking with the master might be the best option of all.
- We can ask ourselves, are we truly free to not serve Jesus?
- Yes, of course, but is that kind of freedom really what we want?

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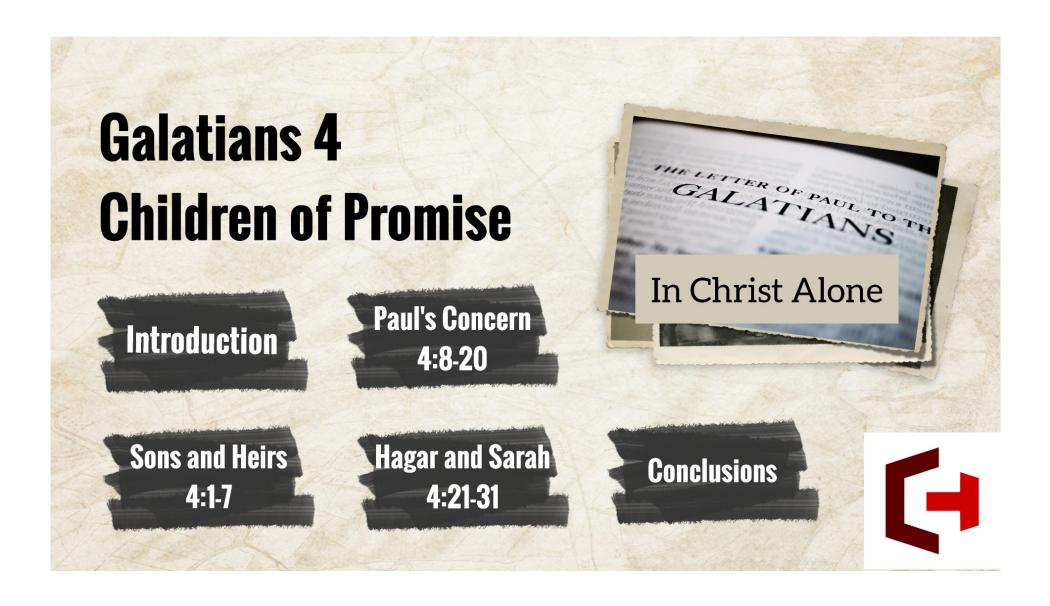
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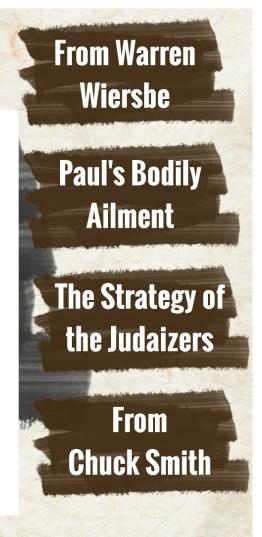
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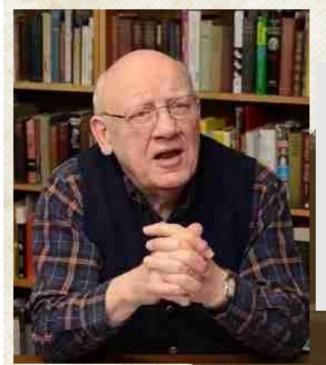




## Paul's Concern 4:8-20

- 3:8-9 Here Paul makes the connection between the "elementary principles" and slavery to demons.
- 3:10 These would have been the Jewish holidays, the Sabbaths, and so forth.
- 3:11-12 Paul considered himself free from these practices, so why should Gentiles embrace them?
- 3:13-20 Paul remembers his original relationship with the Galatian believers.
- What happened? They are being cut off from Paul by the deceitful intentions of the false teachers.



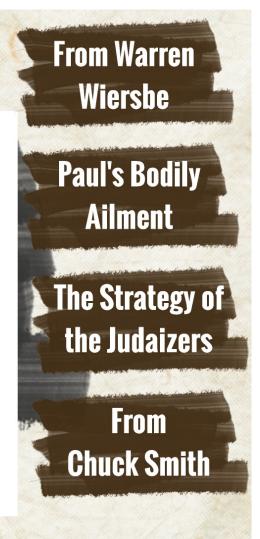


One of the tragedies of legalism is that it gives the appearance of spiritual maturity when, in reality, it leads the believer back into a "second childhood" of Christian experience.

Warren Wiersbe (1929 - 2019), pastor and Bible teacher.

