

Galatians – Freed to be Free

A study of the book of Galatians

Chapter 4 – Enslaved or Saved?

Galatians 4:1-7

What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. ² He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. ³ So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. ⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “*Abba, Father.*” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

1. What point is being made about the Old Testament people directly and New Testament people indirectly in **vs. 1-3**?
 - Is Paul slamming or downgrading the law when he refers to it as “the basic principles of the world”?
2. How did those under the law become those not under the law anymore? (**vs. 4-6**)
3. What does Jesus’ work mean for us? Explain the significance of each thing Paul lists in **vs. 5b-7**.
4. What is the gravity of “*Abba, Father*”?

Galatians 4:8-20

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. ⁹ But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? ¹⁰ You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! ¹¹ I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you. ¹² I plead with you, brothers, become like me, for I became like you. You have done me no wrong. ¹³ As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. ¹⁴ Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. ¹⁵ What has happened to all your joy? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶ Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? ¹⁷ Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them. ¹⁸ It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always and not just when I am with you. ¹⁹ My dear

children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰ how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

5. What are the “not gods” to which the Galatians were by nature slave before being known by God?
 - Which is better: being known by or knowing God?

6. What, in addition to following false so-called gospels, were the Galatians doing which caused Paul to fear his labor among them had been in vain?
 - The above statement of Paul or another apostle could be said to many groups of Christians. Could we be in that group? If so, what for?

 - Why become like Paul?

7. Paul tracks their relationship with him. What was it like at first? What was it like at that moment? What happened to make it that way? Should their relationship be icy at all?

8. How did Paul think of their relationship? How does that image justify his current level of concern for them?

Galatians 4:21-31

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. ²³ His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. ²⁴ These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. ²⁵ Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷ For it is written: “Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.” ²⁸ Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. ³⁰ But what does the Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.” ³¹ Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

9. Paul uses Abraham to make big points about the gospel and living it.
 - How were Abraham and Sarah to be blessed with a child?

- What important identifiers are employed by Paul to make his point in **vs. 22-23**?
 - What do Hagar and Sarah represent?
10. Paul says in **v. 26** that the Jerusalem above, spiritual Jerusalem, Zion, the seat of Jesus' government of peace and perfect, righteous justice is free and that she is our mother.
11. **Isaiah 54:1** is cited by Paul. In Sarah's case and the case of all who believe, the church, how does this prove true?
12. What does it mean to be a child of the promise when it comes to eternity? As a child of the promise, what blessing can you expect from God right now in this life?
- As a child of the promise, what treatment can we expect from those children who don't share in our inheritance? How is this expectation frustrating, defeating, freeing, and empowering? (As you think about this, remember that **v. 31** is true for us all the time!)