

## Galatians Lesson Nine

### ***Galatians 4: 1- 16***

#### **Our Redemption from the Law**

In the beginning our lesson for today, let's take a close look at the first three verses of this chapter in one reference.

***Galatians 4: 1-3 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything,***

***2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.***

***3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.***

Paul refers to us as heirs, born of the head of the house, who serve for a time under guardians and managers.

These are types representing the Law which kept us as wards until the time appointed by God for us to be given the full rights of adulthood.

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

The expression, *born of a woman*, refers to the virgin birth of Jesus.

*Born under the Law*, indicates that Jesus was born under the Law.

In fact, Jesus was born, lived His life, was crucified, died, buried, was resurrected, and ascended into heaven, all under the dispensation of the Law.

The New Dispensation, or better known as the Church Age, did not begin until the Day of Pentecost with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

That's why you and I don't live under the Law because we have the Holy Spirit living in us as our Guide.

Since we are in Christ, positionally speaking, we are complete.

But, in our Christian walk, in this fleshly body we live in here on earth, you and I must absolutely continue to grow and mature in Christ.

We start out as babes in Christ and by feeding on the sincere milk of the Word we grow and develop into spiritual meat eaters.

We grow in the Word and learn to be led by the Spirit of God Himself.

That's when we become full-grown sons and daughters of God!

How do I know this?

Because **Romans 8: 14** says, ***For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.***

So, Holy Spirit leadership is a sign of spiritual maturity.

Some people ask me how you can know that they are truly being led by the Spirit.

Every growing Christian reaches a point in their lives where this question is asked and it's important for it to be answered.

I have often asked people what methods they have been using to find answers about God's will for the situations of life for them most recently.

Many times, often I find that they are at a place where they search the scriptures to get peace about what is unfolding for them.

That's great, usually some passage will come to life for you and you should apply that to your problem, or situation you're facing.

Then, you are being led by the Spirit.

Remember, the Spirit of God always leads in line with His Word.



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Other ways that God may speak to you is through some brother or sister in Christ, maybe a dream or a vision, one or more of the Gifts of the Spirit, or even a still small voice.

Therefore, it is important that even in the middle of our busy schedules, or in our worship, we need to set aside some time to be quiet before the Lord to hear His voice.

***5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.***

Jesus came to redeem those that were under the Law first.

Those people were the Jews.

But then we see the use of the word *we*, in his verse.

Keep in mind that most of the Galatian church was Gentile, not Jewish.

Isaiah spoke for the whole of mankind when he said in ***Isaiah 53: 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.***

Remember that the curse of the Law was threefold, sickness, poverty, and spiritual death.

Everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, was subject to that curse.

So, everyone, both Jew and Gentile needed redemption through Jesus Christ.

Jesus came to redeem all those who were under the Law, which was in fact, all of mankind.

That's why ***Romans 3: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;***

Jesus came to redeem the whole world.



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The Jews were under the Law and couldn't keep it.

We Gentiles were under the curse of the Law even though we didn't have the Law.

However, we all needed redemption, or what is better known as salvation.

## **Our Adoption**

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

***7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.***

Let's consider specifically ***Verse 6a And because you are sons,***

If you are a woman, you may be thinking, "How can I be a son of God?"

You are just as much a son of God as any man because this word simply means a mature offspring.

Hasn't Paul already told us in ***Galatians 3: 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

***Verse 6b God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"***

This word *Abba*, is Chaldean for *Father*, just like the Greek word *pater*, is translated *Father*.

All Paul did here was repeat the same word in two different languages, perhaps for emphasis.

***Verse 7a So you are no longer a slave, but a son,***

There is an implied intimacy with God here.



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One that seems to allow us to call Father, Daddy.

Trust me, the people under the Old Covenant did not have the invitation to do that.

Pay close attention to this, I have searched through the scriptures and I have yet to find one scripture that gave instructions for anyone in the Old Testament to consider themselves Sons of God the way it does in the new Testament.

This new relationship between God and man was what Jesus was preparing the Jews for when He began to teach His disciples to address God as their heavenly Father.

Up until that time, no one dared to approach God that way.

He was not their Father, He was *Elohim*, the Almighty, the Eternal.

He was their Creator, their Lord, their Sovereign.

Yet, Jesus began to give them a glimpse of the new relationship that would be theirs once they entered into the New Covenant with Abba, Father.

In the Old Testament, no one considered themselves sons of God because the only way to come into the family of God is by birth.

Understand this, when Paul speaks of adoption into the family of God, he is not referring to adoption as we know it today.

He is not talking about just taking a child that is not yours and taking them into your family to raise, even if you legally give them your name.

This that Paul speaks of, is God adopting you by transforming you into one of His actual children as a joint heir with Jesus Christ.

