

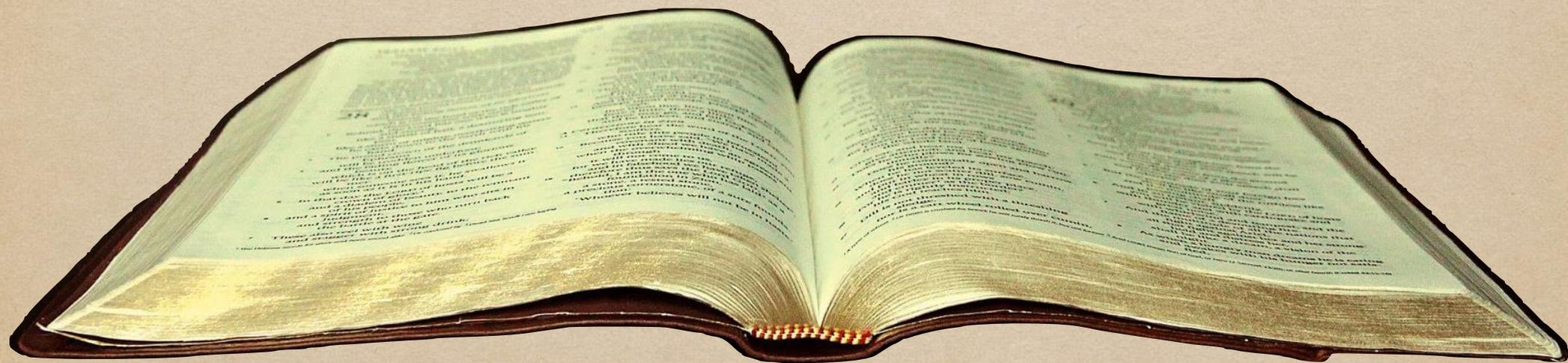


Galatians

From Blessing to Bondage

Part 1

Gal 4:15-20





– Question –
Do you think the Rapture will come
before we're finished with Galatians?

-We started this study on March 9th of this year.

-That was exactly eight months ago.

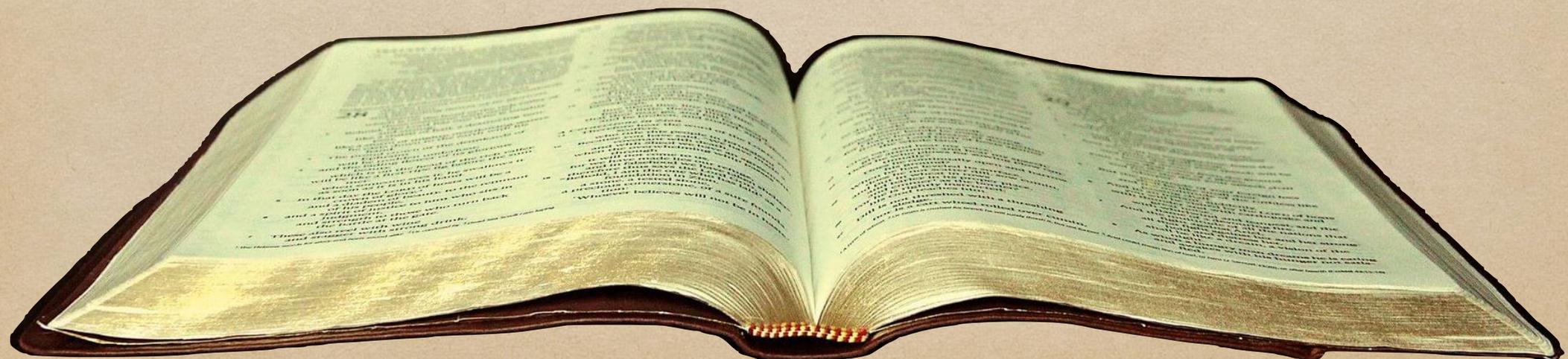
-This is the 35th lesson in this series.

-We're only a little more than halfway through the book.

-During that time Wayne's hair has gotten a little thinner and a little grayer.

-I won't comment on the rest of him.

-It's our hope to finish before he deteriorates any further.



-We are going to spend this week and next week on this passage:



Galatians 4:15-20

¹⁵ Where then is that sense of blessing you had?

For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.

¹⁶ So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?

¹⁷ They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them.

¹⁸ But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you.