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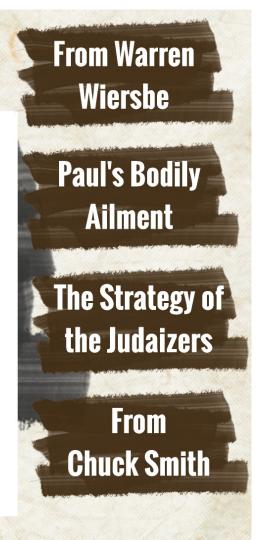


## **Paul's Bodily Ailment**

- It is possible the "bodily ailment" Paul speaks of (v.13) is the same as his "thorn in the flesh" from **2 Corinthians 12:7**.
- Maybe it had something to do with his eyes? (v.15)
- Evidently Paul first preached the gospel in Galatia due to this illnesss perhaps he wanted to travel farther but was unable.
- We are not told this in **Acts**, but it seems to be the case based on what Paul says here.
- Both Jews and Gentiles in those days would have considered Paul's sickliness a sign that he lacked favor with God.
- And yet, at the time, the Galatians received Paul graciously and responded positively to his message.

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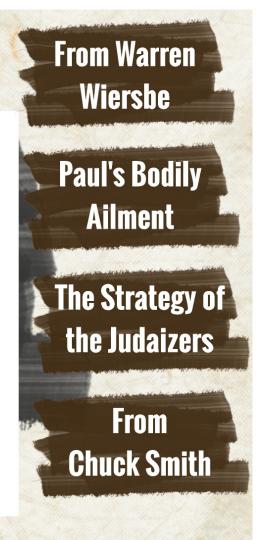


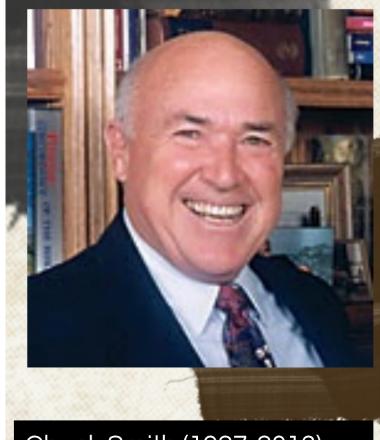
## The Strategy of the Judaizers

- In **v.17** Paul hints at the way the Judaizers weaseled their way into the hearts of the Galatians.
  - 1. They started by "making much" of the Galatians through flattery and excessive personal attention.
  - 2. Eventually they would begin to "shut out" those who responded to them cutting them off from Paul's original message and any other believers who stayed loyal to Paul.
  - 3. Their end game was to have people under their sway who would "make much of them" expressing a highly exclusive devotion to the false teachers.
- This is a common method used by cults, false religions and imbalanced churches.
- They start with something that looks like love but ends by gaining adherents to a personality cult of the leaders.

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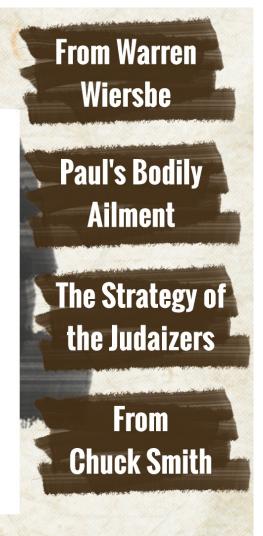


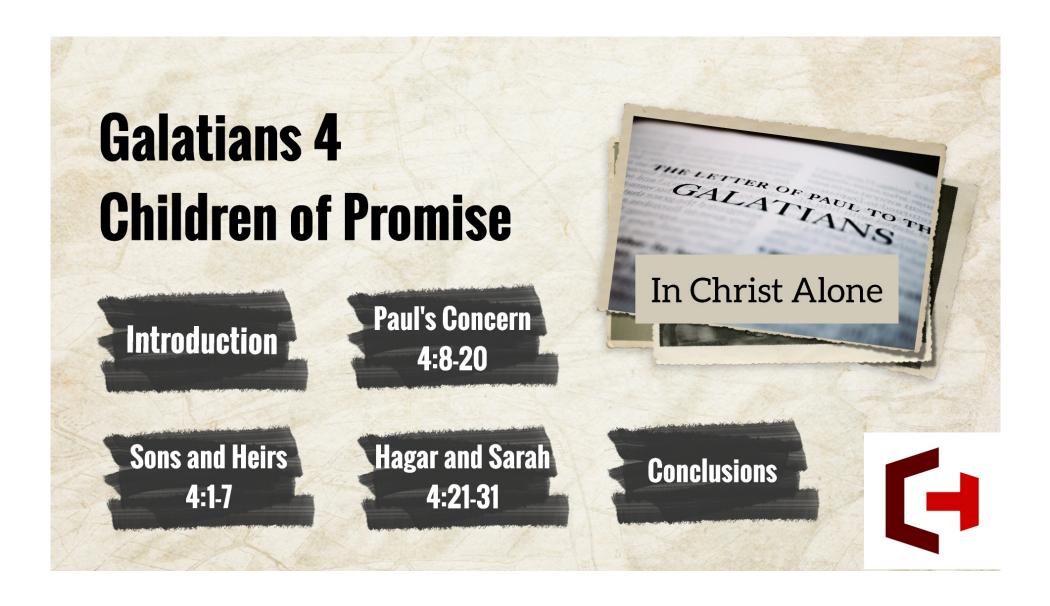
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Here the Galatians were little children. They were not well grounded in the faith ... false teachers had come in bringing heresies and upsetting these babes. And Paul's heart went out to them ... Paul's desire was to bring them into a full relationship with God through Jesus Christ. He desired to see their llives transformed by the indwelling presence and power of Christ in them. Thus, in prayer, Paul was laboring to this end. [See v.19]

