

Born Free

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Galatians 4:30-31

Henry T. Mahan Tape Library

Zebulon Baptist Church

6088 Zebulon Highway

Pikeville, KY 41501

Website: <http://www.sovereign-grace.com/13thstbap.htm>

Online Sermons: <http://mahan.sermonaudio.com>

I want you to open your Bibles with me, now, to the book of Galatians chapter four. The message I am bringing tonight is not easy. It is a difficult, difficult task. I said to someone this morning that the message I brought this morning and am bringing tonight just might be the most important messages I preached from this pulpit in a long, long time. If we can get our teeth into what I am trying to say this morning and tonight, if we can get established on this foundation, this rock, if this truth can penetrate our hearts and we can lay hold on Christ alone—plus nothing, minus nothing—we will be saved. And this just may be the most important messages that I have preached in a long time. And this man spoke up and said, “That you ever preached, that you have ever preached.” And I believe that.

Now, I made some statements Wednesday night either last week or the week before and I want you to listen. I am going to be as candid tonight as I can, as plain as I can because this is what I believe: that I am justified, sanctified and redeemed and accepted by the heavenly Father, my name is in the book of life, I am a child of the king on the account of nothing that I have ever done, said, given or performed, but solely and completely and absolutely and totally and unchangeably because of who Christ is and what he did and where he is now. That is how I am saved. Plus nothing, minus nothing.

Now, Noah may get drunk and cause his son to fall. But he is saved by the grace of God. Can you take that? It is so anyhow. Abraham may fail in faith and deny his wife, not once, but twice. But he is saved by the grace of God. David may find Bathsheba and call and kill her husband, but he is saved by the grace of God. Can you take that? If you can't, you have missed the gospel.

But you say, “That's terrible.”

If you knew how terrible your heart is right now in the sight of God, you would be blushing, not looking so straight ahead. Your head would be hanging. That's right, Tom, isn't it? It is not many sinners, did you know that? We say, “Oh, this is terrible. That's terrible. Something else.” You are terrible by birth, by nature, by practice, by thought.

You say, “I have never done this.”

Not outwardly, but you have in your mind. Everything that people are in jail for right now you have done in your imagination. Every thing that criminals have been hung for, you have committed before God in your thoughts. Do you know that?

Somebody said, "Well, you can't hang a man for his thoughts."

I know that, but God can send him to hell for them. That's right. The judge can't hit his gavel on the desk and sentence you to prison for your thoughts, but God can damn you for them. And that is exactly what he is going to do unless you have a Savior. And Peter can sit by the fire and curse and swear and declare he never knew Jesus Christ, but he is saved by grace. That's so.

You say, "Preach like that and folks will live like they please."

I hope they do. Until God changes your pleasure you are going to anyway. And you might as well live outwardly like you live inwardly because God looks on the heart, not on the outward countenance. That's so. Salvation is by grace and I made these statements and I told you I was going to get plain. But I am getting plain. Now, Christ is going to get the glory for your salvation or he will glorify his justice in your damnation. But he is not going to share his glory with your little puny works. He is not going to do it. He is not going to accept your self righteous rags at the marriage supper of the lamb. You are going to be clothed in the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ or you are going to hear him say, "Depart from me, I never knew you. Bind him hand and foot and cast him into hell where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

That is grace and that is grace alone. And that is the preaching of grace.

Somebody said, "Well, people will charge you with being an antinomian. If this works generation of fundamentalists doesn't charge you with being an antinomian, you haven't preached any gospel because to them, you are one."

They are saved by their works. They are saved by their deeds. They are saved by their goodness plus Christ. Men who believe grace and look to grace and cling to grace and preach grace say, "We are saved by Christ alone, plus nothing, minus nothing." And that is so.