¹⁹ My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you— ²⁰ but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

— We'll divide this up in three different sections —



I. The Past: Their Blessedness Remembered (vs15)

II. The Present: Their Betrayed Relationship (vs16-18)

III. The Personal: Paul's Burden of Rebirth (vs19-20)

— We'll save the third section for next week —

-**By way of introduction**, notice the opening phrase: "Where then". (vs15)

-The phrase (ποῦ - pou) (οὖν - oun) literally means "where then" or "what then happened to...." Just like the common word, "**therefore**".

-Then (οὖν - oun) This is a 'Greek connective', and along with (ἄρα - ara) and (ὥστε - hoste) is often translated then, therefore, so that, or thus.

-Paul uses this style of writing often in his letters building one truth on top of another. Especially here in chapters three and four.

-Notice how Paul uses these Greek connectives to develop his line of reasoning, developing doctrine step by step:

-3:1-5 "**So then**, does He who provides you with the Spirit. . . do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"

-3:6-9 "**Therefore**, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.



-3:10-14 “in order that (**so that**) in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles. . .”

-3:24-26 “**Therefore**, the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ. . .”

-3:25-29 “**But now** that faith has come. . .” - a major turning point -

-4:1-7 “**Therefore**, you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.”

-4:8-14 **However** “How is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?”

-4:15-20 “**Where then** is that sense of blessing you had?”

-Each of these Greek connectors, (*οὐν- ἄρα- ὥστε*) show Paul’s progressive chain of reasoning: → The Holy Spirit → Faith → Abraham → Adoption → Sonship → Inheritance → Loss .

-In 4:8-20 Paul now leaves this step-by-step doctrinal teaching and appeals directly to the Galatians on a personal level.

-We are right in the middle of that appeal starting in verse 15.



I. The Past: Their Blessedness Remembered (vs15)

15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.

A. “Where then is that sense of blessing you had?” (vs15)

-Most likely it has been less than two years since Paul and Barnabus were in Galatia.

-During that period, many of the believer's opinions toward Paul and his ministry had declined rapidly.

-It wasn't until they arrived in Perga, on that first missionary journey, that their ministry to the Galatians began. (Acts 13 and 14)

-Their plan may have been to travel west along the coast but because of an illness they ended up in Pisidian Antioch.

4:13 But you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time;

-It seems to indicate from verse 13 that they only arrived in Pisidian Antioch because of a “bodily illness”.



-Not only did Paul's illness change their plans, but John Mark also changed his plans. For some reason he went back home.

-But God's plan didn't change:

-God had planned all along for Paul to be a blessing to those in Galatia:

15 "Where then is that sense of blessing you had?"

-In Pisidian Antioch:

Acts 13:42 As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the **people kept begging** that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath.⁴³ Now when *the meeting of the synagogue* had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes **followed Paul and Barnabas**, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.⁴⁴ The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord.

⁴⁸ When the Gentiles heard this, **they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord**; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region.



-In Iconium: Acts 14:1 In Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together and spoke in such a manner that a large number of people believed, both of Jews and of Greeks.

-In Lycaonia: ⁵ And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them, ⁶ they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region; ⁷ **and there they continued to preach the gospel.**

-In Derbe: ²¹ After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, **they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,** ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith

²³ When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.



Acts 13&14



PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY AD 44-46

All Scripture is NASB 95 unless otherwise indicated

-Not only did Paul and Barnabas establish the gospel throughout that region but before going home they returned to all the previous cities:



Acts 14:21-25 ²¹ After they had preached the gospel to that city (*Derbe*) and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” ²³ When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. . . . ²⁵ When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. ²⁶ From there they sailed to (*Syrian*) Antioch.

-So — What happened to “that sense of blessing that you had”?

-In context Paul is asking, “what happened to your enthusiasm and affection that you had for me, when we were with you back then?”

B. “For I bear you witness” (vs15)

-When we were with you, in Lystra you treated us like gods:

Acts 14:11 When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have become like men and have come down to us.”



-Even, when we initially arrived in Pisidian Antioch:

“. . .that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus *Himself*. (vs 14)

C. If possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. (vs15)

-This was either a reference to his illness in verse 13 or figuratively emphasizing their deep loyalty and willing sacrifice back then.

-They would have done anything for him back then.

-Given him the ‘shirt off their back’ as was mentioned last week.

-After Paul and Barnabus left Galatia the Judaizers not only turned the believers away from grace but turned them against Paul.

