

## Not a Slave But A Son Galatians 4:1-7

### I. What we were in the past (v.1-3)

- A. Before adoption, one was no different than a slave. (v.1-2)
- “For all practical purposes, the child did not differ at all from a slave under whom he was being trained. Just as a slave had masters, so he had masters. But at the date set by the father, the child’s status changed radically...He was no longer a child or like a slave, but a responsible adult and citizen.”<sup>1</sup>
- B. Before adoption, one was also held in the bondage of spiritual ignorance. (v.3)
- “All legal efforts to achieve salvation by human merit, both by the Mosaic Law or by the Gentile religions, were simply the results of bondage. One might ask how bondage to the Law can be bad, when it was God who gave Israel the Law. Paul is not, of course, implying that the Law was in itself bad. He refers to the way in which Israel took a good thing that had been designed to reveal their sin to them and so twisted its purpose that it became for them an attempted means of salvation. Used in this way, it enslaved them.”<sup>2</sup>
  - “Legalism, then, is not a step toward maturity; it is a step back into childhood. The Law was not God’s final revelation; it was but the preparation for that final revelation in Christ. It is important that a person know his ABCs, because they are the foundation for understanding all of the language. But the man who sits in a library and recites the ABCs instead of reading the great literature that is around him, is showing that he is immature and ignorant, not mature and wise. Under the Law, the Jews were children in bondage, not sons enjoying liberty.”<sup>3</sup>

### II. What God did (v.4-5)

- A. God’s ushered in a plan of redemption in Christ. (v.4-5)
- a. How Jesus Came (v.4)
1. According to the right time (v.4a)
    - “This “time” was when the Roman civilization had brought peace and a road system which facilitated travel; when the Grecian civilization provided a language...of the empire; when the Jews had proclaimed monotheism and the messianic hope in the synagogues of the Mediterranean world. It was then that God sent His Son, the preexistent One, out of heaven and to earth on a mission.”<sup>4</sup>
  2. According to the right means (v.4b)
    - “Born of a woman is not intended to be an exclusive statement emphasizing the absence of a man, and thus does not so much refer to Jesus’ virgin birth,

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important as that great truth is, as to His complete humanity. He was fully man, born of a woman like all other men, yet He was fully God. Otherwise He could not have been Savior of the world. He had to be fully God in order for His sacrifice to have the infinite worth necessary to atone for the sin of mankind. He also had to be fully man in order to represent mankind and take the penalty of sin upon Himself in man's behalf."<sup>5</sup>

3. According to the right economy [Rom. 8:3-4] (v.4c)

b. Why Jesus Came (v.5)

1. To redeem those who would trust in Him.

- "This is... [a redemption] from a slavery to the entire Mosaic system. The emphasis is not on the penalty of the Law as in 3:13, but on its bondage. Since Christ redeemed and set free those who were under the Law, why should Gentile converts now wish to be placed under it? Second, Christ's death secured for believers the full rights of sons. All the enjoyments and privileges of a mature son in a family belong to those who have entered into the benefits of Christ's redemptive work."<sup>6</sup>

### III. Who We Are in the present (v.6-7)

A. God has bestowed both sonship and privilege to those in Christ.

- "The fundamental proof and evidence that the Galatians are truly God's adopted sons is that God has given them the Holy Spirit, and their sonship is expressed by their acclamation that God is their Father."<sup>7</sup>

<b>3 Realities Involved in Salvation</b>		
<p>Through evangelism, one hears and believes the Gospel and is transformed from Spiritual Death to Life. This occurs in one's experience in time. (Acts 16:14-15, 16:30-31)</p>	<p>By His death upon the Cross, Jesus purchased (redeemed) out of the slave market of sin, an innumerable number of people in order to make them sons of God. (Gal. 4:5; Rev. 5:9)</p>	<p>By His death upon the Cross, God adopts His children, bestowing on them the full rights and privileges of the inheritance of Christ, His Son. (Gal. 4:6-7; Eph. 1:11)</p>

a. Our inheritance in Christ

1. Includes ruling and reigning with Christ in His kingdom. [Lk. 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; Rev. 20:4; Rev. 3:21; Rev. 21:7; Rev. 2:25]
2. Includes crowns and personal accolades.

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- 1 Cor. 9:25 – “crown incorruptible for faithfulness”
- 1 Thes. 2:19 – “crown of rejoicing for a joyful life”
- 2 Tim. 4:8 – “crown of righteousness for loving Christ through actions”
- James 1:12 – “crown of life for personal obedience”
- 1 Peter 5:4 – “shepherd’s crown for faithful pastoring”
- Rev. 2:10 – “crown of life for those persecuted”

**Points to Ponder:**

1. Every believer is made a child of God through faith alone in Christ alone and is promised an inheritance as an heir.
2. Every Christian will have a portion of inheritance but this is determined by how well one lives as an “adult son” in the family.
3. The appeal to every believer is grow up in the faith and take hold of your inheritance in Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., Galatians, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 105.

<sup>2</sup> S. Lewis Johnson, The Greatest Commission An Exposition of Galatians 4:1–7, *EMJ* 14:1 (Summer 2005), 48.

<sup>3</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1996), 706.

<sup>4</sup> Donald K. Campbell, “Galatians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), 601.

<sup>5</sup> MacArthur, *Commentary*, 108.

<sup>6</sup> Campbell, *BKC*, 601.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, Galatians, *Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 271.

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