And I said the other Wednesday night, "Your sins will never keep you from Christ. I don't care how dark they are, how black they are, how many they are." Your sins will never keep you from Christ. He delights to show mercy. He came to save sinners. Our Lord died for sinners. He is the friend of sinners. But our Lord despises self righteousness. And while your sins will never keep you from Christ your good works will. That's so.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had nothing but pity and compassion and affection for sinners. They gathered around him. They ate with him. They talked with him. They looked to him. They touched him. The Pharisees stood off and condemned him.

“Thank you, Lord, I am not like those folks. I tithe and fast. I am not an extortioners. I am not an adulterer. I am not unjust. I am not all this.”

But you are not saved either.

But this poor old publican who beats upon his chest and will not so much as lift his eyes to heaven but weeps and cries, “God, be merciful to me a sinner,” our Lord said he went home justified. And he called himself the sinner, not a sinner, the sinner.

You say, “It says a sinner.”

That is the definite article. You look it up. “I am the sinner. I am the chief of sinners.

Now, your sinners will never keep you out of heaven. Heaven is a place where God is going to take sinners, blood washed sinners, redeemed sinners, but your good works will keep you out of heaven and your sins are no barrier, no barrier at all to perfect holiness. No sin I have ever committed, no sin I have ever thought, no sin I will ever commit is any barrier whatsoever to perfect holiness because perfect holiness is in Christ who is my holiness and who is my sanctification.

I’ll tell you outside of Christ if we weren’t in Christ by grace and in Christ by God’s mercy and under Christ’s blood and clothed in Christ’s righteousness, out of Christ the best man who ever lived would be an abomination in God’s sight. Did you know that? The very best man who ever lived, not you and me, the very best man that ever lived because even our righteousnesses are filthy rags. We all do fade as the leaf.

Do you know what a sinner is? If we could just see it, sinners enter heaven by grace. No man ever entered therein by works. And I am telling you, I am saying it as clear as I can, no two things in all this world are any different than works and grace. They are diametrically opposed. They are as opposite, grace and works...grace and law are as opposite as light and darkness. Did you know that? They are infinitely apart. Grace and works can no more mix or agree than fire and water. You can’t mix fire and water and you can’t mix grace and works.

Turn to Romans 11 a minute, Romans chapter 11. And I want us to spit on our hands and choose up sides tonight. And I want you, like Joshua said, he said, “Choose you this day whom you will serve, either the God of all grace, free grace, sovereign grace, pure grace, or the gods your daddy served on the other side of the flood. But as for me and my house we are going the grace road. As for me and my house we are going the road of grace, free grace, free grace.”

And I will guarantee you this. Everybody who has ever seen himself a sinner is going that road, too. Everybody who has ever got a glimpse into his old rotten heart, his old sinful nature, everybody that has ever seen himself under the microscope of God almighty’s perfect holiness he is going that road, too. And do you know who is going to

walk the road of works? Folks who never knew they were lost. But they are going to know it some day beyond repair.

In Romans chapter 11 listen to the verse five. “Even so at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.” And if it is by grace and if it is by grace, it is no more of works. It can’t be. Otherwise grace is not grace. Grace is pure, undiluted, no alloy, no mixture, pure grace, it is a pure gift. If it has got any works mixed it is not grace. That is what he is saying. It can’t be grace.

“I know we believe in Christ, but...”

No, sir, not even a tiny little but.

“I know Christ saves, but...”

Now hold it right there. I know Christ saves—period. That’s it. It is by pure grace, elected by grace, redeemed by grace, chosen by grace, called by grace, accepted by grace, kept by grace, protected by grace. Even faith is a gift of God’s grace. Even repentance is a gift of God’s grace. Even my works are not products of my own heart. They are the work of God.

It is not us. It is Christ that liveth in me. My old flesh will never be any better. Even grace does not improve the old nature. The old nature is the same. It will never change. It can’t change. It has got to be put in the ground. The new nature is holy and cannot sin. It is a divine nature created in the image of God.