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- 4:21-23 Abraham had two sons by two women. This sets the stage for Paul's illustration.
- 4:24-27 Paul now compares the two women to two separate covenants.
  - Hagar is like the covenant of Sinai the law.
  - Sarah is like the new covenant associated with the New Jerusalem where all are saved by God's grace.
- 4:28-31 In the Genesis story, Ishmael the older son, was making fun of the little child Isaac.
- Sarah asked Abraham to kick them out of the house and God sided with Sarah.

#### Two Sons by Two Women

- Back in **Genesis**, God gave **Abraham** a promise that he would have a son, even though he and **Sarah** were childless and getting old.
- While they were waiting, Abraham had a son, Ishmael, through natural means with the slave **Hagar**.
- Sarah encouraged this as it was something people did in those days.
- Later, Isaac was born to Sarah, with God's supernatural intervention when Abraham was 100 years old. He was the promised son.
- Ishmael "was born according to the flesh," through a plan that Abraham and the women made up nothing supernatural about it.

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#### Two Women and Two Covenants

- Hagar was the slave woman while Sarah was free. Sarah was the one who received the promise.
- Hagar and her children are like the covenant given on Sinai, which can now only give birth to people in bondage.
- As long as the Hebrew nation (the earthly Jerusalem) desires to stay under the law from Sinai, they will not be free.
- On the other hand, there is another covenant, a new covenant, instituted by Christ and associated with the Jerusalem from above
   the heavenly New Jerusalem.
- This is the new people God is forming by supernatural means.

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#### Two Sons but Only One Heir

- Ishmael, the son born according to the flesh, apparently resented the young child Isaac, the son of the promise.
- Paul likens this to the persecution he and the church often received from the unbelieving Jews of his day.
- Yet they are the ones who are in bondage to the law, to sin and to the powers of this world.
- They will not receive the inheritance promised to Abraham as long as they reject the grace of God found only in Christ.

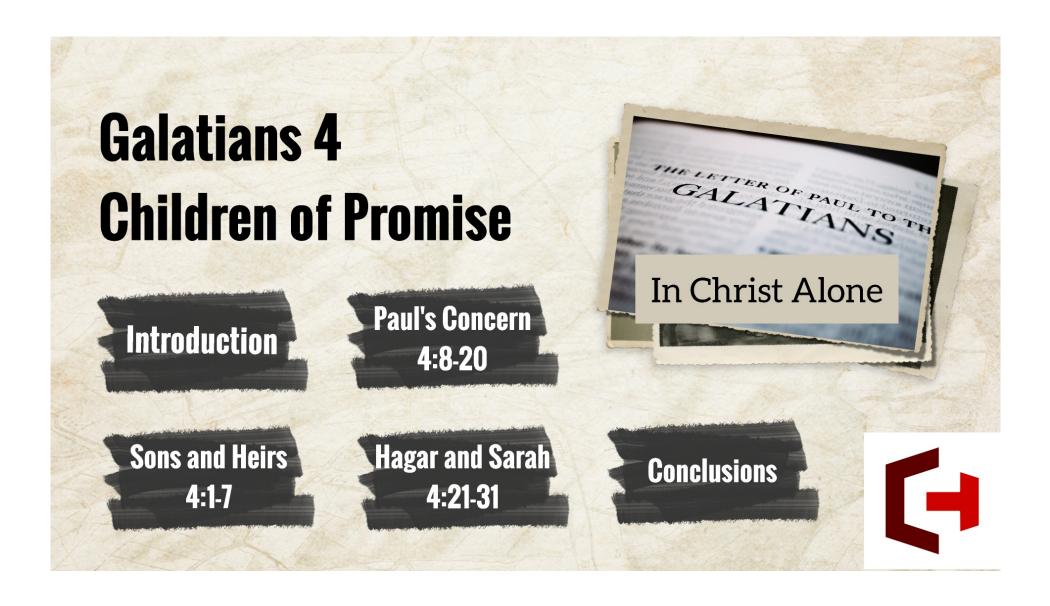
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#### The Truth Will Set You Free John 8:31-36

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." 33 They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?"

