



News:

Potluck Communion Today! Ladies' Night Monday. Leadership Meeting Thursday.

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GALATIANS 4:1&2 ~ ¹Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave, although he is owner of everything, ²but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.

Even a crown prince destined to follow his father as king, while he is underage, is no different than a slave.

In the sense that he is not his own man.

These “guardians and managers” are synonymous with the “guardian” of 3:24&25.

GALATIANS 4:3 ~ ³So we too, when we were children, were held in bondage under the elementary principles of the world.

Paul applies His analogy to mankind’s regent that was the general realities of the world. For the Jew, those realities were defined as the Law.

All humans, Jew or Gentile, were controlled by the realities of the world.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

GALATIANS 4:4&5 ~ ⁴But when the fullness of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons and daughters.

Jeremiah 31:31–40, “Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.” Mark 1:15, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Paul also talks about the perfect timing of Christ’s arrival in Ephesians, I Timothy, and Titus.

God’s DNA, so to speak, does not mix with human DNA.

Jesus, therefore, was fully_____. And also, simultaneously, fully_____.

“God sent His Son,” indicates preexistence.

As a fully Jewish male... Jesus was required to obey the Law or be a lawbreaker.

Acts 3:14 calls Jesus “the Holy and Righteous One.” (Hebrews 4:15, 7:26, I Peter 2:22, I John 3:5, II Corinthians 5:21, etc.).

God came as a human in order to fulfill the Law and inaugurate the Promise.

We are all always under the authority and ownership of something...

Jesus Saves for a very specific reason. It’s like an offer to be purchased from our natural owner to be willingly owned by God.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____
 Phone _____ Email _____

GALATIANS 4:6&7 ~ ⁶Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba! Father!” ⁷Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

Because we are sons of God we are, in a sense, filled with the family essence – the Spiritual DNA, so to speak.

We believe God, by accepting Jesus, trusting in the Salvation provided through Him, and God graciously declares that good enough.

How much is good enough?

It is an easy thing to determine after the fact.

If you have the indwelling Holy Spirit your faith is Salvific.

The question is how can you know that the Holy Spirit dwells within you?

The Spirit of God cries out within us “Abba! Father!”

The Spirit-filled person is the one who knows without a doubt that God is their Papa (Romans 8:14–16).

Most Christians run around unsure whether they are Saved.

Let go and cry out with the Holy Spirit within you “Abba! Father!”

When you do, you are no longer a slave to your own inadequacies.

GALATIANS 4:8&9 ~ ⁸However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are not gods. ⁹But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles, to which you want to be enslaved all over again?

Before accepting the Gospel, the Galatians did not know God but instead, were enslaved by, and to, their pagan beliefs.

Then Paul clarifies the reason that they now know God is because God chose to know them... relationally.

Given that, how could they possibly turn back to the self-focused, self-serving, self-aggrandizing pagan practices they were enslaved to before? (Proverbs 26:11, II Peter 2:22, James 1:23&24).

GALATIANS 4:10&11 ~

In context (connectedness), diction (word choice) and syntax (word order), Paul was clearly referring to, not pagan Gentile practices, but Judaism! (Genesis 1:14).

Observance of the Judaic Law in order to be righteous, was exactly the same as rejecting Christ and going back to worshipping false gods. (Colossians 2:16, Romans 14:5).

Legalism is anything that we think, say, or do, in order to gain God's acceptance or favor. It is always the wrong motivation.

Why do you pray?

Can you also see the self-serving nature of legalism? I earn God's love, not to bless Him, but so He will bless me.

For a Christian praying, the difference between blasphemy and acceptable practice is motive.

Paul concludes by alluding to Isaiah 49:4, which ends with the realization that even seeming failure is part of God's plan.

After the many weeks of studying this Letter, we have arrived at a place where it should be quite straightforward and relatively easy to follow and understand... If it's not, please come to Sunday school or reach out in some way and we'll get it straight. Clarity on God's Word is our goal.

Galatians 4:1–7, 1Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave, although he is owner of everything, 2but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. 3So we too, when we were children, were held in bondage under the elementary principles of the world. 4But when the fullness of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons and daughters. 6Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba! Father!” 7Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

The opening “Now I say,” refers back to what Paul had just affirmed. This passage then functions as a restatement of, and so, a clarification of, and a

reemphasizing of, what he proclaimed in chapter 3, from verse 15 to verse 29. It is the same point made from a slightly different angle.

