

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2024**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN PAUL'S EPISTLES—
GALATIANS**

Message One

The Present Evil Age

Scripture Reading: Gal. 1:3-4, 11-16

I. The subject of the book of Galatians is the rescue of the distracted believers out of the evil religious age—1:3-5:

- A. An age refers to a section, an aspect, the present or modern appearance, of the world as the satanic system, which is used by Satan to usurp and occupy God's people to keep them away from God and His purpose—Eph. 2:2; 1 John 2:14-15.
- B. According to the context of Galatians, the present evil age here refers to the religious world, the religious course of the world, represented by the Jewish religion, which became formal in letter, deadening in quenching the Spirit, killing in man's communication with God in life, and contending with the gospel of Christ in God's New Testament economy—6:14-15; 1:6-16; 2 Cor. 3:6; Phil. 3:2-3.
- C. The purpose of Christ's giving Himself for our sins was to rescue us, to pluck us, out of the present evil age; this is to release God's chosen people from the custody of the law (Gal. 3:23), to bring them out of the sheepfold (John 10:1, 3, 9-11, 15-16; Psa. 23:1) according to the will of God (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3-4):
 1. According to the revelation of the typology in Song of Songs, Christ leads His loving seeker into her spirit, and in her spirit in fellowship with Him she receives the revelation of how to leave the place where she is kept away from the church to go forth on the footsteps of the flock—1:4b-8.
 2. The flock is the church as the place where Christ pastures, shepherds and feeds, His saints—John 10:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2.
 3. The Lord's seeker was seeking after the Lord for her own satisfaction, but the Lord's concern for His saved sinners is not just for their satisfaction but for God's eternal economy; God's economy is to save sinners to gain the churches so that the essence of these churches can become the organic Body of Christ as the precursor for the consummation of the New Jerusalem—Rom. 5:10; Rev. 1:11-12; Eph. 1:22-23; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2.

II. We must overcome the present evil age of today's degraded Christendom with its Judaistic system by holding to the teaching of the apostles (God's New Testament economy) through the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit—Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3-5:

- A. Philippians 3:2 warns the believers about the Judaizers—"Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision"; in nature the Judaizers are unclean dogs, in behavior they are evil workers, and in religion they are the concision, people of shame.
- B. Paul considered the Judaizers as "false brothers" (2 Cor. 11:26), who perverted the gospel of Christ by secretly bringing the observances of the law into the church and who troubled the genuine brothers in Christ (Gal. 2:4; 1:7; cf. Acts 15:1, 19-21).

- C. The Judaizers stressed the law to such an extent that it became a substitute for Christ and distracted God's people from Christ; to exercise the flesh to do good according to the law was the central thought of the Judaizers.
- D. There are two kinds of people in relation to the law: the letter-keepers are represented by the Judaizers, and the God-seekers are represented by Paul—2 Cor. 3:6; Psa. 119:2, 55, 58, 129-133:
 - 1. All the requirements of the law have been fulfilled by the death of Christ, and through His death He released His life that it may be imparted into us in His resurrection to free us from the bondage of the law—John 12:24; Gal. 2:21; 3:13.
 - 2. The Judaizers “bewitched” the believers by distracting them from Christ and the cross; Christ is the center of God's economy, and the cross is the center of God's operation to carry out His economy—v. 1.
- E. Paul was concerned that the Corinthians, whom he had betrothed to Christ, were being deceived and distracted by the teachings of the Judaizers, which would separate them from the genuine appreciation, love, and enjoyment of the precious person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as their life and everything—2 Cor. 11:2-3.
- F. The Judaizers cared for outward appearance, not for inward reality; however, Paul stressed that what matters is what we are inwardly and not outwardly—“He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God”—Rom. 2:28-29.
- G. Christ as the seed of Abraham is for the blessing to all the families of the earth; as the last Adam, the unique seed of Abraham became the life-giving Spirit—Gen. 12:2-3, 7; 17:7-8; Gal. 3:14, 16, 29; 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 12:24.
- H. The resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit is the transfigured descendant of Abraham, the seed of Abraham, dispensed into us to make us the sons of Abraham, the corporate seed of Abraham, those who can receive and inherit the consummated Spirit as the blessing of Abraham—Gal. 3:7, 14; 4:28.

