

#9 Galatians

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Chapter 4:1: 'Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, ² but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father'

Many times, in previous lessons, we've emphasized the difference, and the similarity, between Old Testament and New Testament Saints, between Old Covenant and New Covenant Believers... and that is the key: they were all believers; they believed the Word and Promises of God. Paul tells us, many times, that no one was ever saved or made righteous by keeping the Law or by the sacrifices and shed blood of lambs, bulls, goats or doves. Salvation has ***always, and only***, been on the basis of faith in God, Himself.

We often differentiate between the two Covenants by referring to them as the Dispensation of Law (O.T./O.C.) and the Dispensation of Grace (N.T./N.C.) but the truth is, God's Salvation has always been based only upon God's Grace. Every Saint, from Adam and Eve, on down to us, now, each one has been saved by God's Grace through our faith in Him and His Word. The main difference, however, between the two, an O.T. believer and a N.T. believer, was that now, during the 'Church Age,' when we believe, we are 'born again.' Now, God creates within us and new heart and a new spirit that is One with His Spirit; we actually become New Creations who stand completely righteous and holy before God because we have become the Righteousness of God through the Lord Jesus Christ: 'For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' 2 Cor 5:21

Before the Crucifixion and Resurrection they had not become the Righteousness of God. Therefore, it was necessary for them to be taken down to 'Paradise,' at death, where they did wait until the coming of the 'Promised One' upon Whom their faith had rested. Once the Lord Jesus Christ had taken upon Himself the full punishment for all of their sin, they could then be taken up into Heaven where, in their new righteousness, they could come into the Presence of Righteous and Holy God the Father.

James writes, 'Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.' Jms 1:18 This has been true through all the Ages of Man. God elected and chose each and every one of us before He laid the foundation of the World, and then, at His chosen moment, He revealed Himself and the Truth of His Word to each one and we have all become '***Children of God.***'

Regarding infants and small children who are not capable of believing in Him, (and we could safely assume that this includes those who are mentally incapable of faith in God) that He, in His Sovereignty, saves and causes each one to be born again according to His Own Power apart from their having come to faith in Him because we read, in Matthew, 'And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven... even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that (even) one of these little ones should perish.' Matt 18 Obviously He meant perish as eternal Hell because they were all going to die.

So, many people through the Ages have become children of God but now, we are seeing something else. The Galatians clearly understood what Paul was saying while we, in 'modern times,' might not, necessarily.

In Old Covenant times, believing Israelites were all God's children, but they were not ***God's sons***. Of Jesus, the Word calls Him, God's only begotten Son. Of us, the Church, the Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are now 'sons of God.' And daughters, of course, but we are all, now, not known as just the children of God but even more, incredibly, we are, now, ***sons of God.***

In ancient times, a child was not recognized as the legal heir of the father until they came of age, until they reached maturity, when they reached the age set by the father. Then, they would go down to the forum, like our courthouse, where the child would then be legally adopted as the son of the father, as the heir of the father. And, the adopted heir could even be someone who was not physically born as a child of the father and yet, the adopted son could have more rights and privileges than a child who had been physically born from the father, especially more than a daughter, whatever her age.

Now, we are ***sons of God***, not just *children of God*. He has legally adopted us and we are now full heirs of the Father, co-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, His Only Begotten Son, and we are heirs of all that is.

Verse 3: 'Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

Before we received faith to believe, we were under bondage to the 'elements of the world,' meaning that through our five senses, sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste, which were the only ways in which we could interact with the sinful World around us, our interaction with the physical realm, we were in bondage to our five senses: we lived as though we had to do what would satisfy the longings and lustings of those five senses.

Although, in the natural, we are incapable of interacting with the spiritual realm, many have discovered that through certain practices, they can interact in the spiritual realm, the realm of darkness: drugs, meditation, yoga, martial arts and others, we can be capable of interacting with the spiritual realm; most of it falls under the category of sorcery which is forbidden by God. Those who enter into the realm of darkness then find themselves also, then, under bondage to that realm. The 'elements of the world' has to do with the physical realm but bondage grows for many into the spiritual realm as well.

Verse 4: 'But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.'