Read on. “If it is of grace it is no more of works otherwise grace is no more grace. But if this thing of salvation be by works, it is no more of grace.” That is how clear it is, David. That is the reason I said as Barnard said, spit on our hands and choose up sides. It is either salvation, justification, sanctification, acceptance with God is all of grace, it is the pure gift of God without anything that we do, think or say, or it is by works. It cannot be both. It cannot be both.

Well, this is what is so amazing. This is what is so amazing that while works and grace are so diametrically opposite, so essentially different, the human mind, this old mind of ours is so void of spiritual understanding, this old mind of ours is so depraved, it is so twisted and turned away from God...He said, “Your thoughts aren’t my thoughts. There is a way that seems right to us.” But he said, “The end is destruction. It’s death.”

Why he said, “As the heavens are high above the earth my thoughts are higher than your thoughts, my ways are higher than your ways.” We don’t think like God. Our minds are so depraved and so void of spiritual understanding and so twisted and so turned and so perverted that the most difficult thing for a human being to do is to discriminate between law and grace. Did you know that? That is the hardest thing in the world. That is the greatest conflict that the natural mind has, especially a religious mind. The hardest thing he can...the hardest thing in the world is for him to differentiate, to discriminate between

works and grace. What he wants to blend...what God says can never be blended. He wants to mix what God almighty has positively put asunder. It is grace. It is grace alone wherein God gets all the glory for everything that I have and am and know and shall be or it is works. It cannot be both.

Let me show you some Scripture. I'll just quote it for you. You don't need to turn to all of it. I can get it quickly. "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast."

Listen over here to 2 Timothy 1:9, 2 Timothy 1:9, "For we are saved and called with a holy calling not according to our works, but according to his own purpose in grace, grace, which was given to us, given to us in Christ before we ever lived, before the foundation of the world." This grace was given to me, it was imputed unto me before I ever was born into this world. That is what it says.

Listen to Titus chapter three, verse five. It says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, his mercy, his mercy. He saved us not according to our works." God says that over and over again. A man is not justified by works. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight. Not by works." Yes, we are going to have it anyway. But I just don't believe she is saved or she wouldn't have done that. Do you see what I mean? Well, I just don't believe he can be a saved man and talk like that. Do you see what I mean? We are going to get it together or die. We are going to get it together if it costs God all his glory we are going to mix it.

Not by works, is that clear? But by his grace according to his mercy he saved us. Romans three. I want all of you to turn to this one in Romans chapter three, verse 20. Listen to this, Romans three. Well, let's read verse 19. "Now we know." Everybody that has been taught of God knows this. Everybody that God almighty has opened his heart like he did Lydia and revealed anything to him, he knows this. We know that what things soever God's law says, what God's law says...and let me tell you something. God's law speaks more than to the act. It speaks to the attitude. It speaks to the attitude. Now, I want you to think a little bit. I know there are some folks that don't do things exactly like we think they ought to, but you watch your attitude toward them. Your sin may be greater than theirs. It just could be.

God doesn't judge sin like we do. God almighty does not measure sin like we measure sin. I know enough about his Word and enough about his holy character that what we sometimes judge to be the worst thing in God's sight is not.

Do you know when he named the seven things he hated what he named first? He named pride. That is the first thing he named. And I will tell you this. Here is a person that transgresses or offends us in some way. And the attitude we take towards them and the way that we treat them in their fall or in their problem may be a greater sin in the sight of God than what that individual did. Now you think about that. Think about it.

Romans three. "What the law saith it saith to everybody, not just some." It speaks not to the act only, to the attitude. It speaks not just to the manners, it speaks to the motive. God's law speaks to the heart. You see, sin is a spiritual transgression. That's right. Sin is a spiritual offense. Sin and the way God looks upon sin is in the spiritual world. Almighty God could care less for your cars and houses and bank accounts and money and all this stuff you have accumulated. God looks on the heart. That is where the business of life takes place. Keep your heart out of the issues of life. My son, give me your heart. God is nigh unto them of a broken heart. God saveth such as be of a contrite spirit and a broken heart.