It wouldn't be Paul if there wasn't an unexpected twist along the way. His basic point is that the heir, and just for fun let's make him the crown prince destined to follow his father as king, while he is underage, is no different than a slave.

In the sense that he is not his own man, he does not determine his own daily routine, let alone his destiny. He's not in control; he's directed by another who functions as his master. Even though he will one day be king and owner of it all, while a child he's told what he can and cannot do.

These "guardians" and "managers" are synonymous with the παιδαγωγός, or nanny, of 3:24&25. The young princes' appointed mentors are in charge of him until his father, the King, directs otherwise.

In Paul's analogy here, he's describing a scenario where the king has already died, and the crown prince is under regents according to his father's will. That would be the situation if King Charles and

Prince William died. Prince George would be the king, sure enough, but he would be controlled by “guardians and managers” until he was of age. On the date established, the prince will reach the age of majority, he will be declared competent, and he will be recognized as King in his own right. Until then though, he’s a kid, directed by his advisors.

In verse 3, Paul brings His hypothetical analogy home by saying that we too were directed by others while we were children. In this case, our mentoring regent was the Law.

Paul was essentially writing to Gentiles and technically the Law was not their master. To include the Gentiles in his point, instead of saying the Law, Paul expanded it to the “elementary principles of the world.” Other translations have “the elemental forces,” or “the elemental spiritual forces,” or “the useless rules of this world.”

You can see that some translators add to the basic concept by specifying that it is the natural rules, or order of the universe, while others specify that it is the supernatural forces underlying the universe. The translations that leave it ambiguous and undefined

are better because, in this instance, Paul wasn't specifying whether it was the natural world order, or demonic forces, or angelic forces for that matter. Here his point was general. Meaning that Paul was merely saying that all human beings, Jew or Gentile, were like children, as children are like slaves both controlled by something other than themselves.

No person whether under the Law, or not, was free, no one was their own person. No one had reached an age of majority and so, no one had received an inheritance from God... yet. Because it wasn't time... yet.

In that sense, everyone was locked up, under bondage, and controlled by something other than God Himself, whether the general control of the World, or the much more specific regulations of the Law, no one was free from sin and death.

Verse 4, "But when the fullness of time came." Look at Jeremiah 31:31–40, "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah." God then says that this New Covenant will not be like the Old Covenant that the Jews broke, but that

God Himself “will put My law within them and write it on their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” That’s precisely what Jesus was talking about in Mark 1:15, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Paul also talks about the perfect timing of Christ’s arrival in Ephesians, I Timothy, and Titus. When the stage was completely set and the time was thoroughly ripe, the Eternal Word of God stepped out of Heaven and dwelt among us as one of us and in that sense as the True Son of God.

God’s DNA, so to speak, does not mix with human DNA. The consequence of the Word becoming flesh and blood was that Jesus was fully God and fully human at the same time, not some sort of admixture of both. As fully God He was eternally co-equal with the Father and the Spirit. As fully human He was the Son of God as well as the Son of Mary.

God, the totality of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, sent the Word to earth. The phrase “God sent His Son,” indicates preexistence. You cannot send someone who doesn’t yet exist. He already existed

and God sent Him to earth, not as a magnificent king, not as a glorious High Priest, not as a powerful warrior, but as an embryo growing within a young Jewish girl. As such He was born fully under the Law.

That means that as a fully Jewish male, He was subject to the Law of Moses. Circumcised on the 8th day, then dedicated to the Lord in the Temple as the firstborn son and then raised in full adherence to the Jewish Law. Jesus was covered by and under the domain of the Law. He was required to Obey the Law or be a lawbreaker.

He accomplished the former even though the legalistic religious nut jobs of His day called Him a lawbreaker, Jesus never broke a single Law. He often broke the religious traditions and human interpretations of the Law, but never the Law and so He was the One and Only to ever perfectly and completely fulfill all of the requirements of the Law.

Acts 3:14 calls Jesus “the Holy and Righteous One.” That says it all. Hebrews 4:15, tells us that Jesus can “sympathize with our weaknesses,” because He “has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet

without sin.” Then in chapter 7, verse 26, it goes on to call Jesus, “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.” I Peter 2:22, confirms that Jesus “committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth.” I John 3:5, says that Jesus “appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.”

