

ABBA FATHER  
Galatians 4: 1-7

Romans 5: 12-20  
Romans 8: 1-8  
Read Galatians 3:19-4:7

We have looked at many different arguments that Paul has had against the law over the past few weeks.

He has shown to the Galatians, and to us new covenant Christians that we are no longer under the law, but are under grace. He used the example of Abraham's faith, and showed how God accounted Abraham's faith toward him for righteousness. Paul said that Abraham was righteous before God because of his faith in God, not because of any law, or moral code, because the law didn't even exist until it was given to Moses 430 years later.

Paul was concerned that the Galatian church was in danger of falling into a works religion, and casting aside all that they had learned. Through our studies the last few weeks I have tried to show the dangers of such a belief system and how it can turn into legalism and thus shift our focus from faith to one of moral-ism and the outward appearance of righteousness, as if we can somehow work it up within ourselves, instead of relying on God, in faith, for our salvation.

About halfway through chapter 3, Paul tells us what the law really is. He shows that the law never was given to make man righteous, but rather it was given to make sin, even more sinful. To show mankind, God's holy standard, and to show that it is impossible to become righteous before God on our own for his standard is perfect and Holy and no one can truly keep it. So in reality, the law was not a blessing...but rather it was a curse. For as scripture says, everyone who lives under the law is cursed. Then Christ came, born of a virgin, born under law, being both God, and Man, came to redeem his people from the curse of the law. Becoming a curse for us, to pay the adoption price of our souls, thus making all who are of the faith of Abraham, god's children just as God promised Abraham.

Last week we talked about the importance of the doctrine of adoption, and how without it we would still be lost in our sins, hopeless, and without salvation. Throughout the bible, we can see that all of mankind is split into 2 groups, those who are children of wrath, and those who are children of promise. If it was not for God's plan to adopt for himself a people out of the mass of fallen humanity we would all still be in the family of the world, of nature, and of our father the devil.

This week we are starting out chapter 4. Paul says, that an heir, while still a child does not differ from a slave even though he is master of all. So in chapter 3 he used the analogy of a pedagogue, a person who is the authority figure over a child. Someone who attends to the needs of that child, and also makes sure that that child is growing in the ways that he should, praising that child when he does good and disciplining that child when he rebels. Here in chapter 4 we see Paul flipping the analogy and he is now talking about the child.

In Greek civil law it was a standard practice for a wealthy man to hand over his son to a guardian, or pedagogue, someone who would watch over then until they would come of age. So even while a child, he would still be an heir to all of his fathers estate but was subject to this guardian. He would be the heir apparent, or as Paul says the master of all, but only by title and not yet by actual possession until

the proper time set forth by the parent.

Under this system, even though the heir, holding the title of master, he had little more rights than that of a slave. He was held under a type of law, or rule by this guardian until the coming of age that was determined by his father.

So Paul uses this analogy of raising children to show how the law works with mankind. He says, even so we, meaning those of faith, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world

There is some debate here as to what Paul means by the phrase, elements of the world. There are 2 predominate views as to what is believed he was referring to here.

1 view that would include the gentiles, they were enslaved to their pagan worship, much like the Jews were enslaved to the law. Among pagans, elements of the world could refer to spiritual beings such as the elemental spirits of earth, air, fire, and water. So one way to interpret this is that he is referring to the Galatians themselves during the time they were in bondage to their god's and goddesses.

Another view is that he is actually referring to the mosaic Law. The idea here is that the law is the basic principles, or essential components referring to basic teaching, like the ABC's This 2<sup>nd</sup> understanding seems to fit pretty well following up the analogy that Paul has used about the law being a tutor, and guardian. Teaching us the foundation, the basic things of God. It is like with little children, given certain rules to abide by governing our conduct.

Much in the same way we raise our own children today. When they are young, we spend a lot of time punishing, telling them to stop doing things, or acting in certain way. Setting a hedge around them for their own safety and protection, and also to teach them how to respect authority, listen to direction and advice.

As they age, the process changes. We go from what feels like we are always getting after them, to not having to punish them as much. Now instead of having to punish, just knowing that you are upset with them can be enough. Knowing that they disappointed their parents who they love becomes the punishment.

Children grow up and no longer need the basic things for they should have mastered them and should be able to move on to bigger and better. IT is the same with the mosaic Law, God gave the law to show himself, to show mankind's state toward him, and to drive his people to repentance. William Perkins described Israel as a little school set up in a corner of the world; the law of Moses was as it were, an ABC, or primer in which Christ was revealed to the world, in dark and obscure manner, specially to the Jews. But now that Christ has come, the promised seed, we no longer need the ABC's.

Continuing on in verse 4, Paul says: 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.

Paul has been using the example of a child, who is an heir to the family estate but not yet a master of

it. Here, he is continuing this example to prove another point. Just as in the secular world a parent sets forth the boundaries, and limits, and the time when an heir would receive their inheritance, God did the same thing here. God the father determined when God the Son would come, and pay the ransom and give God's children the promised inheritance.

