

Galatians

THEME: "The Danger of Lapsing Back into Legalism"

THINGS TO HAVE: A handkerchief or, better still, a piece of purple-colored fabric.

INTRODUCTION: The church at Galatia was composed of born-again people, people who had received Christ as personal Saviour, people who knew what it was to be regenerated, but they had become infatuated with the Old Testament legalism and had tried to add legalism to grace. In other words, they were saved, but they did not want to give up the old legalism; they wanted to lapse back into the observing of days, seasons, times, ritual, etc.

The Galatian church has been called "the church of the repaired veil." Remember, the temple veil was torn from top to bottom by a miraculous unseen Hand when Jesus was crucified. This means that now all of us can have access to God without the legalism, without the temple worship, without the sacrifices, without the holy days, without the holy seasons, without the sacred occasions, etc.

The Galatian people, however, wanted to repair the veil. They were saved, but they wanted to go back to the old worship. (Note to teacher: Take your handkerchief or, better still, a piece of purple-colored fabric. Let it represent the fact that He is heavenly; He is God. Purple is a combination of blue and red, which means that Jesus was not only God and man, but He was also the God-man. Now, teacher, take this piece of material and tear it from top to bottom to show how the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom when Jesus was crucified. Then get some thread and sew it back up. This is what the Galatian people were trying to do.) Let us notice some of the sins of the Galatians.

I. THEY HAD FALLEN FROM GRACE.

Galatians 5:4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

Many people misunderstand the words, "fallen from grace." They think that a person loses his salvation. Bear in mind, this book was not written to individuals; it was written to a church that had "fallen from grace." What it means is this: The church had been preaching the doctrine of grace. They had fallen from that message to the doctrine of legalism. They were no longer preaching grace. They had fallen from preaching grace. (Note: Use the example here of a person climbing some stairs. He goes up some stairs and then he falls down to the bottom. That is exactly what this church had done. They had started at the bottom where legalism was and they had gone up step-by-step until they had gotten to the top and were preaching grace. They fell to the bottom and were no longer preaching grace.)

II. THEY OBSERVED SPECIAL DAYS AND SEASONS.

Galatians 4:10, 11, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

Their special days were done away with when the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom when Jesus was crucified. In Colossians 2:14-17, we are told that all of this was nailed to the cross and was taken out of the way. (Note to teacher: You might build a little cross about the size of a person's hand or bigger. You might take a piece of paper and write each one of these things on it: holy days, holy seasons, new moons, sabbath days, observance of meat, customs, etc. Then you might take a pin or a tack and "nail" those to the cross. All of those were nailed to the cross, according to Colossians 2:14-

17, and no longer were they to be observed. However, the Galatian people had gone back to observing these special days.)

III. THEY HAD GONE BACK TO GIVING SPECIAL TITLES AND CALLING PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE SPIRITUAL LEADERS, BY THE NAMES. "MASTER." "RABBI." "FATHER." ETC.

Notice in Matthew 23:7-10 that our Lord condemns such practices. There was a day when the High Priest was above the people and the priests were above the common people. When Jesus died on the cross. He became our High Priest, and each Christian is now a priest. Each Christian can come to God for himself.

There was a day when the High Priest alone could enter into the Holy of Holies. However, since the veil in the temple was rent in twain, we can all come boldly to the throne of grace. See Hebrews 4:16. No more do we call people by special titles, such as "Rabbi," "Father," "Master," etc. (Teacher, ask the class to tell you instances where a human is called "Rabbi," "Father," "Worshipful Master," etc. All of these titles are unscriptural since Calvary.)

IV. THEY ABSTAINED FROM MEATS.

The Galatian people had gotten to the place where they would not eat certain meats. Notice I Timothy 4:1-3. In our generation there is no need for this. All of this was also nailed to the cross.

V. THEY RETURNED TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

They looked up to the priests. They wanted the priests to wear royal garments again and to perform their early functions again. This also was unnecessary. Notice Hebrews 10:11.

CONCLUSION: No longer are we under the bondage of legalism! We have been freed from that, and now we have the joy of being bondservants. The word "bondservant" is a wonderful word. It is one who had served as a slave, whose servitude had ended, and now has volunteered to be a slave because of a love for the master. This is the kind of servant that God wants us to be! We are not under the old legalism; we are not slaves; we have been set free by the penalty Jesus paid on the cross. On the other hand, we do have the right to turn around and say, "Lord, I'll serve You; I'll be Your slave!"

Once there was a black girl on a slave block in the South. She was bitter because she did not want to serve as a slave. An old man kept bidding higher and higher for her services, and she became more bitter the higher he bid because she did not want to be a slave. Finally, he won the bidding and bought her. She came to him, cursed, swore and said, "I hate to be your slave." He looked at her and said, "Young lady, you don't understand. I did not purchase you to make you my slave. I saw something in your face that made me want to set you free. You may go free. I bought you in order that you might be free." The young lady began to weep. She looked up at the man and said, "Oh, sir, then I will be your slave forever!" This is what Christianity is all about! Let us not fall from grace or lapse into legality. Let us enjoy the grace of God and be His slave!

Memory Verse: Galatians 3: 26 "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."