III. The Israel of God, the real Israel (6:16), includes all the Gentile and Jewish believers in Christ, who are the true sons of Abraham (3:7, 29); “the stars of the heavens” signify Abraham's heavenly descendants, and “the sand which is on the seashore” signifies his earthly descendants (Gen. 22:17):

- A. God's promise to Abraham is “I will bless those who bless you, / And him who curses you I will curse” (12:3); from the time that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of Jerusalem until now, every nation, people, race, or individual who has cursed the Jewish people has received a curse, and whoever has blessed the Jews has received a blessing (cf. Isa. 5:20).
- B. The more we praise the Lord for His people and speak well of them in faith, the more we put ourselves under God's blessing; those who speak positively concerning the church receive the blessing; those who speak negatively put themselves under a curse—Num. 24:9; 23:11.

IV. In His epistle to the church in Smyrna, the Lord said, “I know...the slander from those who call themselves Jews and are not”; the Jews mentioned here do not refer to the Jews in the world but to the Judaizers in the church; these ones are spoken of by Paul as false apostles, deceitful workers, and the ministers of Satan—Rev. 2:9; 2 Cor. 11:13-15:

- A. Judaism has earthly promises with earthly blessings, and in degraded Christendom there is a gospel that promises health, wealth, and prosperity; but in the new testament we have the all-inclusive Spirit as the totality of the unsearchable riches of Christ to be our

unique blessing for us to bless others that issues in the church as the fullness of God—Gen. 12:2; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 3:8; 1:3; Luke 12:21; Rev. 2:9; 2 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 3:19b.

- B. Judaism has the law of letters, and in degraded Christendom there are outward legalities and regulations for daily living; but in the new testament God puts His law, the law of life, in our inward parts and writes it upon our hearts—Jer. 31:33; Rom. 8:2; Heb. 8:10.
- C. Judaism has mediatorial priests, and in degraded Christendom there is the clergy-laity system; but in the new testament all the believers are priests to be a holy and royal priesthood as functioning members of the Body of Christ—Rev. 1:5b-6; 2:6; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9.
- D. Judaism has a material temple, and in degraded Christendom there is the thought of the church being a physical place, even a “church” building; but in the new testament the temple is a spiritual house, a dwelling place of God in spirit—Eph. 2:21-22:
 - 1. In Judaism the worshippers and the place of worship are two different things, but in the new testament the place of worship is the worshipper—John 4:23-24.
 - 2. The Father’s house, typified by the temple, is a divine and human incorporation of the processed and consummated God constituted with His redeemed, regenerated, and transformed elect—14:2, 20, 23; 1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 21:3, 22.
- E. All the above points show that degraded Christendom, having the principle of Babylon, has already been Judaized, mixing God’s New Testament economy with the outdated Old Testament economy, mixing the things of man with the Word of God, and mixing the things of the flesh with the things of the Spirit—Acts 21:20-21; Rev. 17:3-5.

V. God’s Son is versus man’s religion—Gal. 1:11-16; 1 Tim. 1:3-5:

- A. The desire of God’s heart is to reveal His Son in us that we may know Him, receive Him as our life (John 17:3; 3:16), and become the sons of God (1:12; Gal. 4:5-6).
- B. The focal point of the Bible is not practices, doctrines, or ordinances—it is the living person of the Son of God, who is the embodiment of the Triune God realized as the all-inclusive Spirit in our spirit for us to enjoy Him, partake of His riches, and live Him—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; Phil. 1:19; Gal. 6:18:
 - 1. In the eyes of God, there is no place for religion or tradition—only the living person of His Son has a place; God cares only for this living person, not for anything else—Col. 1:18b; 2:16-17; 3:10b-11; Mark 9:7-8.
 - 2. Without this living person as the reality and content of the church life, even the church life will become a tradition; the church is the Body of this person, His fullness, His practical and living expression—Eph. 1:22-23; 3:8-11, 16-19.
- C. Christ is our new wine to be put into fresh wineskins; the Greek word for *new* means “new in time, recent, newly possessed”—Matt. 9:17; cf. Ezek. 36:26; Rom. 6:4; 7:6; 2 Cor. 5:17:
 - 1. The new wine signifies Christ as the new, cheering life with cheering strength that strengthens us, energizes us, and makes us very happy—Judg. 9:12-13.
 - 2. All religions are old wineskins; new wine put into old wineskins bursts the wineskins by the power of its fermenting; to put new wine into old wineskins is to put Christ as the exciting life into any kind of religion—Matt. 9:14-15.
 - 3. To be religious means to worship God, serve God, and do things to please God yet apart from and without Christ as the Spirit—cf. Gal. 1:14-16a.
- D. The fresh wineskins signify the church life in the local churches as the container of the new wine, which is Christ Himself as the inward exciting life; the Greek word for *fresh* means “new in nature, quality, or form; unaccustomed, unused.”
- E. We must experience and enjoy Christ as the new wine to be filled and constituted with Him so that we may express Him as the new wineskin, which is the church as the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem as God’s ultimate goal.