And perhaps my favorite, II Corinthians 5:21, God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” The righteousness of God in and through Jesus.

God came as a human in order to fulfill the Law and inaugurate the Promise. Everyone who believes in Him is a Son of God redeemed from under the slavery of the Law and of the world. The Law is stated, the world is implied.

Jesus, in offering Himself for us, has purchased us with His Own Blood, away from the control, domination, and mastery of what is not God Himself, thus freeing us to choose to be under God’s control directly.

We are all always under the authority and ownership of something... We are either slaves of sin, death, and the grave, or we are slaves of Christ.

“Redemption” is to buy a slave out of the market – out of their bondage to another master. Jesus has done that for a purpose.

Often people forget that Jesus Saves, not simply to be nice, but for a very specific reason. In a way, it is an offer to purchase us from our natural owner in order to be willingly owned by God.

A couple of weeks ago I said that the reason God Saved humans was to enable familial relationship with them. Here, the Bible puts it this way... We are redeemed by Jesus’ Blood in order to facilitate our adoption as the very children of God. Sounds like a familial relationship to me.

If you haven’t been directly involved with adoption, it might seem like you would have a lesser connection with that child than you’d have with your own biological child. It isn’t so, now, and certainly not then. In fact, the familial connection with an adopted son or daughter was considered stronger because that child was explicitly and purposefully chosen.

That same idea is at play here. God didn't just get saddled with us because of some twist of fate... He specifically chose each and every one of us to be His Own precious children forever.

You may have heard the analogy where you are on trial for your crimes. Satan is the prosecutor, God the Father is the Judge, and Jesus is your defense attorney. Satan levels his charges against you and you are a bit crestfallen because he's right, it's all true.

Jesus, instead of refuting Satan's claims, agrees with them, but then He produces an affidavit accepting all of your guilt and agrees to pay the debt owed for you. The Judge accepts the substitution and declares that you are innocent.

Just because the Judge decreed that you are innocent, it, in no way, means that you're good. Jesus then gives you His Robe of Righteousness to wear and so you are now clothed His Love, His goodness and His perfection.

The Judge, seeing you as pure as He sees Himself, seeing you as being like Him, declares that He will adopt you as His very Own child and take you into His home where He has already prepared a room just for you forevermore.

Verse 6 tells us that because we are sons of God we are, in a sense, filled with the family essence. We are like God because God has made us like Him through Jesus – we are both innocent and righteous – and as such, it is only natural that we would be animated by God’s Spirit. His nature in us is His seal upon us.

It is wrong to think of it as a step-by-step process, like first this and then that. It all happens instantaneously upon God’s acceptance of our belief in Him as being sufficient trust. We believe God, by accepting Jesus, trusting in the Salvation provided through Him, and God graciously declares that good enough.

How much is good enough? It’s both impossible to tell and it is the easiest thing in the world to determine. It is impossible beforehand because every person is different and “From everyone who

has been given much, much will be demanded” (Luke 12:48). Trust me when I tell you that you have been given much.

It is the easiest thing in the world to determine afterward because the Holy Spirit has entered within and indwells. As we have seen, the Holy Breath of Almighty God animating a human being is the sign, the seal, and the proof, of Salvation.

If you have the indwelling Holy Spirit your faith is Salvific. If you do not have the indwelling Holy Spirit your faith is not Salvific. That’s super easy.

The question that springs to my mind is how can you know that the Holy Spirit dwells within you? The Spirit of God cries out within us, from the very core of our being, “Abba! Father!” Please get this very vital concept.

The Holy Spirit within us declares loudly and boldly, without any uncertainty, apology, fear, worry, or hesitation, that Almighty God is our Papa or Daddy. Those are legitimate terms appropriate for the Aramaic direct address, “Abba.”

It is the name a small child calls his or her own father while they are young enough to still be full of awe-struck wonder and affectionate admiration for him. Such a child thinks that their dad is the greatest and they want to be with him and please him and gain his attention and his approval. It is relational.

Jesus, while praying in Mark 14:36, uses the exact same phrase “Abba Father.” Then in other places, with a similar meaning, Jesus directly addresses the Heavenly Father as Πάτερ μου (pä-těř mü), which means Father of Mine, or My Father. That’s personal and that’s relational.