II. The Present: Their Betrayed Relationship (vs16-18)

¹⁶ So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? ¹⁷ They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them. ¹⁸ But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you.

-After Paul and Barnabus left Galatia, they spent a lot of time back in Antioch.



Acts 14:26 **From there they (Paul and Barnabus) sailed to Antioch. . .**
28 **And they spent a long time with the disciples.**

-Since the Jerusalem Council is not mentioned in Galatians, we can assume that the Epistle to the Galatians was written while Paul was in Antioch and before they met in Jerusalem in Acts 15.

-Remember how we can easily keep track of when Paul's Epistles were written?



A Short Rabbit Trail



Here is an easy way to remember the order of Paul's letters:

Timeline of Paul's Epistles (dates approximate)

1st Missionary Journey 47-48 AD

1 book – Galatians

2nd Missionary Journey 50-52 AD

2 books – 1st & 2nd Thessalonians

3rd Missionary Journey 53-58 AD

3 books – 1st & 2nd Corinthians, Romans

4th trip, Imprisonment in Rome 60-63 AD

4 books – Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians & Philippians

Later, after the last chapter of Acts 64-68 AD

Last 3 Books – 1st Timothy, Titus, & 2nd Timothy

-After Paul and Barnabus left Galatia, they spent a lot of time back in Antioch.



Acts 14:26 From there they (Paul and Barnabus) sailed to Antioch. . .
28 And they spent a long time with the disciples.

-Since the Jerusalem Council is not mentioned in Galatians, we can assume that the Epistle to the Galatians was written while Paul was in Antioch and before they met in Jerusalem in Acts 15.

-In less than two years there were those who had turned many of the Galatians against Paul.

-This section is not so much about abandoning grace but about abandoning Paul himself.

-If Paul is to be effective in his teaching he must first deal with their attitude toward him.

-Paul has stopped the doctrinal portion of this letter to do just that.

-If they are opposed to the messenger, they are going to be opposed to the message.

So, have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? (vs16)



-Paul points out this change in attitude toward him in three steps:

A. Their Strategy (vs17a)

B. The Result of Alienation (vs17b)

C. Paul's Response (vs18)

A. Their Strategy (vs17a)

They eagerly seek you, not commendably –

1. Who exactly are the “they” here?

-We are talking about the Judaizers, but that term isn't found in scripture anywhere. – Or is it?



-What? Another trail?



The term “Judaizers” (ἰουδαίζω - ioudaizō) comes directly from a Greek verb in the New Testament, meaning “to live like a Jew”.

1. Biblical Origin

-The term originates in Galatians 2:14, where Paul rebukes Peter:

“If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews? (ἰουδαΐζειν - ioudaizein)

-The phrase *to “live like Jews”* (ἰουδαΐζειν) is the root of the later noun “Judaizer.”

-It literally means “*to adopt Jewish customs or practices,*” especially concerning the Mosaic Law — circumcision, dietary restrictions, Sabbath observance, etc.

2. Historical Development

-After Paul’s time, early Christian writers began using the term “Judaizers” to describe certain Jewish-Christian groups who insisted that Gentile believers must observe the Jewish Law to be fully accepted by God.



-Ignatius of Antioch* (AD 110) warned Christians “not to Judaize” — meaning not to rely on the old covenant rituals instead of faith in Christ. **Ignatius, Epistle to the Philadelphians 6:1*

-Later Church Fathers like Jerome* (AD 420) also used “Judaizers” to label those who tried to blend Christianity with Mosaic legal observances. **Jerome, Dialogus adversus Pelagianos 2.7*

3. English Development

(Ἰουδαΐζειν - ioudaízein) a Koine Greek verb

Root: Ἰουδαῖος (Ioudaios) = “Jew”

Suffix: (ΐζειν - izein) = “to act like

-When the Bible was translated into Latin (the Vulgate), the verb was transliterated as iudaizare.

-The Latin noun form became iudaizator - “Judaizer.”

-From Latin - iudaizare → French - judaïser → Middle English - judaize → Modern English - Judaizer.

Greek: Ἰουδαΐζειν → Latin: iudaizare → English: Judaize / Judaizer



-Paul points out this change in attitude toward him in three steps:

A. Their Strategy (vs17a)

B. The Result of Alienation (vs17b)

C. Paul's Response (vs18)

A. Their Strategy (vs17a)

They eagerly seek you, not commendably –

1. Who exactly are the “they” here?

-We are talking about the Judaizers, but that term isn't found in scripture anywhere. – Or is it?

