

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

Selections (tr. Richard Hooper)

1:1-9. Paul the Apostle—not from men nor through man, but from Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead—and all my brothers to the churches of Galatia.

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins so that he might rescue us from the present evil times by the will of God our Father, to whom the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

I marvel that you have turned away so quickly from my offer of grace to another gospel, which is nothing other than the distortion of the gospel of Christ. But if either we or indeed an angel from heaven should preach against what we have already preached to you, let him be cursed! As we have said before, and as I say to you now, if anyone preach to you differently, let him be cursed!

1:13-18. For you have heard of my brand of Judaism, how exceedingly I persecuted the church of God and destroyed it, and how I advanced in my Judaism beyond my contemporaries, an excessive zealot in the traditions of my fathers. But when it seemed best to God—who had brought me forth from my mother's womb and had commanded me through his grace to announce his son in me so that I might spread his good news among the foreigners—neither did I seek advise immediately from flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to my apostles, but rather I went away into Arabia, and then returned back to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him for two weeks but saw none of the other apostles except James, the brother of the Lord. And what I write to you, I swear before God that I do not lie.

2:1. Then fourteen years later I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with us.

2:11-15. But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face when he was condemned. For before some men came from James, he was eating with the foreigners; but after they came, he drew back and excluded himself, fearing those of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews shared his cowardice, so that even Barnabas joined his hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were straying from the truth of the Gospel, I said to Cephas before them all: "If you, a Jew, live like a foreigner and not in accordance with Jewish law, how can you force the foreigners to live like Jews?"

3:23-29. Before the coming of faith we were confined under the law, declared prisoners until the coming of faith should be announced. Thus the law was our tutor to Christ so that we might be justified by faith. But once faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For whoever of you has been baptized in Christ has put on Christ as a garment. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you are of Christ, then you are the seed of Abraham, his heirs according to the promise.

4:21-5:1. Tell me, you who wish to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it was written that Abraham had two sons, one of a slave and one of a free woman. The son of the slave was born of the flesh, but the son of the free woman came from the promise. What does the allegory mean? There are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai which conceives into slavery, and this is Hagar. Mount Sinai is in Arabia but corresponds to present day Jerusalem, for she is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it has been written:

“Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife.” [Isaiah 54:1-2]

You, brothers, like Isaac are children of the promise. But just as in the past the man born of the flesh persecuted the man born of the spirit, so it is now. But what does the scripture say? “Cast out the slave and her son, for the son of the slave shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.” [Genesis 21:10] Therefore, my brothers, we are not the children of the slave but of the free woman. Christ has liberated us into freedom. Stand firm, therefore, and do not surrender again to the yoke of slavery.