God had an exact moment, planned from before the foundation of the World, when He would, by His Holy Spirit, begin His creation of the human, physical body which His Son would inhabit for the next 34 years and then forever after His resurrection into His glorified, eternal body which ours will be like. Half of His DNA came from a woman, a virgin, an Israelite who was under the Law, and the other half of His DNA came from the Holy Spirit. I wonder how different Jesus Christ's cells and DNA would look to a scientist, today. Every one of the cells in our bodies contain 46 chromosomes in 23 pairs. Half of each pair comes from our mother with the other half from our father. The only cells in our bodies which have only 23 chromosomes are the mother's eggs and the father's sperm cells. At the instant that one sperm hits an egg, suddenly that one cell, that egg, becomes a zygote with all 46 chromosomes: a LIFE begins! Then, very quickly, that zygote splits and becomes 2 human cells, then they split to become 4 cells and so on until a fully formed baby arrives 9 months later.

That is how it happened for every one of us and that is exactly how it happened for the Lord Jesus Christ; He became one of us; He was fully human but He was, and is, also fully God. Therefore, since He was a human, He could fulfill the Law in Righteousness for every one of us; He became our redeemer, our Kinsman Redeemer of which Boaz with Ruth was a picture, a picture especially for us Gentiles because Ruth was a Gentile. She became the great grandmother of David, the ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ so He even had some Gentile blood in Him... we were in Him; we were crucified with Him and we were raised with Him: 'I have been crucified with Christ' Gal 2:20 'If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.' Col 3:1

Verse 5: 'to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.'

He redeemed us: He bought us, as slaves, back from slavery. But rather than keeping us as slaves, which certainly would have been good enough, He brought us into His home, into His family and then actually adopted us as not only His children but as His sons, as His legal heirs, coheirs with His only begotten Son, heirs of all that He has... coheirs of EVERYTHING... everything that exists... He has held nothing back for His own personal use or possession... everything! In fact, He has given us even Himself: "Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine," declares the Lord God.' Ezek 16:8 "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! Isa 43:1

'My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his.' Song 2:16

Verse 6: ' And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

Because we are His adopted sons and heirs, He has come into us... literally inside of us and we are literally inside of Him: 'Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you?' 2 Cor 13:5 Jesus said, "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who

abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.' John 15:5

The proof of our complete integration into the family of God is that we are blessed and honored to be able to address God the Father with the same familiarity as does the Lord Jesus Christ Himself: 'And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.' When He was at His most vulnerable point, when He was crying out for any possible way to be spared what was coming, the Cross which He bore for us... we can address God the Father in the same way that Jesus Christ does... and we are, even now, seated with Christ at the right hand of the Father and we can speak to the Father anytime about anything and He will hear us, He will give us His full attention and He will answer us. We don't have to remind Him of who we are because He has even written our names upon His hands: 'Can a woman forget her nursing child and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms *of My hands*.' *Isa 49:15*

Would your mother forget who you are? Not likely, unless she's 101, even then, she never forgot me because I was with her every day. The same is true for God: we are with Him every day and always. God will never forget us at all. In fact, He always wants us to come to Him in prayer, in conversation, in petition, in praise, worship and glory... He wants us! He not only loves us but He wants us. Have you ever felt unwanted by people, by family, by friends, by the World? We are never unwanted by Him... He loves us with an everlasting love which will never diminish in any way and He wants us with the yearning of true love: 'I am my beloved's and He is mine!' Forever! 'Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.' What that verse is really saying is, 'as we are seated with the Lord Jesus Christ on His throne, which is right next to God the Father's throne, we are invited to get up and walk right over to the Father's throne and talk to Him at any time, to lay our head upon His lap. And He never says, 'Now who are you, again... remind Me' In fact, what He does say is, as He strokes our head, 'I've been wanting you to come over here for the longest time... now stay awhile... don't leave in 2 or 3 minutes... I really do want you here next to Me... what's on your mind? You have My full attention... how can I help?'

Verse 7: 'Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.'

He bought us out of slavery, brought us into His home and legally adopted us as sons and daughters of God, as full coheirs with the Lord Jesus Christ and we will rule and reign with Him forever.

Verse 8: 'But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. ⁹ But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?'