As humans we look at history, we look at the bible and all these things and think to ourselves, why would God wait so long. You have Adam and Eve, the fall of mankind, and it isn't for many generations before Christ comes to die on the cross. Why did God wait so long. Why would he allow so many to die before revealing his Son. Well to many of these questions I think we can't know the answer. We are not able to know God's plan unless it is revealed to us. But one thing that we do know, is that God is the sovereign Lord of creation, and all things that he does is for his Glory. Speaking of things just like this Paul addresses it in Romans when he says, Indeed Oh man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, why have you made me like this?

I think we can take this very question and apply it as an answer to these questions. Why God did you do it this way? Would it not be better if..... be silent foolish man, who are you to argue against God? The fact of the matter is, God the father is fulfilling his plan, for his purpose, and for his glory. We are creating his beings, created by God for his good pleasure. Sometimes I think we forget that as humans. Our human pride, and arrogance can get in the way and we start questioning God..why God, why did you do this to me, why would you allow this to happen, or the one we hear so often...if God is so powerful, holy and loving then why does he allow things bad things. The answer to these questions all boils down to....because he is God and all things are for his purpose and Glory. Of course this will not satisfy the skeptic, who as Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians, can not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.

So What it really comes down to, is do you believe in a God who is sovereign or not. The bible sows us that God allows things to happen for a variety of reasons, but none of which we can truly know or understand, unless it is revealed to us. But one thing that we do know, is that it is all for his purpose and plan, and His will, will be done. All things are in God's timing, and his timing is always perfect.

The world was ready for Christ, it was ready for the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham. The Jews had been under the mosaic law for over a thousand years, and they have tried, generation after generation to keep it and failed. And the Gentiles were lost in their pagan belief, for generations groping for answers but finding none. Then Christ came, as verse 4 says.. When God's time had come, when the exact moment he intended came, when the world was ready for it God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem those who were under the law that we may be adopted as sons.

There are a few things that we can take from this verse, not only Gods timing, which speaks to his sovereignty, but also the fact that the son was sent. The fact that God sent his son, shows that Christ existed before he was born in Bethlehem. This is important, because it shows that since Christ was sent from heaven, and existed with God it declares his divine nature. He is the only begotten Son of the father, the second person of the trinity who lived with his father in glory from eternity past.

Another thing we can take form this is that it says he was born of a woman which shows his true humanity. Jesus although, sent from his Father, had an ordinary birth. This is a way that God the Son became a human being. This is also highly important because Christ was fully human, he had our flesh, our nature, with all it's temptations. For Christ death to pay the adoption fee of God's children, he had to first become one of us so that he could die for us, take the death that we deserve, and pay the

price for our sin's nailing it to the cross.

So, we see is that at the time of God's choosing, we have Christ who was sent from heaven, fully God, being born of a woman, becoming fully man, But not only that, he was born under the law.

The condition of Jesus birth, shows his perfect obedience to his father. Jesus was born a Jew, born under the law therefor he was bound to obey God's law in its entirety. Which he did, with total perfection. Christ even died under the law, not having done any wrong himself but as Paul said in chapter 3, he became a curse for us redeeming us from the curse of the law.

This is the importance of the duality of Christs nature. Being fully God, being completely righteous, and without sin, yet being fully man, being born so he may die. To Philip Ryken, talking about the offensiveness of Christs death, and how some prefer to just look at his birth and life he says, "Christianity is not a religion of stable and straw, it is a religion of thorns and nails, of wood and blood. The incarnation cannot save us without the crucifixion. Christ did not redeem us by living his life alone, he redeemed us through his death. He redeemed us from the curse of the law, God's holy requirements for righteousness, by being born, under the law, fulfilling the law, and then paying for the curse of it for us.

And now, having payed for our redemption, we we can come before God the father, as Son's. If we look back at verse 4 and continue on it says, 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, and because you are sons God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts crying out Abba Father.

Now that we have become the adoption children of God, he sent the Holy Spirit to us. The spirit lets us know that we truly are God's children. God the father, just as a secular father is the one who adopts us, God the son redeemed us, as Paul put it, from the bondage under the elements of the world so that we would no longer be slaves to the world but son's of the almighty God. Then The father sent us his spirit to indwell in us to minister to our soul, comforting, and convicting us, giving us the assurance of our adoption. So here we see the mystery of the triune God, the one true God, in 3 persons at work.

Paul says in Romans 8:15 and 16, For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry Abba Father. The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Abba is a term of respect and endearment. It is basically saying, Dear Dad, or Dearest Father. It is what Jesus cried out to his Father as he died on the cross. It is a cry out from the heart, a true, honest outcry of the soul.

Paul told the Galatians that they had this spirit, and did not need anything else added to what they had been given already. They did not need the mosaic law that the Judaizers were trying to put them under, They were already children of God through faith, having the holy spirit bearing witness that they were God's children. Just as with all of us today who are of the faith, instead of calling upon our Lord, as a servant would, we can now cry out as children and we can say, Abba Father..