

Galatians 4

Theme of Ch. 3 was seed, the permanence of the promise
Theme of Ch. 4 is sons, position under Law & Grace

Chapter Outline

V1-7 The Adoption of Sons

V1-3 The Past – spiritual minority to acknowledge
V4-7 The Present – spiritual maturity to be accessed

V8-20 The Attitude of Betrayal

V8-11 Liberty giving up
V8 The Past – bondage to idols
V9-11 The Present – bondage to law keeping
V12-16 Love grown cold – A remarkable change from when the gospel had first been heard
V17-20 Loyalty snatched away
V17-18 Deceivers & their Goal –exclusion
V19-20 Apostle & his Goal –Christ be formed in you

V21-29 The Allegory & its Significance

V21-27 The Appeal – if one will follow the law, then learn its truth
V21-23 Historical Story – it is written
V24-27 Spiritual Type – the two covenants
V28-31 The Application – We are sons of the free.

1-7 The Adoption of Sons

1-3 The Past – Spiritual minority to acknowledge

v1-2 Example of Status; a picture from daily life
While in the state of being a child there is no power/authority as compared to the servant (bondslave). The child needed a guardian and a steward. However there is a distinguishing feature. It is what the father has appointed (heir & lord of all)

v3 Application is made to the Galatians
The Law was given because the sinner is like a child in a minority status, and can only dealt with in an elementary fashion. There is a bondage that must be acknowledged. Here, the Law is compared to a guardian. There are other purposes in Ch. 3.
The ‘we’ of v3 may apply to both Gentile and Jew in relation to the descriptions of the elements or ‘first principles’. The rules, regulations, ceremonies, and character of religious systems.

4-7 The Present – Spiritual maturity to be accessed

How will it take place?

- 1) Coming of the Son of God – the incarnation
- 2) Setting/placing as adult sons – the adoption of sons

v4 The Plan of God

The expression, **the fullness of times**, is the completion of a period, or the end of a determined duration of events

There are the dispensations that preceded the coming of Christ. Innocence (until the fall), conscience (until flood), human government (until Babel), promise (until slavery in Egypt), & Law (until rejection of Messiah).
In this divinely appointed time, God sent forth his Son. He came out from the presence of God; He came from God.

v5 The Purpose of God – redemption
Word for redeem is to buy out, with view to giving freedom. Ch 3, redeemed from curse of Law.
Ch 4, redeemed from that system of Law keeping as a way of salvation.
Once children who were subject to law, now the believer is placed as adult sons under grace. The full rights of a son are bestowed on all who believe.
Why would Gentiles turn to something these Judiazers were promoting, when it could not redeem the Jews?
Thus the difference in status between under law, under grace.
For each Believer:
v5 Been placed as adult sons
v6 Knows presence of the Spirit of His Son
v7 Enjoys prospect of heirs of God, through Christ

v6 The Sending of the Spirit
Placing as sons has brought them out (released, freed) from the realm of law, into age of grace. Now the Spirit takes up permanent residence in every believer. This could not have been accomplished under the Law.
The Spirit functions so as to bring to their conscience the knowledge of God as Father, not as Judge. There is a joy in the nearness of relationship which wasn't possible under law.

v7 If a Son, then an Heir
Contrast is made to their previous state of bondage. No wonder Paul says, **oh foolish Galatians**. To go back is to not appreciate the fullness of what Christ has done in His redemption
v5-6 word is sons(plural) – it is the scope of His work
v7 word is son (singular) - it is the singleness of action on a person.
Being an heir of God, is only an act of God. There is nothing to do with the Law or personal works.

Conclusion of v1-7
Justification without or apart from the deeds of the law is emphasized, as Paul seeks to show them their status as ones who have received the adoption of sons.