These Galatians are Gentiles. Before Paul brought to them the light of the Gospel, they had been in bondage to false demonic spirits posing as gods. Every kind of debauchery was present in the 'religions' of the Greeks and Romans. They had been in darkness and in bondage to the forces of darkness under the prince of darkness, Lucifer, who poses as an angel of light. When Paul came to them with the light of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were set free, into the glorious freedom of the children of God in Christ.

Now, they know God through His Son and they are known by God as His sons and daughters; now they have been set free into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

This is a very important point: many people today say, I know Jesus, I'm a Jesus follower, but are they really known by God? Jesus said that many Jesus followers would stand before Him in the Day of Judgment and He would say to them, 'Depart from Me, I Never knew you.'

And here these Galatians are, believing the false teachers, the Judaizers, who did claim to know Jesus, but they were unknown by Him; they have been telling the Galatians that their salvation was **only begun** when they put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that in order to complete their salvation, 'Come all the way and do the works!;' they must become circumcised and follow the Law of Moses. In other words, Jesus' work in His

life, death and resurrection was not complete and Jesus was lying when, on the Cross, He said, 'It is finished, it is completed.' The Galatians are being brought back into bondage that is just as severe and complete as the bondage from which they were delivered because, just as the false gods of paganism were unable to save them or give them freedom, so it is true of the Law of Moses; it never made anyone righteous or gave anyone right standing with God. Only by faith in God and in His Word was anyone of the Old Testament times made righteous: 'Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness.' Abel believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness, as did Enoch, Noah, Jacob, Moses, David, Zechariah, Joseph and Mary... every one believed the Word of God and it was accounted to them as righteousness and the same is true for us; only when we believe God's Word, in the Gospel, are we made righteous in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul loves these people as if they were his own children and he fears for them if they turn back to the deeds of darkness of which are even the works of the Law if they had not been in accordance with faith in God's Word. As Isaiah writes, during Old Testament times: 'In these ways we continue; and we need to be saved. But we are all like an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags;' Isa 64:5 Just so you know and understand what God, and Paul, are really saying about those Judaizers and the Judaizers of today who demand we keep the Law or do this or that or refrain from this or that in order to be accepted by God... God sees those works, done apart from trusting in Him... when He says that our righteousnesses are as filthy rags... the words He used meant... as '*used menstruation rags, a very unclean thing in OT times...* something to be thrown out and burned. Next time we think God is really lucky to have us on His side... that's what He thinks of what we do outside of faith in Him.

Verse 10: 'You meticulously observe days and months and seasons and years.'

In addition to circumcision and keeping the Law, they were also being told that they must observe Jewish Feast Days and Sabbaths and Jubilee years and that they must not eat shellfish or even meat at all or only fish on Friday... etc. All of those things were fulfilled, finished, completed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

These are exactly the same that poor simple minded Jews and Gentiles are being taught, today, through the Hebrew Roots heresy as well as many 'Messianic' congregations and especially with Seventh day Adventists and the Catholics who actually bow down before statues and idols, they worship a wafer in an elaborate golden wafer holder... there are many Judaizers today and many are being sucked into their false teachings.

Verse 11: 'I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.'

If they had fallen back into seeking to do the works of the Law in order to be pleasing to God, then yes, Paul's work among them would have been in vain... they would have proven themselves to have never really been born again. Just like those to whom the writer of Hebrews wrote (and many believe that Paul was, in fact, the writer to the Hebrews): he said, 'Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works (works of the Law) and of faith toward God, ² of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. ³ And this we will do if God permits. ⁴ For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.' Heb 6:1 Remember, when we studied Hebrews, we learned that the writer was writing to 3 distinct groups: 1. those who were really born again, 2. those who were close to being born again but were fearful of the persecution they would face, and 3. those who were just there for the cookies and coffee.

The Judaizers were sent, by Satan, to prey upon groups 2 and 3 and Paul was afraid for them, knowing that only Hell awaits those who don't come all the way to true faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished Work on the Cross.

If someone is truly saved, they have been sealed with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth Who will guide them into all truth. If someone does not have the Spirit of Truth, they are easy prey for all forms of falsehood and lies while they erroneously believe that they are pleasing God with their false rituals and works.