**BECAUSE YOU ARE HIS SONS**

Galatians 4:1-7

Key Verse: 4:6

“Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."”

**Introduction**



In today’s passage, Paul reminds us that we are sons and daughters of God. We used to be slaves to sin and death until Jesus set us free. Now we are children of God with all the blessings and privileges as his children. God is our loving father and we call him, “Aba, Father.” May God help us to know this God personally so that we may love him and serve him out of love!

1. Read verses 1-3. What analogy did Paul use to help the Galatians? (1-2, 3:23-25) How did Paul use this analogy to describe our lives before we believed in Jesus? (3, Col 2:20-23) In what sense were we in slavery to the elemental spiritual forces?

1-1, Read verses 1-3.

What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. **2** The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.**3** So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29135a)] of the world.

1-2, What analogy did Paul use to help the Galatians? (1-2, 3:23-25)

***What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.***

* To understand this analogy, we may need to know the customs of Roman society at the time.
* The children of a typical Roman family were raised by slaves. They were disciplined by the adult slaves. They played with the slave children.
* This was true when a wealthy Roman died and left an inheritance to his children. His young sons had the legal rights to his estate. But until they grew up, they were under the supervision of their legal guardians. They still played with slave children.
* They were still disciplined by the adult slaves. They had to obey their guardians until the time set by their father, which was usually around age 15-17.
* Their coming of age was celebrated with a ceremony called “the toga virilis.” According to Roman custom, there wasn’t a specific age when a son became a man. It happened when the father thought the boy was ready, when he thought the time was right.
* With this as the background, Paul used the phrase **until the time set by the father**.
* According to this custom, a son was destined to inherit all that his father had. While the boy was still a child, he had less freedom and authority than a high ranking slave in the household. Yet, he was destined to inherit everything, while the slave was not.
* So Paul was making the analogy that before being saved by the blood of Jesus according to God’s promise, both Jews and we were under the supervision of the law. The law could not save us. It only disciplined us. We had no freedom.
* But our coming of age happened when we accepted Jesus as our personal Savior. We have been set free by our Lord Jesus who shed his blood on the cross to pay for our freedom.
* We are no longer subject to guardians and trustees, that is, the law. This is what Paul said earlier.

Galatians 3:23-25 reads,

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law .

1-3, How did Paul use this analogy to describe our lives before we believed in Jesus? (3, Col 2:20-23)

***So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world.***

* The original Greek word for “the elemental spiritual forces” is “stoicheion,” which is literally the “ABC’s.
* Between Moses and Jesus, the Jews were in elementary school, learning the spiritual ABC‟s through the law so that they would be ready for the coming of the Son of God.
* The sacrificial system which they had and which required blood was to educate them as to what Christ would do later. It was just a foreshadow of what Christ would eventually do. They had to kill a year-old lamb and sprinkle its blood. This was necessary for the atonement of sins.
* But Jesus came and died as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). He shed his blood on the cross to atone for our sins. Through Jesus, human history was changed forever, turning BC into AD.
* A new era dawned for those who accepted Jesus as the Savior. Jesus Christ came to reveal the full truth about God. So those who believe in Christ are no longer in the elementary school of the law.
* But the Judaizers were telling the Galatian Christians to go back to the law. How foolish it would be for grad students to go back to elementary school to learn the ABC‟s all over again!

Colossians 2:20-23 reads,

“Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!‟? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence”

1-4, In what sense were we in slavery to the elemental spiritual forces?

Colossians 2:6-10 reads,

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. 9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, 10 and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.”

* The ‘ABC’s’ of the world is the principle of cause and effect.
* Paul tells the Galatians to go beyond this into an understanding of God's grace. The good that we do cannot justify us under grace; the bad that we do need not condemn us.
* God's blessing and favor is given on a principle completely apart from the "ABC of the world." But we must not base our relationship with God on this principle.
* He does not deal with us by the principle of earning/deserving. Because this is such an elementary principle, it is so hard for us to shake this kind of thinking.
* It is essential that we walk in grace. When we live on the principle of earning and deserving before God, we still live in bondage under the elements of the world.
* The law's effect on our corrupt sinful was to bring us into bondage under the elements of the world.

1. Read verses 4-5. When and how did Jesus come? (4) Why did God send him to be “born of a woman” and “born under law”? What benefit did this give to those under the law?(5)

2-1, Read verses 4-5.

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.

2-2, When and how did Jesus come? (4)

***4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,***

* When and how did Jesus come? What does “God‟s set time” imply? It was “the right time” set by God.
* Many Jews were wondering when God would send the Messiah, but God set the right time to send his Son.
* God kept His promise to Abraham in Gen 22:18 that said, “… and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”
* God had also promised in Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

2-3, Why did God send him to be “born of a woman” and “born under law”?

