

W464_C_Finish_Work_of_Christ_41.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book at the dinner hour service. Under the covering title of the finished work. And we are considering some of the teaching in Paul's epistle to the Galatians, which we also have said, although we couldn't demonstrate it, that we believe it to be the first of his epistles. At this meeting, I want to help you to see how this epistle to the Galatians overlaps and meets together the Jew and the Gentile in their need of a savior and God's provision. And certain terms are used that are distinctive. And if we can just get these in their place, it may be another little link in a great chain. You say? What's all this about? Well, you remember I just mentioned to you 2 or 3 things which we notice in Galatians and then attempt to illustrate them. He says in Galatians. About the Cross of Christ. That has been placarded, if you get the word translated literally. Oh, foolish Galatians who hath bewitched you before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been placarded and you might think that is an anachronism. That's a good word, isn't it? But actually there is. In one of our museums, a placard that was on one of the walls in ancient Rome. An election was on so and so was a good man. Vote for him. And Paul says, I'll not only preach Christ, I placarded it.

[00:01:44] What's happened to you? That's what people think. Keep in mind. Another one is that he refers to his condition among them, which are a little bit of sympathy. Just at this moment, he said, I was with you in a fit of sickness. And he said I was a deplorable looking person because I believe if I had to do with ophthalmia a dreadful disease in the East, so that he said, you would have plucked out your own eyes if there had been any good. So taking the pin out of the hand of the amanuensis who was writing that dictation, as far as we know, he says, See? Not what a big epistle I've written for. It's a short one. See with what large letters I have written unto you and appeal to their affection that it is difficulties. He was taking the pen and saying, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And then thirdly. In this epistle, the Apostle Paul uses two figures for the great sacrifice of Christ. He stresses the cross. He stresses, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross. But he also says that Christ died on a tree. Now, the the point is that if we look at the passages in the Bible, the point is that Peter. Never uses the word cross. Never once. He speaks about the tree because he was a Jew writing to Jews and Paul.

[00:03:24] He speaks about the cross. But in this one epistle and in Acts 13, where he is speaking to the Galatians, he uses the word tree. So that we have in this one epistle, you see the overlapping that what Christ did for the Jew by being hanged on a tree. And what he did for the Gentile was crucified on a Roman cross as linked together the whole sacrificial work on which, whether we are Jew or Gentile, we stand. And in this epistle to the Galatians, he says that Christ was born of a woman. That takes you back to Genesis three and there was no Jews or Gentiles. Then there were just men. Just mankind. Then he says, made under the law that takes you them outside the law along by in the book and meets with the claim of a broken law. Well, now before I go any further. I've got here. I've seen this before, some of you. But it will illustrate my point in three ways. This is a scroll of the book of Esther. Will you say what Esther got to do with Galatians? Well, first of all, you notice the size of the letters. They are roughly about a quarter of an inch a usual size for a Hebrew manuscript. But when I begin to unfold this and you see that there is one column where the letters are very much larger, don't you see the apostle was doing what they knew they did in these scrolls When they want to emphasize a thing very much, they put it in very large letters.

[00:05:07] So you see with what large letters I've written unto you because I want to impress this upon you. Now, strictly speaking, this is peculiar because they are the names of the sons of Haman who were hanged upon the very tree that he planned for Mordecai and the destruction of the Jewish people. Well, that's one thing. Well, now, again, in this in this sacred outline that you've got the word which could easily be placarding of truth. That's the second statement in Galatians and the third, which is not in this Hebrew scroll, but is a peculiarity of the Greek version of the Old Testament. That one passage only. I'll read it. It says in Esther, chapter seven, verse nine and Harbor-north. One of the Chamberlains said before the king. Behold also the gallows 50 cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king standing in the house of Haman. And the king said, hang him thereon. Now that's a proper translation of the Hebrew, but for some reason known to God, he puts there in the Septuagint version, the Greek version, the one and only occurrence of the word crucify in the whole of the Old Testament.

[00:06:37] There is no word for crucify here, but 300 years before Christ, they anticipated that Christ who would be hanged upon a tree would also be crucified on a cross. Can you doubt the overruling guidance of the Spirit of God? Will you come in one

little obscure book like this with three different points where another epistle written or another letter written hundreds of years afterwards would be benefited by it? It's not accidental. We are trusting in a living saviour and we are trusting in a living book, not the searchings of men groping, but the revelation of God dictating. And so we can trust it to the last letter. Well, now, with that thought, let's turn to the epistle, to the Galatians and see these features. But first of all, I think we all notice the way in which Peter uses the tree. And while we're in the acts of the apostles, we'll see how Paul uses it. Now. The Acts of the Apostles. Chapter five. Verse 30. It says verse. Verse 29, Chapter five. Then Peter said and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. The lead chapter came. Peter is still the speaker. We read again in chapter ten, verse 39. Somewhat similar charge. This verse 39 is Peter's statement in connection with Cornelius and onwards.