The Holy Spirit within a human being declares that very thing. This is a really significant point. The Holy Spirit cries out within the Christian “Abba! Father!” It is the person who, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, knows without a doubt that God is their Papa.

How do you know for sure that you are Saved and filled with the Breath of God? By knowing for sure that you are Saved and filled with the Breath of God! That’s the Holy Spirit’s witness within. When you know that you are His, you are His. What is that?

That is trust in God as your Heavenly Father, and as your Savior, and as your internal Witness.

Paul elaborates the same point in Romans 8:14–16, 14For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons and daughters of God. 15For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons and daughters by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” 16The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.”

Most Christians run around unsure whether they are Saved. What is that but a lack of trust in the One Who Saves? The more a person thinks that their Salvation depends on them, the less they trust God and the more they doubt His Love for them and their status with Him.

Over time, such people become neurotic, and/or legalistic, and/or miserable, and/or heartless. Always worried about their performance they manifest behaviors that are anything but Christian.

The primary reason people can't stand church-going Christians is because so many of those church-going Christians do not fully trust God.

Let go and cry out with the Holy Spirit within you "Abba! Father!" And mean it with every fiber of your being, not because you are so special, but because your Heavenly Father is.

When you do that, you are no longer a slave to your own inadequacies and the terrible self-inflicted consequences of them because you are already a son of the Living God and as a son you have already been made an heir of eternal Life in and through and with Him.

You are already in Heaven at your place at the table of the Wedding Feast... You are already there... Do you believe that? You and I are already with God forever in Heaven... We just need to catch up with that reality in time. Knowing that is trusting God because the Holy Spirit within testifies to that Truth.

Then you know that you have the Holy Spirit and the only way that happens is for your name to be eternally etched in the Lamb's Book of Life!

Paul concludes the argument that he began back in chapter 3, verse 15, with this...

Galatians 4:8–11, 8However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are not gods. 9But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles, to which you want to be enslaved all over again? 10You meticulously observe days and months and seasons and years. 11I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.

In this conclusion we see how all the analogies and examples relate to the actual situation among these early Gentile Christians being coerced into Circumcision and all that goes with it.

It's hard to get the full impact of these verses until they're pointed out, but trust me, Paul's correlation here is shocking. We'll start with what's easy verses 8&9 are fairly straightforward.

The gist is... after confirming the status of the Galatians who trust God, through Christ, and who know that they are sons, as confirmed and authenticated by the indwelling Holy Spirit, Paul takes them back to the time before all of that – the time before their Salvation.

Before accepting the Gospel, and coming to know God through it, the Galatians did not know the One True God at all but instead, were enslaved by, and to, their pagan beliefs. Then they were introduced to God and came to know him. That is Paul finishing the logical connection. They didn't know God before, but now they do.

Paul can't leave it there because technically, the reason that they came to know God was because God made Himself knowable to them. God initiated the relationship. Biblically, no person ever reaches out to God independent of God reaching out to them first.

Not only does that speak of God's Sovereign choice, it also highlights the relational aspect that God Himself, the Almighty Creator God knows them, He knows me, and He knows you. Not impersonally as

obviously God already knows every person, but relationally, as in God chose to know you personally.

Here comes the slap in the face question... Given all of that... how in the world can you possibly be turning back to the “weak and worthless” self-serving humanistic and thoroughly pagan beliefs that you had beforehand?!?!? It simply makes no sense at all.

Peter, in talking about this kind of thing, quoted Proverbs 26:11, in his Second Epistle chapter 2, verse 22, “A dog returns to its own vomit,” and, “A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.” The implication is that human beings are not supposed to act like dogs or pigs. It’s what James was on about in his Letter, chapter 1, verses 23&24, “it’s like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.”

It's like, “Are you insane? You were ignorantly enslaved to false gods, then miraculously you entered into an intimate relationship with the One True God, and now... you want to go back to

serving, worshipping, and loving, those false gods again!”

That’s the rebuke and here comes the shocker that would have rattled the foundations of the Jewish-Christian world. Verse 10, he finally states the exact issue at hand. “You meticulously observe days and months and seasons and years.”