-The Judaizers were both saved and unsaved Jews who wished to put the believers back under the Mosaic Law.

2. “They eagerly seek you –”

-eagerly (*ζηλοῦσιν* - *zēlousin*) to be zealous for, to court, or to show great interest.

-The Judaizers were showing apparent affection and concern, and the Galatians were falling for this.



3. “But not commendably –”

-not commendably (οὐ - ου) (καλῶς, kalōs) not well, not honorably, not with good motives, not in a worthy manner.

-Their zeal was not for the spiritual good of the Galatians, but for their own bad motives.

B. The Result of Alienation (vs17b)

They wish to shut you out so that you will seek them.

-Shut out (ἐκκλείωσιν - *ekkleisōsin*) to exclude or lock out.

-Other translations say it better:

NIV - **What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them.**

NET - **they want to exclude you, so that you would seek them eagerly.**

-The Judaizers goal was control. To isolate the Galatians from Paul so that the Galatians would seek the Judaizers approval.

-This was evident from from the very start of Paul’s ministry in Galatia.



-Although the Judaizers were opposed to Paul's message, their main goal was to discredit Paul himself.

-In Pisidian Antioch:

Acts 13:44-51 ⁴⁴ The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and *began contradicting the things spoken by Paul and were blaspheming.*

⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and **instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas**, and drove them out of their district. ⁵¹ But they shook off the dust of their feet *in protest* against them and went to Iconium.

-In Iconium:

Acts 14:5-7 ⁵ And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, **to mistreat and to stone them**, ⁶ they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region; ⁷ and there they continued to preach the gospel.



-In Lystra:

Acts 14:19,20 ¹⁹ But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, **they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.** ²⁰ But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city.

-The whole idea of the Judaizers was to cut off all communication with Paul; much like cults do today.

C. Paul's Response (vs18)

But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you.

-The Galatians had allowed their emotions to be swayed by the eagerness and flattery of the Judaizers.

-They traded the truth of the gospel (Christ alone) for a more appealing but false system that mixed Christ with the Law.

-Emotion is great but it should be a result of the truth, not the source of it.

-Paul's tone now shifts from confrontation (vs17) to restoration (vs18).



1. “It is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner” (vs18)

-Once again we have the word “eagerly” (*ζηλοῦσιν* - *zēlousin*) where we get our word zeal.

-Paul distinguishes commendable zeal from misguided zeal’.

-Their zeal should be based on the truth – that is, the truth of the gospel and spiritual growth.

Gal 1:6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

2. “Not only when I am present with you” (vs18)

-When Paul was among them, they were enthusiastic and affectionate.

-Where is that sense of blessing you had? (vs15)

-Now in his absence, they’ve grown cold and turned to the Judaizers.

-He urges them to be devoted to the truth and not swayed by who’s in front of them.



– To Sum Up –

-Or as Roger would write at the end of his Bible studies, “Final Thoughts”

-We normally see Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles, the main spokesman for church age believers.

-We see him as Biblical Scholar using the Old Testament scriptures to present spiritual truth.

-We see him as a Lawyer defending the gospel against man-made religions.

-We see him as a Theologian teaching the principles of faith alone and grace as opposed to any system of law.

-But now we see a complete change in Paul’s approach in verses 12 through 20.

-He shifts from doctrinal reasoning to heartfelt persuasion.

-This shift actually took place in verse 11:

”I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.”



-He reminds them that when he was with them, he lived in freedom from the Law and that they should do the same. (vs12)

4:12 I beg of you, brethren, become as I *am*, for I also *have become* as you *are*. You have done me no wrong. . .

-At that time, they accepted Paul as: “an angel of God, as Christ **Jesus Himself**”. (vs14)

-What happened to that “**sense of blessing you had**” for me? (vs15)

-Am I now your enemy? (vs16)

-It’s obvious you have traded the truth for the false teaching of the Judaizers.

-If only you were as zealous now, towards Christ, as you were when I was first with you. (vs18)

Perhaps I have **labored over you** in vain. (vs11)

Paul’s desire: My children, with whom I am **again in labor** until Christ is formed in you. . . (vs19)

— **This is where we will take it up next week** —



Galatians

From Blessing to Bondage

Part 1

Gal 4:15-20

