

Study of Galatians / Lesson 7 – Galatians 4:1-11
Bellevue Church of Christ – Winter 2021

I. Sons and Heirs

Gal 3:29 – "heirs according to the promise"

For the final time Paul contrasts the condition in which believers found themselves before Christ's coming with the position they enjoy now.

Coming of Age

Jews - Became "Son of the Law" shortly after 12th birthday.

Greeks - Around 18th birthday at festival of *Apaturia*. Child passes from care of father to care of state.

Romans - Father had discretion in setting the time of his son's maturity...Occurred at a sacred family festival called *Liberalia*. At that time the son was formally adopted by the father as his acknowledged son and heir.

¹I mean that the heir, as long as *he is a child*, is no different from a *slave*, though *he is the owner of everything*,

How is a Son like a Slave?

When a child was a minor in the eyes of the law, his status was not much different than that of a slave, even though he might be the future heir to a vast estate. He could make no decisions and had no freedom. This is the same as a person under the law.

²but he is under *guardians* and *managers* until the date set by his father. <- *Ga1 3:22-26*

³In the same way we also, *when we were children*, were *enslaved to the elementary principles* of the world. <- *Ga1 3:10; 22-24*

Fullness of Time

- Acts 2:23
- Rom 5:6; 15:8
- Gal 3:8
- Eph 1:3-14

⁴But when the *fullness of time* had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,

⁵to redeem those who were *under the law*, so that we might receive *adoption as sons*. <- *Rom 8:12-17; Eph 1:5*

Adopted sons

Rom 8:15 - We now have the privilege of calling God our "Father," because of the relationship we have through Christ by the giving of His Spirit.

⁶And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "*Abba! Father!*"

Natural Son

The word "Abba" is from Aramaic, and a little more intimate than the word "Father."

⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. <- *Rom 8:17*

II. Slaves Again

⁸Formerly, when you did not know God, you were *enslaved* to those that by *nature are not gods*.

Not only were they slaves, but they were ignorant of the one, true God. Obvious reference to the pagan worship of the Gentiles.

Their previous slavery and ignorance is not surprising to Paul. His astonishment is that they are willing to go back to slavery after having been set free!

-Gal 1:6-9; 3:1

⁹But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, *how can you turn back* again to the weak and *worthless elementary principles* of the world, whose *slaves you want to be once more*?

¹⁰You observe *days* and *months* and *seasons* and years! <- *Lev 23:5, 16, 28; 25:4* - *Special observances under the law of Moses*.

¹¹I am afraid I may have *labored over you in vain*. <- *See Phil 2:16; 1Th 3:5*

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Heirs According to the Promise

Galatians 3:29 (ESV)

²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Guardians and Managers / Elementary Principles

Galatians 3:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."

Galatians 3:22–26 (ESV)

²² But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

Fullness of Time

Acts 2:23 (ESV)

²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Romans 5:6 (ESV)

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 15:8 (ESV)

⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,

Galatians 3:8 (ESV)

⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."

Ephesians 1:3–14 (ESV)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our

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trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Adoption as Sons

Romans 8:12–17 (ESV)

¹² So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Ephesians 1:5 (ESV)

⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

Paul’s Astonishment

Galatians 1:6–9 (ESV)

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁷ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

Galatians 3:1 (ESV)

¹ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.

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Days, Months, Seasons, Years

Leviticus 23:5 (ESV)

⁵ In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight, is the LORD's Passover.

Leviticus 23:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to the LORD.

Leviticus 23:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God.

Leviticus 25:4 (ESV)

⁴ but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the LORD. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.

Labored in Vain

Philippians 2:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

1 Thessalonians 3:5 (ESV)

⁵ For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.