



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

GALATIANS 3:26—4:7

LESSON: HEIRS OF THE PROMISE — February 5, 2017

INTRODUCTION:

Chapter 3:19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. What was the object then of the law? **It was added** in order to restrain transgressions among men, and especially among the fleshly race of Abraham, only until the promised seed, to whom the promise was made, even Christ, should come. This was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. He would mediate between Israel and God; that is, to Moses.

3:20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one. A mediator implies two parties between whom he acts. The law was the contract to which both parties agreed to the condition. God said *"If ye will obey"*, and Israel said *"We will do"* (Ex.19:5, 8). The law was valid so long as both parties fulfilled the terms of the contract. Israel defaulted and did not live up to her part of the bargain. So then God was no longer obligated to keep His part. And a mediator was needed for there was separation. The conditions were not kept, and the blessings were not received.

3:21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. No. The law does not give life at all. If it did, and could impart righteousness, then it might be said to be opposed to the promises of righteousness by faith.

3:22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But none became righteous by the law. Therefore, in Scripture, the law place all under sin. See Rom. 11:32. But, the promise based on faith in Christ should be to them only who believe. All hope is in the gospel.

3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. **Kept under the law.** Before the faith was revealed we were confined under the law, as in prison, in a state of preparation for the faith that was to be revealed. The law was *"added"* (v. 19) in order to do a work of preparation until the gospel was revealed. **Kept under the law**— meaning under its power.

3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. **The law was our schoolmaster**— revised as *"tutor."* In Roman families a trusted slave, a pedagogue, had charge of children, preserved them from harm, and took them to school. The law is such a tutor; not a schoolmaster, but a guide to lead us to the school of Christ. Bringing us to Christ we are **justified by faith**.

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3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. When once brought to Christ we do not need the tutor any longer. We are no longer under a schoolmaster.

LESSON: I. BENEFITS OF BELIEF Galatians 3:26-29

3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. When faith comes to all, you are all God's children by faith in Christ, no longer under a schoolmaster.

3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ¹Paul now shows how their faith acted to bring them into Christ. As Dr. Schaff says, *"Faith always implies surrender."* Faith leads to obedience. The believer is **baptized into Christ**, and being found in him has **put on Christ**. Being in Christ, a member of His body; a part of the Son, the believer becomes a child of God. Compare Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 10:2, and Matt. 28:19. Quote: *"The baptized is surrounded by Christ and covered by his merits. . . . The figure of putting on Christ as a new dress afterwards gave rise to the custom of wearing white baptismal garments."*—Schaff, *in loco*.

3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. In Christ the old, worldly lines of separation are all blotted out. All one. One person, as it were, *"one new man"* (Eph. 2:15), of which Christ is the head. All, without regard to race, blended into one whole.

3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Those being in Christ are then part of Abraham's family. As the seed of Abraham, then we are heirs of the promise to Abraham. What belongs to him belongs to us.

II. TRANSITION IN STATUS Galatians 4:1-7

4:1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;— Each society has a time for a young boy to become a man. In Paul's days, it was a very important event. As soon as a boy became a man, he had full legal rights. Until that time, other people had to manage a child's personal and business affairs. Young children could not own property, even if their father gave it to them. Young children had no rights. Slaves could not own property either. Slaves had no rights; so young children and slaves were in the same situation. In Jewish society, a boy became a man soon after he was 12 years of age. In Greek society, a boy became a man at about 18 years of age. In Roman society, the child's father decided when the child was ready to be an adult. So Paul was probably using Roman society as a model in this verse. Paul is illustrating the spiritual immaturity of those living

¹ http://www.ccel.org/ccel/johnson_bw/pnt.pnt0903.html
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>



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under the law and who are being prepared for faith in Christ. When a son is a minor and too young to receive his inheritance, he might as well be a slave. This was the situation of Paul and his fellow Israelites under the Old Covenant.

4:2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Paul uses two terms that both carry the idea of entrusting someone with something of value: 1) tutors and 2) governors. Tutors are guardians who have the supervision of the person. Governors are stewards who have supervision of the property. They are trustees who manage the estate. The minor child, like the slave, is subordinated to other decision-makers and authority-figures **...until the time appointed of the father.** The child cannot speak or act on his own behalf. In Roman society, the child's father decided when the child was ready to be an adult. In God's eternal timing, He appointed a time when the believer would operate under grace.

4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:— Paul now brings the point home. The Galatians were bound in legalism when they operated by rules. People subject to rules function like children. The law enslaved those under it from Sinai to Christ. The Greek indicates that they were in a permanent state of bondage to the law. **...under the elements of the world** referred to the *"elementary principles"* the Galatians previously followed, which for Jews would be the Mosaic law and for Gentiles, the basic concepts of their pagan religions. But they were enslaved like little children in terms of their mind-set and life situations under a legalistic system. Legalism is not a step toward maturity; it is a step back into childhood. When enslaved by the law, the Jews were children in bondage, not sons enjoying liberty.