That's what being born into God's family really means, no longer servants but sons of God.



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Need some evidence?

How about ***John 1: 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,***

***Verse 7b and if a son, then an heir through God.***

That new birth brought about a new relationship with God.

They were no longer mere servants of the Most High, now they are sons of God.

He is no longer relegated to being their Creator and Lord; now He is their heavenly Father.

I can't help but believe that one of the things being declared in all of the languages of the known world on the day of Pentecost was *Abba, Father!*

If Jesus is the heir of God, and we believers are joint heirs with Him, then what are we heirs of?

The answer is found ***Hebrews 1: 1-2 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,***

***2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.***

Now, wouldn't it be foolish if we, after having been granted the freedom and fulness sonship, should suddenly decide to go back and place ourselves under the power and dominion of our old and outdated mentor, the Law?

Yet, that is exactly what the Galatians were doing.

Goofy, no?

They had been brought out of the bondage of sin, just been set free from the law of sin and death, just been received into the family of God as heirs of all that is His, only to turn around and place themselves back under bondage.

This kind of ignorance and foolishness Paul just could not understand.



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## Why Turn Back to Bondage?

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

***9 But 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?***

Let's focus on **Verse 8** first.

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

This expression, *by nature*, simply means "in essence."

Paul is asking these people: "How is it that when you were sinners, in essence you served those things which were not gods at all?"

Before their conversion to Christ, the Galatians were heathens, they were idol worshippers.

They bowed down and worshipped images carved from wood and stone.

Of course, we know that man-made gods are not gods at all.

Notice that Paul doesn't say that they worshipped these non-gods, he says "***you were enslaved to them.***"

That is, the Galatians served idols.

To be a servant is to choose to enslave yourself to something.

***9 But 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?***

An earlier question is raised again with a little different twist.



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*Now that you have come to know God, why do you turn back to another form of death, the Law?*

To Paul, what the Galatians were doing made no sense at all.

## **Led of the Spirit not by the Law**

### ***10 You observe days and months and seasons and years!***

Here Paul begins to rebuke the Galatians for allowing legalistic Judaizers to influence them into observing the Jewish calendar instead of holding to the freedom that was won for them through the suffering of the Lord Jesus.

The “*days*” the Galatians had taken to observing were Jewish Sabbaths.

The Gentile Christians had become Sabbath keepers identical to the Jews of the Old Testament.

Remember this is Saturday, not Sunday, the Christian day of rest and worship.

Through the centuries, the Jews had worked out an elaborate and complicated system of laws regulating every possible aspect of Sabbath keeping.

For example, they had determined the exact number of steps you could walk before it would have to be considered work.

Let’s consider the *months*, part of this passage.

This refers to the fast that was initiated during their Babylonian captivity.

Here the Galatians had gone way back into Hebrew history that had nothing specifically to do with these Gentiles.

Furthermore, the Galatians were now observing Passover, the Feast of Unleavened bread, the dedication of the Firstfruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonements, and Tabernacles.

Can you see why Paul was so upset with the Galatian Church?

Why would they ever think that these would apply to them in their original context?

You may wonder why it was so frowned upon by Paul that these Galatian Christians would want to celebrate these Jewish feasts.

After all, isn't it just a way of honoring the Jewish history?

To address this question correctly, you must keep in mind that many things in our lives are either right or wrong based on our motives for doing what we are doing.

Keep in mind that most of the feasts celebrated by the Jews have already been fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

Those which He has not already fulfilled will be when He returns.

The first feast was Passover, the ancient Jewish celebration of the passing of the death angel over the homes of the children of Israel while the firstborn of the Egyptians died.

Each Hebrew family took a lamb and slaughtered it, smearing the blood on the doorpost as a sign that they were under God's protection.

Jesus Christ was our Passover Lamb Who shed His blood that we might be saved.

Why did you think it was, that His death took place during the Passover celebration in Jerusalem?

The same religious Jews who were responsible for Christ's crucifixion rushed home from calvary to celebrate the Passover feast, never realizing that they were eyewitnesses to the very event they had been proclaiming all those centuries by their commemoration.

Next came the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread during which time the women were required to thoroughly clean their houses to remove all dust because leaven, represented by dust, was a type of sin.

Removal of the dust was a sign of the removal of our sins by Christ by His three days and nights in the bowels of the earth.

The first Sunday during the Feast of Unleavened Bread was called Firstfruits.

In the Jewish tradition, this commemorated the bringing of the first and best of the fruits of the harvest to be dedicated to God.

It was on the day of Firstfruits that Jesus was resurrected, representing the First and Best of a long line of souls who will be raised to eternal life because of Him.

You and I are part of that great harvest that is yet to be completed.

