**GALATIANS 4**

**LIBERTY IN CHRIST**

**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,**

We do not enter God’s family by adoption. We enter by being born again. Adoption has to do with our standing as an adult son.

**2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.**

As children we are under servants. As “sons” we stand in the position of an adult.

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

The Judiazers tried infancy and immaturity.

Elements = basic principles

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

For 1,500 years, Israel was in kindergarten, getting ready for Christ to come.

FULLNESS OF TIME:

Why was THIS the right time for Christ? World Peace – “Pax Romana” – This was a period of 120 years with no major war.

1. Postal system
2. Highway system of roads and signs
3. Open travel over the empire
4. Common language (Greek)
5. One stable government

Made of woman – Genesis 3:15

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

Jesus was under the law so that we could “stand as adults.”

The CHILD: Enters the family, Needs guardians

The SON: Enjoys the family, has liberty, an heir of God.

PURPOSE: To redeem – “buy back”

PURPOSE: To adopt – stand as a son

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

Advantages of being a son:

* 1. The Spirit of Christ dwells in you
  2. God is your “Abba (papa) Father”

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

You are not just a servant, you are a son.

**8 But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.**

Nature = long standing practice, habit, standard accepted custom

NOW: You know God. And, God knows you. Why turn back?

**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?**

The Galatians were leaving the bondage. They were “dropping out” of grace and enrolling in kindergarten – again.

Weak things – beggarly elements – Result in bondage.

**10 You observe days and months and seasons and years.**

Days = Sabbaths, Holy Days

Months = New Moon festivals

Times = Annual feasts like Pentecost, Passover, etc.

Years = Sabbath year, Jubilee

**11 I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.**

The real issue is their binding of their observances.

**12 Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I *became* like you. You have not injured me at all.**

Paul turns from “spanking” them to “embracing” them as a father.

**13 You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.**

Some believe this is a reference to Paul’s “thorn in the flesh.”

We do not know what this “thorn” was. Several theories are set out. All of them are just that – theories.

**14 And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.**

Angel = messenger. We think of wings, halo and white robe.

Paul brought them the message of salvation. He was an angel.

**15 What then was the blessing you *enjoyed?* For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.**

Where is the blessing? How are you blessed:

IF you reject the gospel?

IF you bind yourselves under the old law?

IF you return to that which can not save?

IF you observe “holy days” of Judiasm?

**16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?**

Who is the enemy? Truth? Messenger?

False teachers who take away your liberty as a son.

**17 They zealously court you, *but* for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them.**

Zeal is good (to a point).

When it has knowledge – Romans 10:3

When you obey the doctrine of Christ. Acts 2:43

**18 But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you.**

They had lost the enjoyment of their salvation. They thought bondage to a legal system made them better Christians.

ARE YOU GOING TO CHURCH MORE, AND ENJOYING IT LESS?

**19 My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,**

Children = term of endearment, love, affection

Not – childish, immature

**20 I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.**

Paul has three wishes:

1. To be present with them
2. To change the tone of voice used here
3. To remove doubt about their stand.

NOTE: Parents never outgrow their children. When they are little, they are a handful. When they are grown, they are a heartful. When children are little, you step on their toes. When grown, they step on your heart.

**21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?**

**22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.**

Notice Abraham’s age:

75 – Promise was made

85 – Still waiting

86 – Hagar bears Ishmael

99 – Promise reaffirmed

100 – Isaac is born

**23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise,**

**24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—**

**ALLEGORY** – “Figurative application of real facts, a continued metaphor carried out in a great variety of particulars.” Hermeneutics, Dungan, page 259

Abraham had two sons:

Ishmael Isaac

Bond woman Freewoman

Flesh Promise

Mt. Siani Jerusalem

Hagar Mother of us all

Born of flesh Born of Spirit

Cast out Remained

Not inherit Inherit

Bondage Free

**25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children—**

**26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.**

**27 For it is written: *"Rejoice, O barren,* *You who do not bear!* *Break forth and shout,* *You who are not in labor!* *For the desolate has many more children* *Than she who has a husband."***

**28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was,* are children of promise.**

**29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, even so *it is* now.**

The Persecutor was persecuted.

**30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? *"Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."***

**31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.**

The law cannot give life and fruitfulness; legalism is barren. Legalism is a major problem in the church today. Legalism does not suggest the setting of spiritual standards is wrong. It means worshipping standards and thinking we are spiritual because we obey them. A person can refrain from smoking or drinking and still not be spiritual. We must not judge others by these standards.