4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,— The idea behind the phrase *"the fullness of time"* is *"when the time was right."* Jesus came at just the right time in God's redemptive plan, when the world was perfectly prepared for God's work. There was a fullness of time when God delivered the world— God sent forth His Son, born of a woman— Jesus came not only as God's Son, but also as one born of a woman, born under the law to deliver man from condemnation of the law. Jesus Christ had to live under the law in order to secure the perfect righteousness of law for man. He had to obey the law in every single precept and stand before God as the Perfect and Ideal Man—Ideal Embodiment of Righteousness. God spoke the Word from the beginning to time. The woman conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit and the power of the Highest (God) overshadowed her (Luke 1:35).

4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Paul has told us **who** came—God's Son; **when** He came and **how** He came. Now he explains **why** He came: to



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redeem them that were under the law. *"Redeem"* is the same word Paul used earlier (Gal.3:13); it means *"to set free by paying a price."* The reason that all must be redeemed from the law is the fact that by the law, all are condemned to die. The law brings death. Romans 6:23, *"For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Therefore redemption was necessary that He might receive the adoption of sons. The word *"adoption"* (huiothesia) means "to place as a son." In the ancient world the family was based on a Roman law called *"patria potestas,"* the father's power. The law gave the father absolute authority over his children as long as the father lived. He could work, enslave, sell, and if he wished, he could pronounce the death penalty. Regardless of the child's adult age, the father held all power over personal and property rights. Therefore adoption was a serious matter. Yet, it was a common practice to ensure that a family would not become extinct by having no male children. And when a child was adopted, three legal steps were taken.

1. The adopted son was adopted permanently. He could not be adopted today and disinherited tomorrow.
2. The adopted son immediately had all the rights of a legitimate son in the new family.
3. The adopted son completely lost all rights in his old family. He was looked upon as a new person, that old debts and obligations connected with his former family were cancelled out and abolished as if they never existed.

This *"adoption of sons"* is bestowed as a gift. We cannot have it, and still be in bondage. We might no longer be accounted and treated as servants, but as sons grown up to maturity, who are allowed greater freedoms, and admitted to larger privileges, than when under tutors and governors.

4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. God the Father sent the Son to die for us, and then He sent the promise of the Spirit to live in us—The contrast here is not between immature children and adult sons, but between servants and sons. Like the prodigal son (Lk.15:18-19), the Galatians wanted their Father to accept them as servants, when they really were sons. So, because they were sons, and having the Holy Spirit of God's Son in their hearts makes them desire to cry Abba Father.

4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

This verse ends a long section that Paul started in 3:1. The Christians in Galatia were no longer slaves. They were part of God's family. They were receiving the good things that God promised to Abraham. They received these good things because they trusted Jesus Christ. The contrasts of son and servant:

- The son has the same nature as the father, but the servant does not. When we trust Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us; and this means we are partakers of the divine nature (2Pt.1:4). The law could never give a person God's nature. So when the believer goes back into the law, he is denying



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the very divine nature within, and he is giving the old nature (the flesh) opportunity to go to work.

- The son has a father, while the servant has a master. No servant can ever say "*Father*" to his master. When the sinner trusts Christ, he receives the Holy Spirit within, and the Spirit tells him that he is a child of the Father (Rom.8:15-16). It's natural for a baby to cry, but not for a baby to talk to his father. When the Spirit enters the heart, he says Abba Father (Rom.8:15). The word "*Abba*" is an Aramaic word that is the equivalent of our English word "*papa*." This shows the closeness of the child to the Father. No servant has this.
- The son obeys out of love, while the servant obeys out of fear. The Spirit works in the heart of the believer to quicken and increase his love for God. The Judaizers told the Galatians that they would become better Christians by submitting to the law, but the law can never produce obedience. Only love can do that.
- The son is rich, while the servant is poor. We are both sons and heirs. And since we are adopted—placed as adult sons in the family—we may begin drawing on our inheritance right now. God has made available to us the riches of His grace (Eph.1:7; 2:7), the riches of His glory (Phil.4:19) the riches of His goodness (Rom.2:4), and the riches of His wisdom (Rom.11:33)—and all of the riches of God are found in Christ (Col.1:19; 2:3).
- The son has a future while the servant does not. While many kind masters did provide for their slaves in old age, it was not required of them. The father always provides for the son (2Cor.12:14).

SUMMARY:

We are children of God only by faith in Christ Jesus. Those who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. In Christ, the old worldly lines of separation are all blotted out—no more Jew or Greek, bond or free, nor male or female because we are all one in Christ Jesus. And by being in Christ, then we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (**3:26-29**).

²Children who are under age are no better off than slaves, even though everything their parents own will someday be theirs. This is because children are placed in the care of guardians and teachers until the time their parents have set. Paul is saying, "*We were minors, children, not yet delivered from bondage, since the time had not come appointed by the Father.*" But when the fulness of the appointed time came, the Father sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that we would receive the adoption of sons crying, Abba Father, where we would be no more a servant but a son, and an heir of God through Christ (**4:1-7**).

² <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/galatians-41/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>