

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

GALATIANS 3:26—4:7



LESSON: HEIRS BECAUSE OF THE GOSPEL—May 19, 2019

INTRODUCTION:

Before the faith was revealed we were confined under the law, as it were in prison, in a state of preparation for the faith. The law was "added" (3:19) in order to do a work of preparation until the gospel was revealed. Thus, we were "kept under the law" and kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. To put it another way, the law was our schoolmaster, it was like a tutor, a guide to lead to Christ where we could be justified by faith. When once brought to Christ, and faith had arrived, we do not need the tutor; we are no longer under the law of a schoolmaster any longer (3:23-25).

LESSON: I. THE REWARDS OF FAITH GALATIANS 3:26-29

3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Faith makes us children of God. How? Jesus Christ brings us face to face with God. He stirs God to adopt us as children of God by faith.

- Faith comes to us to focus upon God's Son, Jesus Christ. This simply means that God will honor any person who honors His Son by believing and trusting Him.

3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ¹Paul now shows how their faith acted to bring them into Christ. The believer is **baptized into Christ**, and being found in Him has **put on Christ**. The phrase "put on" is the picture of putting on clothes, of covering oneself. And because we are clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, God sees us in His Son and accepts us. Being in Christ, a member of His body; a part of the Son, the believer becomes a child of God. Compare Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 10:2, and Matt. 28:19.

- Faith clothes us with Christ, with His righteousness and Sonship. When God looks at the believer, He sees His Son Jesus Christ covering him, therefore, He counts the believer as a son of His.

3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. In Christ the old, worldly lines of separation are all blotted out. Even in the different distinctions, there are no barriers to Christian fellowship. While the law separated our distinctions, Christ united us. All are one. One person, as it were, "one new man" (Eph. 2:15), of which Christ is the head of all, without regard to race or gender, blended into one whole.

3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. If you have given yourself completely to Christ, then you belong to Him and therefore inherit the promise. And those being in Christ are then part of Abraham's family; Abraham's seed, heirs of the promise to Abraham—What belongs to him belongs to us.

II. A NEW POSITION GALATIANS 4:1-7

4:1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;— Each society has a time for a young boy to become a man. In Paul's days, it was a very important event. As soon as a boy became a man, he had full legal rights. Until that time, other people had to manage a child's personal and business affairs. Young children could not own property, even if their father gave it to them. Young children had no rights. Slaves could not own property either; so young children and slaves were in the same situation. In Jewish society, a boy became a man soon after he was 12 years of age. In Greek society, a boy became a man at about 18 years of age. In Roman society, the child's father decided when the child was ready to

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be an adult. So, Paul was probably using Roman society as a model in this verse. He is illustrating the spiritual immaturity of those living under the law and who are being prepared for faith in Christ. Therefore, when a son is a minor and too young to receive his inheritance, he might as well be a slave. And this was the situation of Paul and his fellow Israelites under the Old Covenant.

4:2 But is under tutors and governors— Paul uses two terms that both carry the idea of entrusting someone with something of value: 1) tutors and 2) governors. **"Tutors"** are guardians who have the supervision of the person. **"Governors"** are stewards who have supervision of the property. They are trustees who manage the estate. The minor child, like the slave, is subordinate to other decision-makers and authority-figures **...until the time appointed of the father.** The child cannot speak or act on his own behalf. Therefore, in Roman society, the child's father decided when the child was ready to be an adult. In God's eternal timing, He appointed a time when the believer would operate under grace.

4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:— Paul now brings the point home. The Galatians were bound in legalism when they operated by rules. People subject to rules function like children. The law enslaved those under it from Sinai to Christ. The Greek indicates that they were in a permanent state of bondage to the law. **...under the elements of the world** referred to the **"elementary principles"** the Galatians previously followed, which for Jews would be the Mosaic law and for Gentiles, the basic concepts of their pagan religions. But they were enslaved like little children in terms of their mind-set and life situations under a legalistic system. Legalism is not a step toward maturity; it is a step back into childhood. When enslaved by the law, the Jews were children in bondage, not sons enjoying liberty.

4:4 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,— The idea behind the phrase **"the fullness of time" is "when the time was right."** Jesus came at just the right time in God's redemptive plan, when the world was perfectly prepared for God's work. There was a fullness of time when God delivered the world— God sent forth His Son, born of a woman— Jesus came not only as God's Son, but also as one born of a woman, born under the law to deliver man from condemnation of the law. Jesus Christ had to live under the law in order to secure the perfect righteousness of law for man. He had to obey the law in every single precept and stand before God as the Perfect and Ideal Man—Ideal Embodiment of Righteousness. God spoke the Word from the beginning to time. The woman conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit and the power of the Highest (God) overshadowed her (Luke 1:35).