Do you hear what I am saying? With the heart man believeth. Out of the heart the mouth speaketh. That is where God does business. He could care less how long your dress is. That's right. He created you, you didn't have nothing on.

Do you see what I am saying? We are so busy, caught up in and wrapped up in things, material things, physical things. And God almighty could care less about it. He looks on the heart. I am telling you the truth. These other jack legged preachers are not. Now, that is just honesty. One thing, they don't know it. That is the reason they can't tell it. But sin is a heart problem and God looks on the heart and God deals with the heart. I hate to see people go to hell with an outward righteousness and an inward condemnation. But that is what the Pharisees were. God said...our Lord said to him, he said, "Why..." He said, "You are like a whited sepulchre. You are so pretty and so nice and so outwardly pure. And on the inside you are full of dead men's bones. You are beautiful to men and on the inside there is nothing but excess and extortion and all of the wickedness God almighty hates with a passion."

Oh God help us, but he won't. We know that what the law saith—and the law speaks not just to the manners, it speaks to the motive, not just to the act, but to the attitude, not just to the deed, but it speaks to the heart. And what does it say? It says to everybody under the law that every mouth may be stopped, stop your mouth. And all the world become guilty, guilty, guilty.

Have you ever been guilty? Guilty. I tell you what. Guilt looks for grace. Pride looks for works. That is exactly right. Guilt looks for grace. Misery looks for mercy. But man's pride and arrogance and his haughtiness before God looks for rewards.

All right. Every mouth stopped, all the world guilty. Therefore...here is my conclusion. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh..." And you set forth your Levitical law, your sabbath days, your tithing your feast days, your washings, you set forth your moral law, the thou shalt nots and thou shalt. God says, "By the deeds of now law, no law given my man or God, no law either Levitical or moral, no law...by the deeds of the law no flesh shall ever be justified in God's sight, no flesh."

Now, that is as clear, that is as clear as it can be made. So we face three difficulties. We face three major hurdles. And the first one is this. Somehow, some way by God's mercy and by God's grace we are going to have to find out that we are sinners. I don't know

how it is going to be done or whether it will ever be done, but we are going to have to find out these proud arrogant spirits and hearts are going to have to be crushed and broken before God and smitten. We are going to have to be slain or we will never be made alive. We are going to have to have our foundations cut out from under us and swept out from under us for we have got no place to rest our feet. Without hope, without God, without help, without strength, without hope, without Christ and at our wit's end as Scott says at the end of the rope hanging by a thread over the open pits of hell. We have got to find that out.

I don't know whether God will ever show me I am a sinner, but if he never does he will never save me. He will never save me. I have got to be stripped before I am clothed. I have said that 10,000 times. I like to hope 10 people have heard it. We are going to have to be slain before made alive. We are going to have to be crippled before we are healed. We are going to have to be hopeless at the wit's end, crying unto the Lord in our troubles or we will never be saved.

Learning a doctrine doesn't save you. Christ saves you. Changing from fundamentalism to Calvinism won't save you. Changing from some other -ism to this ism won't save you. We are going to have to come to him as a sinner, a stripped and broken sinner. We are going to have to come to him like that leper fell at his feet and worshipped him and cried, "My Lord, if you will, you can make me whole."

So many people were in this and now they are in that and they are no better off. So many folks saw this and then they saw that. They accepted this and they are no better off. They only man that is better off is a man who is seeing himself lost, empty, slain and looked to Christ and reached out an empty hand and said, "If I can but touch him, I will be made whole." That is the one that is better off.

Some folks have had some experiences and they have seen the light, but they have never seen Christ. That's sad. So to we...that's the first hurdle. We are going to have to find out we are sinners.

Then, secondly, turn to John six. We are going to have to learn the gospel. We are going to have to learn the gospel. In John chapter six we are going to have to be taught of God. We are going to have to learn the gospel. And what is the gospel, David? The gospel is the gospel of God, isn't it? We know that. It came from God.

