

Galatians 4:1-7 – Sweet Freedom

Family, TSK, GreekLexicon, Handfuls, Rienecker, Trapp, Robertson, PNT, Barnes, JFB, Clarke, Henry, Geneva, Gaebelein, Calvin, Lightfoot?

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: When slavery ended in the 1800's one could imagine the joy that came with it.

But there are two noteworthy things about the ending of slavery.

First, **it took powerful men who were not slaves to fight for the end to slavery** – Christians like William Wilberforce.

Second, **the freed slaves had to learn how to live with freedom**. That was not an easy thing.

Similarly, the child of God knows Almighty God set him free from the clutches of the Devil who robbed him and his children of their future, and he then learns to live in freedom to honor the one who freed him.

This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

You were under stewards

You were then saved

You are now sons

Our goals are: **That you will realize you have been made totally free from all your sins by the blood of Jesus and adopted as a child of heaven, and you will therefore live, work, and fight for your new family – the work your Liberator called you to do.**

You were under stewards

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

1. Before Jesus came to die for sinners, the Israelites were like little children with as much right as a slave.

Yes, a child was an heir, but **he had no inheritance until the appointed time** – a time set by his father – a common Roman thing.

This guardian was one who held something in trust until the child was old enough to get it. **The steward was like a manager.**

2. So the Israelites were limited (as a child was) by laws (guardians) that reminded them of their sin and misery and what they deserved and it taught them to wait for the curse of the law be removed to receive their inheritance.

3. To the Jews, “elements of the world” refer to laws, sacrifices, and ceremonies.

Prove “elements” refer to these things! Well, Apostle Peter said all **elements would be destroyed – burned up.**

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and **the elements will melt with fervent heat**; both the earth (land) and the works that are in it will be burned up. 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the **elements will melt with fervent heat?**

All of these “elements” (ceremonial things and acts) were burned up when Jerusalem was destroyed. (Remember how many pictures of heaven were in the tabernacle...on the curtains...in the Holy of holies...the angels...the Ark...?)

So this did not refer to the melting and remaking of the elements of the earth as a home for Christians after they go to heaven and return. (How would heaven be burned up? How do you burn up earth made mostly of water?)

Look at other uses for the word “element.”

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through **philosophy and empty deceit**, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic **principles of the world**, and not according to Christ.

Galatians 4:9 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?**

Hebrews 5:12 For though by this time **you ought to be teachers**, you **need someone to teach** you again the **first principles** of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

None of these things speaks of the earth’s elements, but of ceremonial things that were part of God’s religion.

4. So non-believers of Apostle Paul's day who were trapped by their pagan religious duties and idolatries (elements of the world) had to wait for freedom to come (and not rely on their good works).

5. Lessons:

a. Laws have great value but they don't save. They only show you how bad you are, how much you need a Savior, and then lead you to him. (Not that you could obey the laws anyway!)

b. Those who try to use ceremonies and traditions in place of *salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone* deceive themselves and will end up in the fires of hell. They may look religious, but they won't go to heaven.

You were then saved

4 But when the **fullness of the time** had come, **God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,** 5 to **redeem those who were under the law,**

1. Jesus came at the right time, not a minute sooner or later, in order to redeem those who were under the curse of the law.

It is hard to find a more perfect time in history for that to happen. There was **Roman peace**, a **common language**, **many roads**, many **sea routes available**, and **freedom**.

Negatively, there was **much immorality so men were crying out for help.**

Finally, there was **no longer a king of Judah on the throne** (Genesis 49).

Of course there were **over 100 prophecies of the Lord's incarnation**...And all happened at a time God decreed.

2. Jesus, the Son of God, was sent by his Father.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son..." Apostle John wrote this in John 3:16.

And here Apostle Paul **confirmed Jesus' Deity** as the term "Son of God" was understood to mean the 2nd person of the Trinity.

Jesus was killed by the Jews for claiming to be the Son of God, which they understood as a term showing equality with God.

3. Jesus was born of a woman.

Isaiah 7: 14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: **Behold, the virgin shall conceive** and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

A man sinned, so a man had to die. God required a fit sacrifice. The animals of the Old Testament sacrifices were only pictures of Jesus. The blood of bulls and goats could not forgive sins.