[00:08:40] Ever. And we are witnesses of all things, which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom ye they slew and hanged on a tree. And then to show that this is not accidental in his epistle, first Epistle, Chapter 224. We read that Christ bear our sins in his own body on the tree. So it's a consistent emphasis by Peter that Christ died upon a tree. Now, will you look at Acts 13? X13. Here we have Paul at Antioch. And he is in the synagogue at Antioch. And we now know that Antioch was in Galatia. So here we have Paul in speaking to a company in Galatia and here in this particular passage, he says. Verse 29. I think it is. Yes. Verse 28. And though they found no cause of death in him yet desired, they pilot that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree. Now, that's as far as my knowledge goes, is the only time that Paul outside Galatians ever uses the word tree. But you see how consistent it is. When Peter spoke on the day of Pentecost. We are reading the Acts Chapter two. There were none but Jews only there. In spite of all the tradition that had been tacked onto it.

[00:10:29] But when Peter speaks, he says in verse 26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham and whosoever among you fear it God. So here we have the overlap. The Jew is still there and he is still first. But the Gentile is coming in through Paul's ministry. So he uses the word tree as well as the word cross. And after he's done it in Galatians and after he spoke of it in this synagogue in Galatia, he drops the reference and then uses plainly the execution under Roman law for he was the apostle

of the Gentiles. But it's interesting to see how these things overlap. Well, if you come back to the Epistle, to the Galatians now itself, or go on to the Epistle to the Galatians, I think we'll read those passages, which I just alluded to. First of all, we are dealing with a tree. So we read these words. But a chapter three. Verse one. Oh, foolish Galatians who hath bewitched you? That you should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been Evidently. Set forth crucified among you. Evidently set forth is just the word to placard. He said, I haven't merely preached. I haven't really suggested I've exhibited in the plainest possible terms that here is the basis of all our hopes. He said so about himself. First, he says in verse 19 of the preceding chapter for I through the law, am dead to the law that I might live unto God to the law.

[00:12:17] How did you die? To the law? Well, will you look at chapter three, verse ten. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God. It is evident for the just shall live by faith. But the law is not of faith, but the man to do with them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us, for it is written cursed is everyone that haggith on a tree. So there the Jew had his conscience before him settled that the curse had been endured, that he was now free from an endeavor to save himself by the works of the law. He could put his trust in a finished sacrifice, receive forgiveness of sins and justification before God, become a member of a new creation, and rise to walk in newness of life and serve in newness of spirit. But isn't it good to see how it's been hedged about so that there was no loophole left for either Jew or Gentile to go astray? Well, then dealing with the large letter.

[00:13:43] In chapter six, he says. Uh, verse 11. Ye see how large a letter are written unto you with mine own hand? Well, now that large a letter makes you think that he's referring to the epistle. But the word letter here means a character. It's a letter of the alphabet. And he was doing just the same as we saw in that scroll of Esther enlarging with large letters, cumbersome writing, possibly something at the last, as he himself would put in. Do remember that. In the days of the Apostle. A person of sudden. Standing in education may not hardly be able to write his own name. In our own country a few hundred years ago, a writer, an author, he wasn't looked upon as very much. And in the days of the Apostle, those wonderful manuscripts which we see in the museums with a wonderful lettering, they were done by a scholar. They were done by a slave. And

if you like, you could ask a person who wrote the epistle to the Romans. And if they said, Paul, you say, Oh, no. So if you read the last chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, we read I tertius who wrote this epistle Salute you in the Lord. Now Tertius is number three. We read a Secunda to number two. And so we've got, we've got Primus, we've got Secundus Quartus, we've got Tertius.

[00:15:23] So we've got these two, three and four. That was their numbers. Slaves who wrote so, so much a page. That's why nearly every manuscript has got the identical number of lines on it because they were paid so much a line. But it's very good for us because if a page is destroyed, we've simply got to count and say, yes, that's that's what's happened. You know what's happened. It's all right. All these things are overruled. So we have here. The statement. See our larger letter. I am using. I'm appealing to you. And what I say is, God forbid that I should boast. Glory. Save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto thee and I under the world. In a preceding chapter, he said, the flesh is crucified. And here we have then the flesh and the world and sin. As of writing of the Law Order, with all put away, all completed. And I felt that it would be a useful sidelight for you to take away may not be greatly importance, but we never know. Maybe a useful sidelight on the way in which these epistles were written and the connection with some of these Old Testament scrolls and. Prepare us for our next step. Our next step will be to consider the possibility that the epistle to the Hebrews, which has no signature, no name to it, doesn't say who wrote it.

[00:17:05] Was that the Galatians was a covering letter written at the same time. And Paul was not an apostle to the Hebrews, so he didn't put his name. But 1 or 2 things that he ought to have said in Hebrews, if it was all by itself, are already said in Galatians. So when we meet together next time, which will not be, God willing, next Wednesday. I hope you don't begrudge me time off either for the usual holiday, which we hope to have and for the fact that I'm still under observation at the hospital. But when we meet together after the fortnight interval, I want then to pick up and show you that Galatians and Hebrews marched together and they understood better if they are seen as a pair. And then we shall have canvassed the great basic truth in detail, not in much detail, certainly of justification in Galatians. And when we've traversed Hebrews, we should have the companion sanctification in Hebrews and all those will be part and parcel of the process unto the hand of God. Of the coveted title of this series, the

finished Work. Or may we be glad to think we belong to it. That we can realize that when Christ said it is finished on the cross, he knew what it meant, even if we only have a vague idea.