

Galatians 4

Galatians 4.1-7

V1 – How does Paul describe a child in a wealthy family, as compared to a slave for the family?

While they are both young, they have no inheritance and no rights

V2 – But when does that comparison change? When the children of the father reach the legal age of adulthood, then they receive the blessings of the father

V3 – So what was it like for the Jews under the Law of Moses? They were like the children of the father, but they had not reached the legal age of "adulthood"

V4 – When did that relationship change in God's plan of salvation? At the right time, Christ was born into this world, and the plan of eternal salvation began to unfold

-What were the characteristics of "*the fullness of time*"?

-The Romans had established an extensive system of roads

-There was a language of business and the common people that was perfect for the writing of the gospel (Koine Greek)

-Alexander the Great had been defeated, and the Romans had established a stable world with a system of laws that our laws are still based on today

-In other words, God had prepared the world for the coming of his son "*in the fullness of time*"

V5 – What was the goal of God's plan of salvation? Both those who had lived under the Law of Moses and also those who would be "adopted" by God could be saved

V6 – Since we are all now children of God, we can approach our Father in heaven with terms of endearment (*Abba, Father*)

-The word *Abba* is an Aramaic word which is a term of endearment of a child for his father – The equivalent in English would be something like "papa"

-It shows the love and close ties that a child has for his father; it was not a term that a slave would use for his master

V7 – Even the "slaves" (Gentiles) can now receive the inheritance from the father (Paul's point exactly)

-This is absolutely great language and great logic that allowed Gentiles to enter into God's plan of eternal salvation

Galatians 4.8-11

V 8 – **What was the situation of the Gentiles before they became Christians?** They worshipped the gods of nature (which are not real gods)

V 9 – **But since they had become saved through Christ, what is so tragic about their situation?**

They had turned back to their old false religions

-in other words, they had obeyed the gospel of Christ, but had turned away from it and had fallen away from the faith

V 10 – They observed "holy days," in contradiction to the one "holy day" (the first day of the week) in the Christian dispensation

V 11 – **What was Paul's deepest concern?** That he had wasted his time on the first missionary journey in establishing congregations in Galatia

Galatians 4.12-20

V 12 – Paul breaks up his condemnation of the churches of Galatia with some loving comments from his heart

-We cannot be sure of the background of these verses, but it appears that he possibly did not originally intend to visit Galatia, but had done so because of some illness

-He either went to Galatia because of this illness or remained there because he was ill

V 13 – His illness resulted in his preaching the gospel in these cities of Galatia

V 14 – And his illness made his appearance rather revolting (or disgusting)

-But how did they receive the apostle, even with this terrible appearance? With great respect, even as they would have welcomed an angel of God or even Jesus Christ himself

V 15 – **How much had they loved the Apostle Paul at that time?** They would have given him their own eyes, if they could have

-Thousands and thousands of words have been written about Paul's "thorn in the flesh," but we have a clue here that it had to do with his eyes

-Notice how Paul generally did not write his own letter, but rather dictated them

-Read these Scriptures:

Acts 23.1-5 (Paul did not recognize the high priest)

Romans 16.22

Galatians 6.11

1 Cor. 16.21

Col. 4.18

2 Thess. 4.15

-These passages might explain why the Galatians had such love and sympathy for Paul that they would have given him their eyes, if they could have

-Why didn't the New Testament just come right out and give us details of Paul's affliction?

Because people would say down through the centuries, "Oh, that's nothing – my disease is much worse than what Paul was complaining about. He should have had to deal with...as I deal with every day"

-In many cases, people think they have the worst affliction known to mankind, and nobody can "out brag" them

-So the Holy Spirit chose not to reveal the exact nature of Paul thorn in the flesh, but these Scriptures do indicate that it had to do with his eyes

V 16 – What a great rhetorical question – Today, as in Paul's day, the "enemy" is the one who speaks the truth

-Why do people consider him to be the enemy? Because they do not want to hear the truth (it would condemn them)

V 17 – **What was the goal of the false teachers?** To take advantage of those who are led astray (the same today, with the many false teachers in the religious world)

V 18 – Paul wanted the love and attention of the Christians in Galatia, but not just when he was with them, but when he was preaching in other parts of the world

V 19 – **How did Paul describe his current relationship with these congregations?** As a woman in labor; they still were being formed, but had not yet achieved maturity in the Christian faith

V 20 – Paul could not understand how they could have departed from the faith to this degree

Galatians 4.21-31

V 21 – Paul returns to attacking the basic false doctrines in the churches in Galatia

-The false doctrine? Going back under the Old Testament (Law of Moses)

V 22 – **How many sons did Abraham have?** Two

-By whom? Sarah and Hagar

V 23 – **Which one was son of the flesh and which one was the son of promise?**

-Ishmael was the son of the flesh, and Isaac was the son of the promise

V 24 – **What did these two women represent?** Sarah = covenant, Hagar = slavery

V 25 – **What places did they represent?** Sarah = Jerusalem, Hagar = Mt. Sinai

V 26 – **Which city represents the Christian faith? Jerusalem**

-Paul shows that even the Jewish false teachers did not trace their ancestry back to Mt. Sinai, but to Jerusalem

V 27 – *Isaiah 54.1* – This verse seems to say that the descendants of Hagar are more numerous than the descendants of Sarah (other interpretations are possible)

V 28 – But it doesn't make any difference – because the Jews were children of the promise (up until the cross of Christ)

V 29 – **Names of two sons?** Isaac and Ishmael

-**Older?** Ishmael – he persecuted Isaac and had to be sent away (*Genesis 21.9*)

V 30 – Ishmael and Hagar were cast out

V 31 – **Paul's conclusion?** Christians are children of the promise (and this includes Gentiles and Jews)

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