4. Jesus was born under the curse of the law.

In other words, he became a debtor of the law for sinners who were under the curse of the law-obey and suffered under it. He had to **obey the 10 laws**, he had to **participate in many ceremonies of washings and restrictions**, and **he had to die**, taking the curse of man on his head. And he did. He said so himself.

Matthew 5:17 "Do **not think that I came to destroy the Law** or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy **but to fulfill**.

Matthew 3:15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus **it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness**." Then he allowed Him.

5. Lessons:

a. Jesus met all the conditions – every single one - for you to be saved and be set free from sin’s curse. He was God. He was man. **He obeyed the law. He innocently suffered for you.** He suffered because you didn’t do the things you should have, and you did the things you shouldn’t have!

b. He had to save you because you couldn’t free yourself. You were under the curse of the law. If you took **God’s justice**, you’d go to hell. But he was pure enough and great enough to die for you...and triumphantly rose from the dead on the 3rd day.

c. You are now freed from spiritual prison. What heavenly mercies you have received from your God!

You are now sons

5... that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, **God has sent forth the Spirit** of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, **then an heir of God through Christ**.

1. Jesus caused the Father to adopt you because he made you acceptable by his obedience and his death.

While we can say all men are children of God, only those who are reconciled by the death of Christ to God can have the true Spirit of sonship. And all in this family are alike!

Jesus Christ was the Great Emancipator.

2. As freed sons of the King of Heaven, Christians are now able to talk to the Father as the Holy Spirit works in their hearts.

Slaves were mostly abandoned.

3. More personally, Christians are able to cry out: Abba Father (Daddy).

What is the first thing a child does when he is born? Cry.

That's what Apostle Paul did when he was born again!

Acts 9:11 So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, **for behold, he is praying.**

Christ's Sonship is the basis of your sonship! He cried to his Father on the cross and reconciled you to be adopted sons. **You were redeemed from the father who wanted you dead!** That father was the Devil.

In much of Israel a slave was never permitted to call his master "Abba." But here, the Christian is free!

And God sent his Holy Spirit into the hearts of his people so they would call!

Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the **Spirit of grace and supplication**; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

The Holy Spirit remains with man even after conversion.

Would God send his Spirit to help Christians to ask if he had no intention of answering prayers?

Mark 14:36 And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

4. This further means you are no longer a slave with the curse on your head, but you are an heir of heaven!

1Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has **begotten us again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

The change from plural “you” to singular “you” is notable, making it personal. **Individually**, you are heirs of Christ and heaven.

5. Christians are now treated as sons in the kingdom – by God himself and his bride!

6. Lessons:

a. God doesn't have stillborn children. You are all real, living sons of God. **Don't be kids anymore.** Before you were converted you were enslaved and under curse. When you see the cross and trust in the Savior you are freed!

b. If you have God's Spirit, you are free!

c. Act like you are living, breathing sons and call on your Father for the things you need to do the work he has called you and others to do. He has ordered you to ask for things you need. Prayer is not a suggestion! Talk to God any day and any time. **Don't let your sins overwhelm you so you avoid him!**

d. Pray for a richness of God's Spirit in you so you will call more to God.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The Holy Spirit of God will teach you sweet and pure language with which you can pray. You will use language that will make your Father proud. Isn't that the first thing you notice about someone who has become a Christian?

Doesn't his language start to change?

Conclusion:

Like Israel, you were under stewards – the moral and ceremonial laws - until you came to Christ who gave you the promise - salvation. You are now sons of the living God, a sonship none can take away. Your adoption is complete! Your no-good father is gone.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Live like you've been freed from slavery, never more to return.

2. Specifically, work and fight for your new family – the family of God. It will honor the one who liberated you from your former slavery when you believe and worship him.

3. Tell others how they can be freed from slavery. How can you justify leaving them there?

Finally: Do you want to be a son of God? There is only one way. Your **good works** aren't good enough. Your **good words** aren't good enough. **You need the good work of Jesus**, the only one who can satisfy the Father for the sins of mankind. If you want his good works, which is free for you, just ask God for it.