Secondly, it is the gospel concerning his Son. We know that. That is what the gospel is. The gospel is not concerning what you do or what anybody else does. It concerns Christ; who he is, what he did, why he did it, where he is. It concerns Christ alone. It is the gospel concerning his Son. Christ is my righteousness. He is my wisdom. He is my sanctification. He is my atonement. He is my sin offering. He is my high priest. He is my mediator. He is alpha and omega, the beginning and the end and all in between. God looks on Christ and not on me. It is concerning his Son. Not just his finished work, but his eternal work. Not just his death, but his righteousness. And I know this. That gospel is

a gospel of God's grace, pure grace, free grace, grace alone. And the only way to learn that is to be taught of God.

John six says this. Our Lord said in verse 44, "No man can come to me, is able, has the ability to come to me except my Father which sent me draw him. He is going to have be drawn by the Father and I will raise him up. It is written in the prophets, 'They shall all be taught of God, taught of God.'"

And I'll tell you. Before God teaches a man what is the first thing he does? He shuts his mouth. A man or woman will never learn. I am warning. I am telling you. You will never learn while you are teaching, talking, telling somebody else what you believe, what your position is. When a man learns is when God strips him and breaks him and humbles him and sets him down and shuts his mouth. Then God teaches him. God teaches him.

I'll tell you what God teaches him. He teaches him who he is, who he is.

I love the way Tom opened his prayer in our Bible study class this morning. "God, oh God, our Father. We know a little bit about how awesome you are, how mighty and how glorious, how eternal and magnificent."

Do you? Do you?

Now, the next thing he will teach you is how insignificant, how wretched and worthless in Adam you are, how no account. God doesn't need you. God doesn't need me. We need him. But you don't amount to a hill of beans in yourself. In Christ you do. You are somebody in Christ. You are a prince. But out of Christ you are nothing but a rebel. You are nothing but an enemy of God. You are nothing but a son of Satan. You are nothing but a tree that cumbereth the ground, that bringeth forth no fruit and God says, "Cut it down and burn it." Christ said, "In me are all things and without me you can do nothing."

What is the branch separated from the vine? Fit for nothing but to be gathered together and cast into the fire and burned, worthless, less than nothing. Man at his best state is vanity. God will teach you that.

And I will tell you this. It will turn your eyes on Christ. And he will let you see from eternity past to eternity future everything he has ever had for the sinner considered giving the sinner, set down in his purpose to bestow upon the sinner, he purposed it in his Son.

Christ is the first born of every creature, the first born from the dead and he is the first in God's kingdom. And every thing we have is because of him and in him and through him and for his glory. That is so. God will teach you that. And God will shut you up to faith in Christ. Grace, what a charming sound. Grace.

Now, here is the third hurdle. Find out I am a sinner. God has to do it. Strip me. God has to do it, to break me, to humble me, to shut my mouth, to make me see I am nothing, have nothing, Arthur Pink said, and know nothing, poor in spirit, poverty stricken, in the

kingdom of God less than nothing, lower than the beasts, lower than the animals, a wiggling maggot, unworthy of God's attention, found him on the dung hill and set him on a throne. Where did he find him? Where he did he find me? Down here on the dung hill. He found every one of his sons on the dung hill. That is our abode. That is our place of habitation, the dung hill. God found us there. And God washed us and cleansed us in the blood of his Son and robed us in the righteousness of Christ and shod our feet and put a crown on our head and a ring on our finger and exalted us and set us on his throne, not ours, his. And he did it all. He brought me scratching and fighting all the way. That's right. He put me on a throne.

Everyone of us is going to hell if we can. That's right. Everyone of us. And it is all by his grace, all by his grace. And then he will teach us the gospel. And what he will teach us. And then the third thing, what is it? The difficulties. It is to rest therein. Did you know that? To stay there.

