

## THE MOTHER OF US ALL

### **Galatians is the “Christian’s Declaration of Independence”**

- Judaizers (legalizers) proclaimed a mixture of Christianity and Judaism, teaching that Christianity could only work within the Mosaic law - they believed that faith in Christ was not sufficient
- Had they won, we would merely have been a sect within Judaism

### **Paul argued with invincible logic for justification by faith**

- 1:8, 1:12, 2:16, 2:20-21, 3:10, 3:23-25, 5:1, 5:7, 5:22-23, 6:14-15
- In the midst of his defense of justification, he makes this comparison:

**Galatians 4:19-29, King James Version:** My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. **But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.** For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

**Galatians 4:19-29, The Message:** Do you know how I feel right now, and will feel until Christ’s life becomes visible in your lives? Like a mother in the pain of childbirth. Oh, I keep wishing that I was with you. Then I wouldn’t be reduced to this blunt, letter-writing language out of sheer frustration. Tell me now, you who have become so enamored with the law: Have you paid close attention to that law? Abraham, remember, had two sons: one by the slave woman and one by the free woman. This son of the slave woman was born by human connivance; the son of the free woman was born by God’s promise. This illustrates the very thing we are dealing with now. The two births represent two ways of being in relationship with God. One is from Mount Sinai in Arabia. It corresponds with what is now going on in Jerusalem - a slave life, producing slaves as offspring. This is the way of Hagar. In contrast to that, **there is an invisible Jerusalem, a free Jerusalem, and she is our mother** - this is the way of Sarah. Remember what Isaiah wrote: “Rejoice, barren woman who bears no children, shout and cry out, woman who has no birth pangs, because the children of the barren woman now surpass the children of the chosen woman.” Isn’t it clear, friends, that you, like Isaac, are children of promise? In the days of Hagar and Sarah, the child who came from faithless connivance (Ishmael) harassed the child who came - empowered by the Spirit - from the faithful promise (Isaac). Isn’t it clear that the harassment you are now experiencing from the Jerusalem heretics follows that old pattern?

## GOD IS OUR FATHER, AND THE CHURCH IS OUR MOTHER

- You can’t be born without both! The Mother births the child which is begotten by the Father.
- The normative Biblical pattern is for the Mother to nurture the child, while the Father provides for both the Mother and child.

## WHAT IS YOUR MOTHER LIKE?

Erma Bombeck on “**Motherese**” (language common to all mothers):

- This is going to hurt me worse than it hurts you.
- When you grow up, you’ll thank me for being so strict.
- I’m doing this because I love you.
- Never mind, I’ll do it myself.
- No sense crying over spilt milk.
- I’ll give you something to cry about.
- When I was your age ...
- I’ll treat you like an adult when you start acting like one.
- You’re going to drive me to an early grave.
- That’s what you get for not listening.
- Just wait till you have children of your own.
- Do you think I was born yesterday?
- You made your bed, now you’ll have to lie in it.
- If your friend jumped off the bridge would you do it too?
- If you fall off that swing and break a leg, don’t come running to me.

## WHAT IS THE CHURCH LIKE?

**First distinct mention of the church in the New Testament is in Matthew 16:15-20, by Jesus.**

**The church is the only thing in the world that cannot be shaken:**

- The earth is to be shaken (Isaiah 2:19-21)
- The nation of Israel is to be shaken (Ezekiel 38:19-20)
- The heavens and the nations are to be shaken (Haggai 2:6-7)
- Everything that can be shaken will be shaken (Hebrews 12:26-29)

**The church is not “Plan B” in God’s mind, necessitated by the Jewish rejection of Christ. Rather, the church (Gentiles coming into God’s Kingdom) was prophesied in the OT:**

- All nations were to be blessed by the seed of Abraham (Genesis 22:18)
- All families of earth were to be blessed by Abraham’s seed (Genesis 26:4)
- All kindreds of the nations would worship the Lord (Psalms 22:27-28)
- In the last days all nations would flow to the house of God (Isaiah 2:2-3)
- The Gentiles would seek the Root of Jesse (Isaiah 11:10)
- Many nations would be sprinkled with the blood of Messiah (Isaiah 52:15)
- Many nations would be joined to the Lord in that day (Zechariah 2:11)
- The Name of the Lord would be great among the Gentiles (Malachi 1:11)
- In His Name the Gentiles would trust (Matthew 12:21)

**Jesus said that the prophets who gave these prophecies would have loved to have seen and heard the things happening in our age (Matthew 13:10-17):**

- Moses would like to have seen the New Testament church and priesthood (1 Peter 2:5-9)
- Isaiah would love to have seen Pentecost (Isaiah 28:10-12)
- Joel would like to have been in the Upper Room (Acts 1-2)
- Enoch would like to see the translation of saints (Jude 14-15)
- Israel would like to see the true Passover (Exodus 12)

**WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT:**

**The Church is not a Material Building.**

- The word is never used in Scripture to refer to a material building (140 times in NT)
- The language used of the Church could not be applied to a building: The Lord added to the church. Herod vexed the church. The church was persecuted. Paul saluted the church. The churches had rest.
- Only in the traditions of men can people “go to church.”
- Jesus did not mean “church buildings” when he said “I will build my church.”