4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Paul has told us **WHO** came; **WHEN** He came, and **HOW** He came. Now he explains **WHY** He came. **Christ came in the fullness of time, made of a woman to redeem them that were under the law.** **"Redeem"** is the same word Paul used earlier (Gal.3:13); it means *"to set free by paying a price."* The reason that all must be redeemed from the law is the fact that by the law, all are condemned to die. The law brings death. Romans 6:23, *"For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Therefore redemption was necessary that He might receive the adoption of sons. The word **"adoption"** (huiothesia) means "to place as a son." In the ancient world the family was based on a Roman law called **"patrla potestas,"** the father's power. The law gave the father absolute authority over his children as long as the father lived. He could work, enslave, sell, and if he wished, he could pronounce the death penalty. Regardless of the child's adult age, the father held all power over personal and property rights. Therefore adoption was a serious matter. Yet, it was a common practice to ensure that a family would not become extinct by having no male children. And when a child was adopted, three legal steps were taken.

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1. The adopted son was adopted permanently. He could not be adopted today and disinherited tomorrow.
2. The adopted son immediately had all the rights of a legitimate son in the new family.
3. The adopted son completely lost all rights in his old family. He was looked upon as a new person, that old debts and obligations connected with his former family were cancelled out and abolished as if they never existed.



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Christ's "**adoption of sons**" is bestowed as a gift. We cannot have it, and still be in bondage. We might no longer be accounted and treated as servants, but as sons grown up to maturity, who are allowed greater freedoms, and admitted to larger privileges, than when under tutors and governors.

4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

God the Father sent the Son to die for us, and then He sent the promise of the Spirit to live in us—The contrast here is not between immature children and adult sons, but between servants and sons. Like the prodigal son (Lk.15:18-19), the Galatians wanted their Father to accept them as servants, when they really were sons. So, because they were sons, and having the Holy Spirit of God's Son in their hearts, makes them desire to cry Abba Father.

4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. This verse ends a long section that Paul started in 3:1. The Christians in Galatia were no longer slaves. They were part of God's family. They were receiving the good things that God promised to Abraham. They received these good things because they trusted Jesus Christ. The contrasts of son and servant:

- **The son has the same nature as the father**, but the servant does not. When we trust Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us; and this means we are partakers of the divine nature (2Pt.1:4). The law could never give a person God's nature. So when the believer goes back into the law, he is denying the very divine nature within, and he is giving the old nature (the flesh) opportunity to go to work.
- **The son has a father, while the servant has a master.** No servant can ever say "*Father*" to his master. When the sinner trusts Christ, he receives the Holy Spirit within, and the Spirit tells him that he is a child of the Father (Rom.8:15-16). It's natural for a baby to cry, but not for a baby to talk to his father. When the Spirit enters the heart, he says Abba Father (Rom.8:15). The word "*Abba*" is an Aramaic word that is the equivalent of our English word "*papa*." This shows the closeness of the child to the Father. No servant has this.
- **The son obeys out of love, while the servant obeys out of fear.** The Spirit works in the heart of the believer to quicken and increase his love for God (Rom.5:5). The Judaizes told the Galatians that they would become better Christians by submitting to the law, but the law can never produce obedience. Only love can do that.
- **The son is rich, while the servant is poor.** We are both sons and heirs. And since we are adopted—placed as adult sons in the family—we may begin drawing on our inheritance right now. God has made available to us the riches of His grace (Eph.1:7; 2:7), the riches of His glory Phil.4:19) the riches of His goodness (Rom.2:4), and the riches of His wisdom (Rom.11:33)—and all of the riches of God are found in Christ (Col.1:19; 2:3).
- **The son has a future while the servant does not.** While many kind masters did provide for their slaves in old age, it was not required of them. The father always provides for the son (2Cor.12:14).

SUMMARY:

Faith makes us children of God because when we believe and accept Christ, the Father accepts us. It starts with faith. When we are baptized into Christ, we have put on Christ. We are then clothed with His righteousness. God seeing His Son's righteousness covering us accepts us. In Christ, the old worldly lines of separation are all blotted out—no more Jew or Greek, bond or free, nor male or female because we are all one in Christ Jesus. And by being in Christ, then we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (**3:26-29**).

The illustration given about a minor child receiving his inheritance although being lord of all was the same as being a slave, for he couldn't for the reason of being under guardianship and supervision which was like being enslaved and held in bondage to the law. But, when the fullness of the time came, God sends forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that they (we) might receive the adoption of sons. And because we are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father, wherefore we will no more be a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ! (**4:1-7**).

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