Gerald mentioned this to me in the study a while ago. He talked about what I preached this morning, how much he appreciated it, how he believed it. He said, "The amazing thing to me," and it is amazing to me, too, but then I understand it to some extent. He says, "It seems that some people...some people lay hold of this message of grace, of Christ, of salvation by Christ, God's election and Christ's redemption, Christ's burial and resurrection, Christ's intercession. They seem to lay hold on that and they seem to appreciate it to some extent and even teach it and argue for it. But then they still...it's Christ and this and that and something else. And you can't be saved by Christ unless this and unless that and unless something else. And if you are saved by Christ, this, this and this."

I know that. And do you know what it is? I'll tell you what it is. They have never...they have got a head knowledge of Christ, but they have never really been satisfied with Christ. They have never really laid hold of Christ with the full heart and the whole heart and the complete heart. They have never been completely satisfied that everything that the law requires and that God requires and that justice demands is met in Christ and they are satisfied with Christ. Otherwise they wouldn't add anything to Christ. If I am complete, then nothing needs to be added, nothing.

And here is another thing they don't see. That is the first thing. They have never seen that everything the law demands, everything that justice requires, everything legally, everything spiritually that God almighty is and requires is fulfilled in Christ. I am complete in Christ and you can't get more than complete.

Brother Scott Richardson says, "We make the mistake talking about growing in grace as if we grew in the grace of God." Oh, no. We are as gracious as we will ever be in God's sight. We are as holy as we will ever be. We are in Christ. We grow in acts of grace. We grow in love and faith and these things. But as far as acceptance, I am already seated on God's right hand in Christ. I don't grow in that, not at all.

See, another thing wrong was this. Anybody who looks to anything else for fulfillment or for additional acceptance or for completion, never saw himself a sinner. Now, let me tell you something. Brethren, a sinner is dead, dead. A sinner is without any way in this world of satisfying a holy God. Let me tell you something. Even those good things, good in whose sight, good in our sight. But what is good in God's sight? Perfection. And I have never done...listen to me. I have never done in the eyes of God a good work, never, never, never. Have you?

Russell, have you ever done a good work? Now, in my eyes you do. I wouldn't take a dollar and half and a county calf for you. I think you are one of the finest men I know. I think you are one of the most loyal, dependable...but you ain't never done nothing in God's sight that is perfect, never have. And I haven't either. In other words, I have no good works on my account, none. I have got a lot on Christ's account.

Do you see what I am talking about? I don't... you can give your body to be burned and have not Christ and it will profit you nothing. You can bestow your good to feed the poor and have not Christ. It will profit you nothing. That is Bible. You can speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not Christ and you are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. You have never performed one good work and you never will in God's sight. In the flesh, what does the Bible say? No man can please God. No man.

But I will tell you this. Now, here is what I am saying. By grace in Christ I have a perfect standing. In Christ my works, my prayers, my deeds, my worship, as unholy as they are, as selfish as they are, as tainted as they are, as sinful as they are, are accepted in Christ, in Christ.

Please listen to me. That's so. I beg of you it is so. You have got to stay there. Paul said, "I..." Turn to Galatians chapter two and listen to it, Galatians chapter two.

And you say, "Well, preacher, if you keep on like this you will discourage good works."

I hope I discourage any man from trusting in them. I hope I discourage any man from finding any joy in them. I hope I discourage any man from having any hope in them. I hope I discourage any man from having any approval of them. I hope I show every man that there is no such thing out of Christ as a good work. And that will shut him up to Christ. Won't it?

But Paul says in Galatians 2:21, "I do not confuse, I do not confound, I do not frustrate the grace of God. If righteousness comes by the law in any shape, form or fashion, Jesus Christ died in vain."

Now, turn back to our text and let me show you something here quickly. I want you to look at these two women. He says here...I read it to you. You remember me reading it, Hagar and Sarah. Abraham had a wife named Sarah. God said to him, "You are going to have a son." Abraham was 90 years old or less than that. He was 80 some odd when God first promised him an heir. "Out of your own bowels you will have a son."