34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

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# **Conclusions**

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- As we heard last week the law was a guardian, intended to lead us to Christ.
- If we want to remain under its teaching, we are going back to basic elements and ultimately into bondage.
- This is not appropriate for children of God, children of promise who can now rightfully be considered God's heirs.

**Key Verses** 

The legalist, who functions under the law, has no inheritance alongside the believer who is under grace. Law and grace cannot co-exist in the same house (or in the same church). Salvation and spiritual development cannot take place when these two are under the same roof. Followers of Christ are not to live under the law but to live under grace, responding to the love of God by faith through obedience.



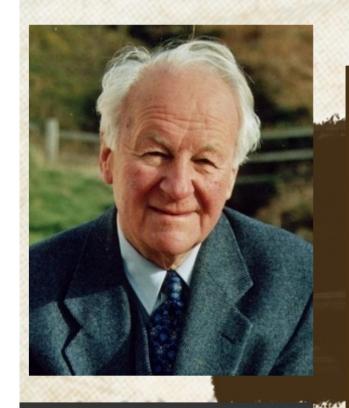
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John Stott (1921 - 2011)

The religion of Ishmael is a religion of nature, of what man can do by himself without any special intervention of God. But the religion of Isaac is a religion of grace, of what God has done and does, a religion of divine initiative and divine intervention.

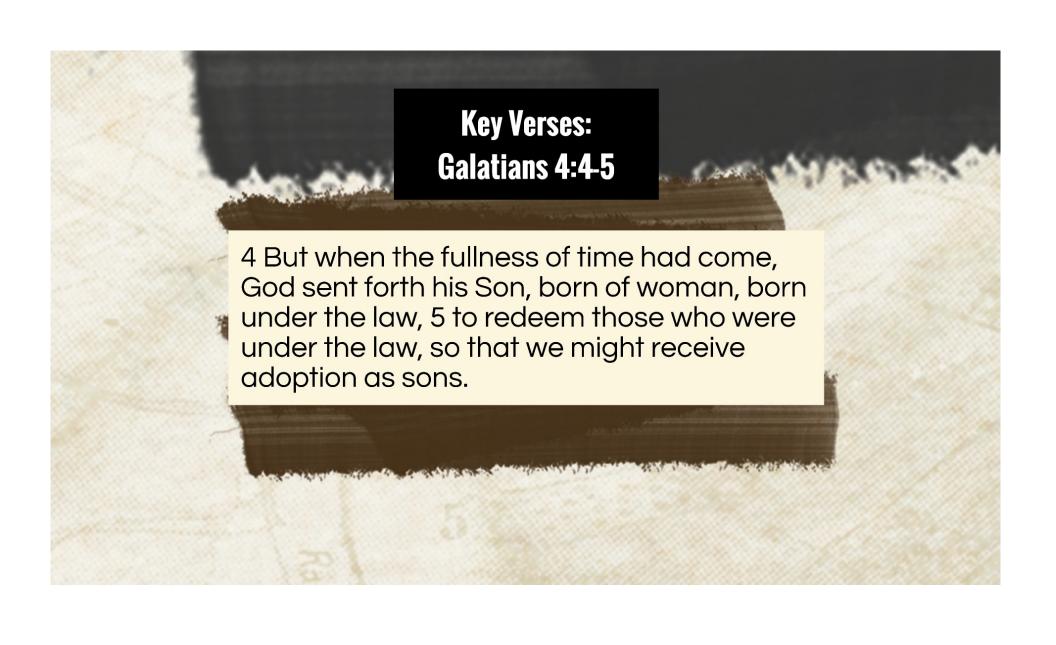
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## **A Final Prayer**

#### Heavenly Father,

- We thank you for the privilege we have to be your children and to call you "Abba," as the true Father you are.
- And we thank you for the inheritance we receive as heirs.
- Help us to walk in the freedom of your grace, and not give in to any bondage of legalism or sin.
- Help us rather to serve you out of love.
- Please also create in us those qualities that would reflect a family resemblance with you.
- In Christ,
- Amen

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