* Jesus was **“born of a woman”** fulfilling the prophecies of God in the Old Testament scriptures.
* Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary as the Prophet Isaiah had prophesied long ago,

Isaiah 7:14 reads,

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel”

* 'Woman' indicates that Christ was born a true man. Paul does not say that Christ was born of man and woman, but only of woman.
* **“Born under the law”** - Jesus was born under the law so that he might become a curse like us who were under the curse, or under condemnation of the law, to be a ransom for us.
* He was circumcised on the eighth day according to the law (Lk 2:21). Jesus was made like his brothers in every way in order to be a merciful and faithful high priest for us (Heb 2:17).
* God sent his Son to this world to save all sinners, Jews and Gentiles. Jesus, the Son of God, gave up his heavenly glory to come down to this world as a humble human being.
* He was born to a poor family and laid in a manger. Why? It was because we sinners could not come to the Holy God. So God came down to live with us and save us from the power of sin and death.
* John the Apostle was so moved by this amazing grace of God that he exclaimed:

John 1:14 reads,

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth”

2-4, What benefit did this give to those under the law? (5)

***to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.***

* It is amazing that Jesus to came and died for our sins. Before Christ redeemed us, both Jews and we Gentiles were miserable under the law.
* We were condemned by the law. As sinners, we knew we were not right with God but couldn‟t do anything to save ourselves from our bondage to sin and death.
* We were prisoners in the prison of sin. But God sent Jesus to redeem us. He set us free from our slavery by paying a price with his own life. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood (Romans 3:25).
* People in the Roman world were very familiar with the slavery market since there were numerous slaves at that time.
* No slave could be set free until a full price was paid for his freedom. This is what Jesus did for us. He redeemed us by paying the full price for us. He did this with his blood that was shed on the cross.
* Our sins died with Jesus when he died on the cross. He said, “It is finished.” The ultimate purpose of Jesus in redeeming us was to adopt us as His children.
* Jesus set us free from sin and death so that we might be adopted into God’s family. We received the full rights of sons. He redeemed us to be sons & daughters of God.

* Again under Roman law, an adopted child had all legal rights as a son. He was not a second-class son. He was equal to a biological son.
* As adopted sons of God through the blood of Jesus, we share with him the full rights of sons.
* Let us remember how we received the full rights of God’s sons. We did not do anything to deserve this wonderful grace. We did not earn it.
* We received the grace of God by faith in Christ. We became children of God, “not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (Jn 1:13).
* It was all because what Jesus did for us. We can only thank him and love him for this amazing grace.

1. Read verses 6-7. Who came to our hearts when we were adopted to sonship? (6a) What happens to our relationship with God? (6b, Ro 8:15-16) How is our identity changed? (7, Ro 8:17)

3-1, Read verses 6-7.

Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, *“Abba*, Father.” **7** So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

3-2, Who came to our hearts when we were adopted to sonship? (6a)

***Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts,***

* This new relationship is not based on some adoption papers. It is based on the Holy Spirit that moves our hearts.
* The Holy Spirit touches our hearts to believe that our sins are forgiven by the blood of Jesus and we have been adopted into God’s family.
* Paul says in Romans 8:15-16, “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship...The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” (Ro 8:15-16).

3-3, What happens to our relationship with God? (6b, Ro 8:15-16)

***the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”***

* Also our relationship with God is changed. He is our Father. We call him affectionately, “Daddy!” On the other hand, slaves call their master “Master.”
* “Abba” is an Aramaic affectionate diminutive for 'father' used in the intimacy of the family circle
* They would not dare to call their master “Father.” But we now have an intimate love relationship with our God.
* Calling God “Father” seemed a foreign concept to the legalistic Jews even as Jesus taught them the truth.
* To them God was only an authoritative figure whose words must be obeyed, just as slaves must obey their master’s commands.
* They dutifully observed God’s commands, but with no love towards him, like the older son did in Jesus‟ parable of the prodigal son.
* Jesus was heart-broken whenever he saw them blinded by their stubborn and legalistic hearts. We are sons of God.
* Sons love the father and obey him out of love. Slaves obey him out of fear. Sons are free. Slaves are not free. We were slaves until Jesus sets us free through his cross and resurrection.
* Sometimes, we find ourselves thinking and acting like slaves. This happens when we forget the grace of God. We might be slaves of our own emotions such as anger, jealousy, hatred and self pity.
* We show symptoms of being a slave when we serve God‟s ministry grudgingly rather than out of love for God. We may be slaves of our pride and stubbornness.
* We may be slaves of legalism when we focus on keeping rules rather than building relationships in Christ.
* Let us not despair when we find the vestige of our old nature, but boldly come to God and cry by the Holy Spirit, “Abba, Father!”



* We are sons of God. We have been set free from our bondage to sin and death! Sons have a future. Sons are heirs. Sons have a future; slaves do not. We have a bright future in God.
* Sons are never slaves, and slaves are never sons in their father's house.
* Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the prodigal son, where the son was determined to return to his father as a slave - but the father refused, and would only receive him as a son.

3-4, How is our identity changed? (7, Ro 8:17)

***So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.***

* What progress it is to set free from bondage, to be adopted as God’s child, and now become an heir!
* Paul also says in Romans 8:17, “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”
* We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ in the eternal kingdom of God. We have an inheritance stored up in heaven.
* St. Peter also says, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, …” (1Pe 1:3-4).

**Conclusion**

Paul reminds us that we are sons and daughters of God. We call God our “Abba, Father.” Because of what Jesus did for us, we can enjoy all the blessings and privileges as sons of God. God loves us and is keeping our eternal inheritance in heaven. As former slaves, we sometimes suffer from a slave mentality. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help us to live each day as blessed sons of God, loving him and serving him out of love!

**One word: We are God’s children!**