Well, he got to be 86 years old and he still didn't have a son. Sarah was 10 years younger. She was 76 and didn't have a son, was past, the Scripture says, the way of women at that time. So she said to him, she said, "There is my handmaid Hagar. Go in to her and have a son."

So Abraham listened to the voice of his wife, went in to her and had a son. He was 86 years old when this one was born. And Ishmael started growing up and God came to Abraham when he was 90. Ishmael was four years old and God said, "Abraham, I told you you were going to have a son. Out of your own bowels you will have an heir and he will be great."

And Abraham said, "Lord, I am 90 years old and Sarah is 80, past her the way of women." He said, "Let Ishmael live before thee."

"No, sir. No, sir. I will not have Ishmael. I will not have him. I won't have him. You are going to have a son by Sarah. It is going to be a miracle son. It is going to be a son God gave, a son God gave."

So when Abraham was 100 years old and Ishmael was 14 years old, a young man running around 14 years old, Sarah was 90. She conceived and bore a son, bore a son. And when they were weaning Isaac, Ishmael was about 15 or so then. When they were weaning Isaac and Ishmael is over there laughing at him, mocking Isaac, mocking him, mocking the heir. And Sarah saw him and Sarah told Abraham and said, "Get rid of that woman and her son."

And Abraham went to God and he said, "I can't do that."

And the Lord God said to him, "Sarah is right. Cast out the bondwoman and her son. Cast them out. For the bondwoman and her son will not be heir with the free woman and her son." That is what God said.

All right, then, Paul comes along right here and says, "Those two women are an allegory, a something that happened back there, people, things and events that illustrate something right now." Paul says, "Those two women are the two covenants. Hagar is the covenant of works, the dos and don'ts and deeds. That is who she stands for. Ishmael, her son, is the product of the covenant of works." See that? Flesh. Abraham produced him. Hagar produced him. Works produced him. Sarah is a covenant of grace, pure miracle, pure grace, pure purpose, pure promise that God made before the foundation of the world.

Isaac, her son, was born when she was 90 years old. And her husband was 100, a pure miracle, a pure work of God. Ishmael, born of the flesh, Isaac born by the fire of God.

And, my friends, that is the difference, right here in works and grace. Works is what you do. Works is what you produce. Grace is what God did and what God produced. Abraham could take credit for Ishmael. Abraham got to...I am sure when he came out

down the street and that boy was born people were patting him on the back and saying, "Abraham, great. Glad you got a son."

"Yeah," he said, "I am proud, too."

But I tell you. Isaac wasn't any reason for him to be proud. God did that. Abraham didn't do it. God did it. Sarah didn't do it. God did it. All the praise and the glory goes to God.

I am going to show you some things about these two women. First of all, first of all, Sarah was Abraham's wife originally. That's right. She was original wife. And the covenant of grace is the original covenant. It was made before the foundation of the world. It was made before Abraham ever knew Hagar, before Hagar was ever on the scene, before Hagar was ever heard of, before Hagar was ever born Sarah was the wife. That's right. That's right. And I am telling you God's covenant of grace towards sinners was there before sinners were ever born, before the covenant of works had ever produced on Hagarine. Is that a good name? A Hagarine. I think that would be a good denomination, a Hagarine. It wouldn't be a Nazarene, it would be a Hagarine.

But before there was ever a Hagarine, whoever wiggled and writhed under heaven, God had a covenant of grace. Now, Hagar was never Abraham's wife, never was. Never intended to be and never was. Sarah was his wife. And the covenant of works was never intended to save anybody. Hagar was never free. She was a slave when he met her and a slave when he hired her and a slave when she conceived and a slave when she gave birth to the son and a slave when they put her out, never free. Sarah was free and Isaac was born free, born free.

And I will tell you this. Everybody that is born by the grace of God is born free, was never a slave, was never in bondage, always a son of God.