In both the context, and the words chosen, Paul was clearly referencing, not pagan Gentile practices, but Judaism! He was describing the Jewish religious calendar. The allusion goes all the way back to the first chapter in the Bible. Genesis 1:14. Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and they shall serve as signs and for seasons, and for days and years.”

What Paul was saying was that the observance of the Law, to include circumcision, in order to be righteous, was exactly the same as rejecting Christ and going back to worshipping pagan deities, false gods, human philosophies, and all the other empty deceptions that human beings create.

That would have completely stunned nearly everyone, especially, of course, the Judaizers. They would have been apoplectic... spitting mad. No wonder the Jews and even Christian Judaizers detested Paul so much.

Some people refuse to see the obvious here and say that Paul was merely referring to a pagan calendar of events, but it misses the entire point of this phase of Paul's argument, it refuses to consider the overall context and tenor of the Letter, and worst of all, it fails to understand the nature of idolatry.

Let me focus on the last one. First, we need to recognize that Paul uses the same basic imagery for following the Jewish religious calendar elsewhere. Colossians 2:16, Therefore, no one is to act as your judge in regard to food and drink, or in respect to a festival or a new moon, or a Sabbath day. Then in Romans 14:5, One person values one day over another, another values every day the same. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

It is impossible that Paul was condoning actual pagan practices in either case. Notice that in both cases, the untrained eye would see that Paul has

dramatically softened his position on adhering to the Law. In these two places he seems to be saying that it is perfectly fine for a Christian to follow the Jewish calendar whereas, here in Galatians, it is a blasphemous rejection of Christ to do so.

Did Paul change his mind? To even suggest it, as some scholars do, is blasphemy. Down that road lies the rejection of the Bible as God's Word. The difference is that the Galatians were trying to add Jewish practice to get both the acceptance of the Judaizers, but worse the acceptance of God.

That's legalism. Legalism is anything that we think, say, or do, in order to gain God's acceptance or favor. It is always the wrong motivation. Let me use this example to drive the point home... Why do you pray? Please examine your own heart and answer the question. Why do you pray? Think about that question.

Do I pray to move God on my behalf? Do I pray to influence God to help others? Do I pray because I'm supposed to pray? Do I pray to make God happy at me and give me smoother sailing? Can you see that

all of that is legalistic? Me trying to get God on my side.

Can you see that it is blasphemous since God is already on my side because of Jesus and His Sacrifice?

If my wife tells me that she loves me, and I ignore her words and instead try to earn her love, can you see that I have just demeaned her? I have said with my actions that you cannot love me unless I make you love me through my efforts. Can you see that what seems like a good thing – earning her love – is actually a repudiation of her honesty and the purity of her choice to love me as I am?

Can you also see that if I accept her love for me and then simply act in accordance with that reality, I will still try to bless her, but not to get something, ultimately for myself... again, not to get something that is always ultimately for myself... but simply because I am dwelling in her love?

Can you also see the self-serving nature of legalism? I earn God's love, not to bless Him, but so

He will bless me. Can you see how backward all of that really is?

For a Christian praying, the difference between blasphemy and acceptable practice is motive. Therefore, for a Christian observing Jewish Law, the difference between blasphemy and acceptable practice is, again, motive. You can enjoy Easter celebrations, Christmas festivities, a Jewish Seder, and even resting on the Sabbath, if you do it with humble thanksgiving that you fully belong to the Father through Christ and by the Holy Spirit.

Anything and everything that we do in order to move God is ultimately a denial of His Grace and a serving of ourselves as our own god. That's the nature of all legalistic efforts regardless of the specific flavor involved.

Inevitably, it all amounts to nothing more than witchcraft. That's why Paul was so adamant. It wasn't circumcision and following the Jewish Laws that was the problem. The problem was that they were wanting to do those things in order to gain for themselves what God had already graciously given

them. In that respect, anything that diminishes the completed work of Christ is idolatry.

Paul concludes by alluding to Isaiah 49:4, where the great prophet lamented that his self-sacrificial service to God on behalf of the Jews was in vain. Of course, he found out that God knew all about it and that He had a perfect plan in place.

If the Galatians adopted the legalism they were being coerced to adopt, Paul's ministry efforts on their behalf would have been in vain, but, again, God knew all about it and so this statement sets up the next passage, which launches into our favorite thing... the practical application of the argument. Next week, Lord willing...