8-20 The Attitude of Betrayal

8-11 Liberty Giving up

There is no difference between past & present. Both states are characterized by bondage. In the past was idolatry, and presently were serving features of the law & its religious calendar

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v8 The Past before the Gospel

Slavery to that which was not Deity.

v9 The Present Bondage

The emphasis is on God, on being **known of Him**. Why would they turn back to a form what they had been rescued from? Those elements (first principles) described as:
Weak: lack of power Beggarly: poverty stricken
Legalistic Judaism was in poverty itself, therefore had no power or means of imparting spiritual life or godliness.

v10-11 Labour without purpose

Part of their turning involved that which appeals to the natural senses, the external.
These were Paul's own sons in the faith, and as such, he longed for their continuance and growth.

12-16 Love Grown Cold

A very personal appeal based on their shared experience.

v12 An Example to Follow

v13-15 An Expression of Fervent Love

Many suggestions for nature of weakness (**temptation in my flesh**), but regardless, these believers had once looked beyond the external to see a true messenger of God.
The question is, where was now that joy of salvation, that blessedness, that burning desire of first love?

v16 An Exposure of the Truth

Galatians did not like that Paul had exposed the real nature & source of this 'other gospel'.

17-20 Loyalty snatched away

An appeal to understand a contrast in goals and ambitions.

v17- 18 Deceivers & their Goal – exclusion

Desired to shut them out from the benefits of the gospel, for the purpose of further dependence on these false teachers.

v19-20 Apostle & his Goal – Christ be formed in you

Paul had laboured that they might receive new life. Now that toil is being repeated until Christ be formed in you.
Because of this shepherd care, there is a longing to be with them as he is perplexed at the path that is being chosen

21-29 The Allegory & its Significance

V21-27 The Appeal – if going to follow the law, then learn its truth

As son of the bondwoman gave place to the son of the free, so law has given place to grace. Law has no place with grace.
v21-23: two sons, from two mothers, in two ways
v24-27: two covenants, two Jerusalems, slavery & freedom

v21-23 Historical Story – **it is written**

Emphasis is not on the two sons, but the mothers. Sons inherit the status of the mother.

Along with status, the manner of birth is contrasted.

After the flesh, and by promise.

Ishmael born without an act of faith, nothing supernatural. Isaac's birth was by promise. By faith, Abraham & Sarah believed God. Rom 4:19-22. ...**God would perform as He had promised... Therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.**

V24-27 Spiritual Type – **there are two covenants**

Allegory: the facts stated are applied to illustrate principles. Choice set before the Galatians. There can be no mixture. Sarah, Mount Zion, Heavenly Jerusalem, Freedom, Faith... or Hagar, Mount Sinai, Earthly Jerusalem, Bondage, Law

v24-25 One covenant is associated with Sinai and the giving of the Law. Comparison made to Hagar, who being a slave, could only give birth to others who would follow in same slavery. As Hagar could only bear children to bondage, so those from earthly Jerusalem could only do the same.

v26-27 The contrast in the other covenant could not be greater. There is a freedom found in Christ, and it parallels the freedom in the birth of Isaac, the son of the freewoman. Believers are characterized by being born from above. This quote from Isa 54 is used to describe the outcome of these covenants. Sarah is the one who is described as **barren and desolate**. Hagar had the husband. But in the will of God, the outcome of grace will far exceed that of law.

V28-31 The Application

v28 Statement as to Manner of Birth

As Isaac was, so were the Galatians. Born by faith, born supernaturally, and born according to the promise of God. Therefore standing with God is not based on physical descent from Abraham, but to those who act in faith.

v29 Statement as to Outcome of Life

Hagar despised Sarah, Ishmael despised Isaac. That which is legalistic in nature and practice will not stop in seeking to destroy that which is truly of the Spirit.

v30 Statement as to Future Prospect

Sarah acted in God's will, Hagar and Ishmael must be cast out. There is only one heir. There is no joining of bondage and freedom, of law and grace. Pleasing God according to the flesh has no place with inheriting all things by faith in/through Christ.

v31 Statement as to Status in Christ

Everything has been accomplished through faith, the law can only bring a curse. Justification, righteousness is not by the law. It can only bring bondage.
Who are those who are free? Those born after the Spirit.

Conclusion: Nothing gained by placing one selves under bondage to law. Only in freedom from it, would they enjoy the promise of the seed of Abraham, and the blessing as sons.