Now, watch this. Turn to Genesis 21. I want to show you this. Genesis 21. And this is what we have got to do and it is a hard thing for the flesh to do. But in Genesis chapter 21, let's look at it. And it says in verse eight, Genesis 21:8, are you with me? "And the child grew and was weaned and Abraham made a great feast this day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian which was born unto Abraham mocking. She said, 'Abraham, cast out this bondwoman and her son for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, never, never, never.' And the thing was grievous in Abraham's son because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, 'Let it not be grievous in your sight because of Ishmael, because of the bond woman. In all that Sarah hath said to you hearken to her voice for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.'"

Do you see that? Now turn to Galatians three and I will show you that same name over here. And this is hard for us. It is hard for us. And, boy, I will tell you, Abraham...when God told him that, here is Sarah the free woman and her free born son, a gift of God, a miracle, of God that is a type of Christ and a type of salvation, the covenant of grace. Here is Hagar and her slave son. He is still Abraham's son. He is a product of Abraham's

flesh. He is as much a part of Abraham as Isaac is. He is older than Isaac. You know, though Sarah was the first wife, Hagar had the first son. And though there was a covenant of grace before the covenant of works was ever produced, the covenant of works produced the first son. Adam was an Ishmael. And my old flesh was born before I was born spiritually. And I will tell you. Abraham sat there and he said, "I can't do that. I can't. That is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh."

God said, "He has got to go. I don't care how painful it is. I don't care how hard it is. I don't care how distressed you are. Ishmael has got to go, got to go."

And I will tell you this. We gnaw and bite, but look at Galatians chapter four. Listen to this, verse 30. "Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? 'Cast out the bondwoman.'" Who is she? The old covenant. "And her son." Who is he? He is the product of the old covenant. He is a product of works. He is a product of the flesh. "Cast him out for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman."

"But, Lord, let's give the...let's give Ishmael a little corner over here on the ranch. Ain't nobody going to pay much attention to him. Let's just..."

Oh, no. Listen to me. In salvation Christ is going to have all the glory. Our flesh and deeds and works are not even going to live in one little corner. They have to be cast out. That is what Paul is saying in Philippians three if you want to look at it a minute. In Philippians three here he named all the things he had done and all the things he was. He said, in verse five, "I was circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee." Verse six, "Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church. Touching righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But all these things I count loss. Yea, I count them all loss for the excellency of Christ." He said in verse eight, "And I do count them but rubbish to be cast out, dung to be cast out."

And I say this to you. We take all that we have ever done and all that we have ever said, religiously, our heritage, our ancestry, our tithes, our gifts, our preaching, our teaching, our decisions, our experiences, all that we have, all our little Ishmaelites, our little Hagarines, let's take everyone of them and let's cast them out. Tell them goodbye. Turn them into the wilderness. The son of promise, the son of purpose, the son of grace, he lives alone. He is exalted alone. God is not going to share his glory. He is just not going to share his glory. We are intent on blending them. We are intent on giving Ishmael...We will give Christ the major place.

You will give Christ the whole place.

But we will give Christ the greatest honor.

You will give Christ all the honor.

But we will recognize Christ is worthy.

You will recognize him alone as worthy. That's just so. That's where the rubber hits the road. That is where business with God is done, in Christ, for Christ, through Christ. And he is not going to recognize your Ishmaels. That has got to be done. You have got to...whatever it...however it hurts, however painful it is, how much it turns people against you... You just think what the neighbors thought when Abraham put Hagar out. I bet there was some talk went on. Just think what the neighbors said.

“You mean you are going to put that boy out? He's yours.”

“That's right. I am going to put him out because he is mine. And I am going to cling to Isaac because he is God's.”

That's right. And you let them talk. You let them say what they will. It is not men that are going to judge you. It is God that is going to judge. And we have got to get rid of our Ishmaels and our Hagers, cast them out. Be done with them. Count them but rubbish. Fit for burning. Take the best we have that the flesh has ever produced, no matter how proud we are of it.

“I raised that boy.”

I know you did. That's what's wrong with him. You are going to have that one God raised. He will raise his own in the image of his Son, Jesus Christ, created in his image, created in his image. He will get the glory.