

## Review: Gal; 4:19-22: the Legalistic Attack by the Judaizers; Present-Day Legalism among Protestants; Paul's Corrective to the Galatians, Gal 4:19-21

### Review: Galatians 4:19-22

**Galatians 4:19** - My little children [ τέκνιον, *teknion*: toddlers: saved but short on doctrine ], I am enduring labor pains [ ὠδίνω, *ōdīnō*: spiritual anguish ] until Christ is formed in you.

1. The Galatian believers were born-again having received their spiritual birth through the teachings of Paul. Since then, they had not grown spiritually. Until they grow up and acquire occupation with Christ, they will remain vulnerable to the legalistic propaganda of the Judaizers who insisted that in addition to faith in Christ, works were also necessary.
2. In the Church Age, a person can hear the gospel from a multiplicity of sources but, once saved, he must grow in grace if he is to have meaningful impact in the Invisible War as a good soldier for Christ.
3. Any denomination that claims its followers are saved by grace but must depend on works for its assurance is legalistic. As Paul states in Romans 11:6, "If it is by grace, it is no longer by works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."
4. To grow spiritually a believer must learn the content of Scripture through intensive study of the Word under a qualified pastor-teacher. To learn how to evaluate contemporary history demands that it be viewed through the prism of Bible doctrine.
5. Galatia was a region in central Asia Minor that contained the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.
6. The believers in Galatia were involved in legalism and because of this Paul contends he is still having labor pains which will continue until they advance to the level of **υἱός, huios**: full-grown, spiritually mature believers.
7. Occupation with Christ enables the believer to utilize the thinking of Christ. In so doing, his thoughts, decisions, and actions reflect the mind of Christ which glorifies the Lord.
8. Paul next expresses his desire to come back to Galatia and read them the riot act:

**Galatians 4:20** - I keep on desiring to be present with you and to change my tone of voice, for because of you I am perplexed [ ἀπορέω, *aporeō*: unsure of how to proceed ].

1. When a pastor finds that his congregation has grown in grace, he is encouraged and uplifted. But later, when he discovers that they have moved into the cosmic systems and are held there by legalism, he becomes perplexed.

2. To be perplexed means that Paul is doubtful about these believers' spiritual condition. He knows that if he were able to return to Galatia he could go to these churches and quickly straighten them out. Once done, he could shift from stern rebuke to tranquil instruction.
3. His desire is to accomplish this by teaching doctrine so he can change his tone of voice. It was not in the decree that Paul return to Galatia for God has other assignments for him. The happy result is the inclusion of this Epistle in the canon which resulted in many Galatian believers getting straightened out as well as countless others throughout the Church Age.
4. Consequently, it was Paul's desire to return to Galatia but it was God's will for him to be elsewhere. Often our desires do not line up with God's will. The advantage a mature believer has is the wisdom to tell the difference.
5. Next we learn the desire of the Galatian believers:

**Galatians 4:21** - Tell me! You who constantly desire to be under the authority of the law, do you not hear and understand the law?

1. In this verse the verb for "desire" is the present active participle of the verb **θέλω, thelō** indicating that the desire is continuous and therefore a wheel-track of wickedness motivated by emotion.
2. Why is it a wheel-track of wickedness? Because its purpose is stated in the present infinitive of the verb **εἰμί, eimi** plus the preposition **ὑπό, hypo**, the definite article **τόν, ton**, and the noun **νόμος, nomos**: "to be under the law."
3. This means that the believers in Galatia have willingly placed themselves under the authority of the law. Paul then poses the question, "Do you not hear and understand the law?"
4. This question's verb, the present active indicative of **ἀκούω, akouō**, is preceded by the negative conjunction **μή, mē**. Paul inquires rhetorically if these believers are not hearing or understanding the law. If not, they are exchanging grace for legalism.
5. Paul has verbally grabbed them by the shoulders and shaken them: "Hey, dufi! Do you not understand what you are hearing?"
6. Having heard the truth of grace these believers are now placing themselves under the authority of the law from which they were delivered. Christ is the fulfillment of the law. Having been saved by grace they are no longer under the law, yet they are now continually going back to it.
7. A believer has to be in reversionism and in numerous gates of the cosmic systems not to discern the rank contradiction. Legalism is contrary to grace. One has to be deluded or inattentive not to grasp the difference.
8. In order to illustrate the difference Paul is going to use Abraham's offspring: Ishmael from his adulterous union with Hagar, and Isaac from the union with Sarah his wife. Since these are historical figures the illustration is not a parable but an allegory.