

Galatians 4:1–7

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.

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, 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.

"In the Fullness of time"

Galatians 4:1-7

To us, Christmas is usually wholly about the historical event when God the Son became a baby and entered into human history. So, we think of shepherds and angels, wise men and camels, a stable, Mary, Joseph, and the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. This event is also important because of what God the Father was doing in the theological history of the world. We see this event from God's redemptive perspective in the book of Galatians.

"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." (Galatians 4:4–5) From the Father's perspective, we see the preparation for Christ's coming. Then we see the timing is right. Finally, we learn that the redemption which God planned was accomplished and applied.

I. The Preparation is Made. (v. 1-3)

II. The Date Arrived. (v. 4-5)

III. God's Redemption Accomplished and Applied. (v. 6-7)

I. The Preparation is Made. (v. 1-3)

A. "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, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world." (Galatians 4:1–3) The Apostle Paul tried to help us understand God's plan of redemption. He did this by drawing an

analogy. He made a comparison between God's eternal plan and something the Galatians saw often.

B. The problem is we are not acquainted with this process of "coming of age ceremonies" which were practiced in Paul's day. The Jews still have a "coming of age" custom called either a bar or bat mitzvah. This is a ceremony to mark the point in which the boy or girl becomes an adult in the eyes of the Law and responsible before God. The Greeks had a time like this as did the Romans. In the first century, they marked the time a son received all the rights of inheritance and son-ship.

C. Paul hitchhiked on this idea and wrote that like this ceremony, God had confined all of His people under obligation to the Law. When Paul made the application to all of us in verse 3, he asserted this was true of God's eternal plan for all of His people.

1. All of this was the preparation for the fulfilling of God's plan. The people of God are under bondage to the Law. Apart from God's doing something, we are all lost in sin

2. We recognize we can never meet God's requirements. We can never be sinless, so we are in a hopeless condition before God.

II. The Date Arrived. (v. 4-5)

A. From the beginning God always had a plan. This plan was detailed. It included a time of preparation and then at just the right moment, Jesus came. ***"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."*** (Galatians 4:4-5)

1. ***"In the fullness of time."*** Although we do not know the exact day that Jesus was born, God the Father knew that day from the beginning. It was in His calendar from the beginning. And when the date came, God sent forth His Son into the world.

2. God also has a plan for our lives, if we know the Lord Jesus as our Savior. God's timing is always perfect. We may be in a hurry. God is not and He is never late. A second lesson from this truth is that God also has a date for Christ's second coming. We do not know when that moment will be but He is not tarrying. When the fullness of time is come, God will once more send forth His Son to receive us unto Himself.

B. ***"God sent forth His Son, born of a woman."*** We find in this phrase both His Deity and His Humanity. He was God the Son sent forth, and He was fully born as a human being. In order to die for our sins, He had to be a man. In order to die for more than just Himself, He had to be God.

C. ***"God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law."*** He was born under the righteous demands of the Law. He was born under the Law just like we were, except that He had no sin. The difference is that He came with a purpose. He fulfilled the Law perfectly and then died as our sinless sacrifice that we might be redeemed from this bondage and

released to a place of great privilege. He did this so that we might receive the adoption as sons.

1. Because He died, was buried, and rose again, we can through faith in Him become sons of God. ***“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” (John 1:12)***

2. Sometimes we are so familiar with all of this we become calloused and it does not move us like it should. Remember the Apostle John’s amazement at this reality? ***“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God and we are. Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:1–2)***

III. God’s Redemption Accomplished and Applied. (v. 6-7)

A. ***“And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father.’ Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” (Galatians 4:6–7)***

What happens to us because the Lord Jesus redeemed us? We have received the adoption as sons. As we have already said, we receive that adoption by putting our faith in Christ alone to save us.

B. Because we have the adoption as sons, we receive the ministry of the Spirit of God in our hearts. The Spirit of God cries out “Abba Father.” In ***Romans 8:14-16***, there is a similar statement which clarifies what Paul is saying here. ***“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”*** The ministry Paul underlined is our experience when we see the Father in the Bible and our spirits together with the Holy Spirit join to tell us that we are His children.

C. Finally, because of our sonship we have assurance of an eternity with Him. We are heirs of God with the Lord Jesus Christ. What this fully means I am not sure. But someday, if we belong to Him by faith, we will know.

Two questions:

1. Are you and I saved? Do we recognize how the Lord came and died to save us and we can have this salvation if we will recognize that we are sinners and put our trust in Christ alone to save us?

2. If God the Father did all this to save us and to have a relationship with us, what are we doing to build our fellowship with Him?

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