**The church is not a Denomination.**

- Denominationalism is contrary to Scripture, evidence of carnality and divisions.
- It is possible to belong to a “non-denominational denomination” or “non-sectarian sect”!
- Denominations are usually formed around a certain form of church government, a doctrinal emphasis or truth, a personality which God used in some revival, or an experience.
- The tragedy is that each revival of truth finds its bitterest enemies in the previous group which had light from heaven! The cycle goes from Man to Movement to Monument!
- History repeats itself in each generation. The only thing we learn from history is that we never learn from history! Having begun in the spirit, they end in the flesh!

**The church is not the entire Kingdom of God.**

- The kingdom is larger than the church, including whole universe, angelic hosts, OT saints.
- The church is confined to believers in this present age; you must be in it to be saved!

**WHAT THE CHURCH IS:**

**The church is the eternal purpose of God manifested in time! (Ephesians 3:11)**

- We may lose some battles, but we have won the war - God will have a church!
- In fact, He already has a church in the grave!

**The Apostolic church is the perfect will of God.**

- Church history’s long “detour” through the dark ages and and arduous return to truth through the reformation was only the permitted will of God.
- This principle is illustrated clearly for us in Matthew 19:3-9 concerning the matter of divorce and remarriage. Divorce was never God’s will; He permitted it for one reason only, the hardness of man’s heart after the fall. God did not create robots!
- Isaac was God’s perfect will; Ishmael was God’s permitted will. God permitted his birth, and even blessed him. But Isaac was the son of the Promise, God’s perfect will.
- This happens in the church world. God permits denominations to have some truth, and he even blesses them like Ishmael. But the Apostolic church is like Isaac; they are the son of Promise, and they hold saving truth!

**The church is the mystery of God.**

- A “mystery” in the NT is not an undiscovered secret, but a secret undiscoverable by human reason, now revealed by the Spirit of God.
- Paul spoke of mysteries made known only to the Apostolic church:
  - \* the mystery of iniquity (2 Thessalonians 2:7)
  - \* the mystery of God’s wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:7-8)
  - \* the mystery of marriage of Christ and his church (Ephesians 5:31-32)
  - \* the mystery of the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)
  - \* the mystery of speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:2)
  - \* the mystery of God in Christ (Colossians 2:2)
  - \* the mystery of godliness (1 Timothy 3:16)
  - \* the mystery of Christ in you (Colossians 1:26-27)

**The church is the EKKLESIA.**

- In the classical days of Athens, the EKKLESIA (“called out”) was the convened assembly of people, all citizens who had not lost their civic rights. Apart from the fact that its decisions had to conform to Laws of the State, its powers were to all intents and purposes unlimited.
- It elected and dismissed magistrates, directed the policy of the city, declared war, made peace, contracted treaties and arranged alliances, elected generals and other military officers, assigned troops to different campaigns and dispatched them from the city, raised and allocated funds, ultimately was responsible for the conduct of military operations.

- These meetings began with prayer and sacrifice. It was a true democracy; two watchwords were “equality” and “freedom.” All had equal rights, and equal duty to take part.
- For secular Greek society, EKKLESIA meant “an assembly of free citizens who were called out of their homes or places of business to assemble together to give consideration to matters of public interest”
- The church is not just “called out,” but “called out to assemble together”!
- EKKLESIA in the NT is used 114 times, 110 of these speak of the church
- The church is the free citizens of the heavenly community, summoned by the gospel from their places in the world to assemble together to hear from God!
- We are not just a select few who are “picked out.” The church is not EXCLUSIVE, but INCLUSIVE. The summons is to everyone to come and shoulder his responsibilities.
- We are called out of every kindred, tribe and nation (Revelation 5:9), and called out of darkness into light (1 Peter 2:9).

**IT IS BIBLICAL TO HONOR OUR EARTHLY MOTHERS. HOWEVER, WE SHOULD ALSO REMEMBER AND HONOR OUR SPIRITUAL MOTHER, THE CHURCH!** (*Hebrews 10:25*)