Then, as we learned on Pentecost Sunday this year, 50 days after Passover, came the Feast of Pentecost which was fulfilled when the Holy Ghost was poured out on all believers in Jerusalem.

Between Pentecost and the next feast there was an interval of five months.

Pentecost was in April, the next feast, Trumpets, came in October.

The interval of five months between the two represents the church age in which you and I are now living.

So, the next feast to be fulfilled will be Trumpets, referring to the fanfare that will mark the triumphant return of our Lord to this earth to begin His Millennial Reign.

After that comes the Feast of Atonements, looking forward to the day that Jesus Christ will cleanse the earth of all sin, removing all sinners from it, and lift the last curse from it.

The final feast day to be fulfilled is Tabernacles, which was instituted to remind the Jews of the time in which God dwelled in the Tabernacle with them.

This fulfilment will come when Jesus Christ sets up His Kingdom here on earth, beginning a thousand year reign of peace.

So then, there is no need for us Gentiles to observe these “*times*” of the Jewish calendar because those that have not already been fulfilled soon will be.

We should know about them and their significance to us as the body of Christ on this earth, but we are not obligated to keep them in their original context.

*..... seasons and years Verse 10d.*

This is a reference to the seven seven-year periods of the ancient Jewish calendar, culminating in the fiftieth year, the year of Jubilee.

In that year all slaves were set free and all property that had changed hands was returned to its original owner.

Now we Christians don't need to observe the year of Jubilee because we are living in it.

Proof?

***Luke 4: 18-21 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,***

***19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”***

***20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.***

***21 And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”***

The acceptable year of the Lord has already come.

It is here, Jubilee has come.

The slaves are set free.



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The property of the just has been returned to the rightful owners.

Throughout the land there is rejoicing and praise to God the Father because He has He has redeemed us from our oppressors, has opened our blind eyes, has healed our brokenness and restored to us our inheritance, just as He promised.

## **Be as I Am**

***11 I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.***

***12 Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong.***

The first few words in **verse 11a, I am afraid**, would have been better understood if it had been translated as, ***I am afraid for you.***

***Verse 11b, I may have labored over you in vain.***

Paul was afraid that by their actions they were undoing all the work that he done with them.

He was concerned that they were in danger of destroying the foundation of faith and freedom which he built in them during his first visit.

***Verse 12a, Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am,***

Paul is telling these people, “become as I am.”

He means he began his walk in faith and remained in faith, because Paul fully understood the message of grace.

***Verse 12b, for I also have become as you are.***

Whenever Paul’s message of grace is taught today, people tend to say, “Sure, it was easy for Paul to live by faith, he was an apostle, a great man of faith.”

“But’s it hard for me to live that way, I’m nobody special.”

Paul assures the people of Galatia that what he is encouraging them to do is not impossible.

He is saying that he lives by faith and they can too, because he is saying there is no difference between him and them.

He wants them to understand that he is not superior to them.

***Verse 12c, You did me no wrong.***

Paul is simply that by your actions, you have not wronged me.

He is trying to tell the people that they have not harmed him, but he was concerned that they were harming themselves.

***13 You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first,***

***14 and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.***

***15 What then has become of your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me.***

***16 Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?***

Now too many times people have taken these verses out of context and quoted them as evidence that Paul was a sickly man.

In their efforts to discredit the message of healing in the atonement, they link this passage with others from various sources to prove that Paul's thorn in the flesh was a physical sickness or disease.

Most of this can be boiled down to speculation.

In fact, none of us have conclusive of exactly what Paul was referring to when he vaguely referred to his condition.

This most likely is because if God wanted us to know the exact condition, he would have clearly told us.

I have my personal beliefs on the matter; however, God is a better parent than I am.

Since He knows everything, I will leave the matter at His feet.

***Verse 13, You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first,***

As I have discussed many times in my teaching, it is clear in the Bible that on Paul's first missionary journey to Galatia, he was stoned by the people of the region.

I can't help but believe that there were some lingering effects from the beatings he suffered for the Gospel's sake that were a reminder of the costs exacted for the revelation from God that he received.

***Verse 14 and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.***

Whatever physical condition or appearance Paul suffered from on his first Galatian visit, He is saying that the people did not allow it to reduce the effectiveness and power of the message.

***Verse 15 What then has become of your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me.***

Paul has an important question for these people that goes something like this, "After the positive manner in which you received the Gospel message of grace that I had shared with you on my first visit, how could you now reject it so easily for a message of bondage?"

Paul was saying that they had loved him at first, do they hate him now?

***Verse 16 Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?***

Paul wants to know what happened to the loving spirit in which they had so openly received the original message.

Paul reminds that all he has done since the beginning of their relationship is tell the truth.

For that, have I now become your enemy?



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