

Gal. 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;

Gal. 4:2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

Gal. 4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

Gal. 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

Gal. 4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Our position as a child is secure, but we aren't ready for responsible service until we have been trained. We may be heirs to royalty, but we are no more than servants until we become more mature. We are dependent on guidance and instruction from the Father and His designees. The Father is the one who decides when we are ready for the responsibilities accompanying our position.

"when we were children" I think *were* is the operative word here. He is talking to Christians who should know more--who have been taught. Our Christian growth is to be a continual thing.

"we were in bondage" Again, *were* is the key. Bondage to what? "the elements of the world" My margin uses the word *rudiments* as a synonym, and basically the natural state of the world we are born in is "sinful." Again, this was emphasized by the Law.

"the fulness of time" - This phrase is always dependent on the will of God. He is the one who determines the fulness of time for every process of science, every point of prophecy, every bit of molding of His vessels of service, etc. So God sent His Son to the earth as a child, born of a woman--and He was born subject to the same laws God established for man. He didn't have a special set of laws. He was born a man.

The whole purpose for which He was born was to redeem "those who were under the law." That identifies all of mankind. (Pastor Fidel was giving an explanation of redemption this weekend and used S&H Green stamps for an example--boy did I feel old.) He was making it possible for us to be adopted as the sons of God. When you are adopted, you have the same rights and privilege as that of a natural child. The mind-boggling thing is that He did this with full knowledge of each one of us and all the baggage we bring--our hard headedness, our lack of patience, our pride, our ingratitude, our selfishness, our laziness.

I'm back to God is so good to me!!!! He won't write me off. (3/07) He will forgive me every time I confess and ask for forgiveness. He wants to use me in service if I will but submit.

Gal. 4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, *Abba, Father.*

This is a sweet verse. When we call out to God as our "Father," that is a witness of the Spirit in our life. If you never have a desire to approach God as your

Father, then maybe you need to reexamine your life. When I think of the word *Father*, it represents many different things. I think love, protection and security are the first things that come to mind, but teacher, disciplinarian, provider, and example are words that follow close behind.

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

The difference is in *servanthood* and *sonship*. A son is motivated by love and not by force or fear. As sons, we are heirs of God through Christ. It's important that we never forget who made this position possible (Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God) and why (because of His love for His Father and for us; to provide a way of restoring fellowship between the Creator and the creation, our whole reason for being). Cf 3:26

Gal. 4:8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

Gal. 4:9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

"when ye knew not God" - a position we all come from. I think this *know* is referring to that intimate relationship. We would naturally serve others whom we deemed to have authority over us even though they were in no way on par with God.

There really is no understanding how someone who has really come to "know" God as Father could desire to abandon that relationship and put themselves back under the bondage of the law. The phrase "or rather are known of God" is quite intriguing. I think it tends to tie in to the idea of adoption. You can't receive the full benefits of sonship until the Father chooses you as His child. I personally believe that that sonship is open to each individual. (See Topical Study - Predestination, Salvation and Security.)

John 6:45--It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Ezekiel 33:11-- Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

The moment of sonship comes when we receive His gift of salvation. He then affirms it with the seal of the Spirit, and we are then "known of God."

Gal. 4:10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

Paul now makes the observation that they are observing days, months, times and years. My Bible cross references **Romans 14:5** where it talks about different men thinking that certain days were more important than others. Then he goes on to express the feeling that maybe his labor has been in vain among them. I think

the point he is making is that observances of the law are not the key--it's who and what you are observing in your heart. When we are serving Christ in love with the freedom and adoration of a child, we are not bound by the laws and traditions of men--even if they were established with the best intentions. Christ is to have the preeminence in our lives.

Gal. 4:11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Paul is concerned that all the work/effort he has put into teaching them has been for naught. (How many parents go thru that thought process.) I think it is another tool that the enemy uses to try and discourage us; to feel like we can't really make a difference. We have to learn to rest in the fact that we are just to obey.....God is responsible for the results.

Gal. 4:12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.

"Brethren" - It is obvious that Paul feels close ties, family ties to the Galatians.

"beseech" - Paul is begging, pleading with them to listen to his heart.

"be as I am" - How many of us really feel comfortable in asking others to imitate us? That is one of our goals/responsibilities--to set examples that can be imitated. Here I think the context goes on to explain that Paul wants them to enjoy the freedom they have in Christ. They weren't bound to the law and should never be bound to the law. He became as they were-- free from the bondage of the law and has no regrets for it. It is the right thing to do.

Gal. 4:13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

Gal. 4:14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.

Gal. 4:15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, *if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.*

Evidently the first time that Paul shared the gospel with the Galatians he was sick. This sickness was such that it was a trial to them (repulsive in its outward manifestation?). Instead of responding in a negative way and rejecting him, they gave him the best of care, just as if he had been an angel or even Christ Himself. This probably had a lot to do with the feeling of family that he had towards these people. We, as Christians, have to be oh so careful not to make judgments on people or deal with people based on outward appearance or circumstances. We should bend over backwards to love the unlovely. We should have a servant spirit and be willing to help those who need help.

Paul senses that they have lost the joy, the blessedness of the spirit that they once had. He could personally testify they had served him with a sacrificial spirit and unconditional love--to the point that they would have gladly given him their own eyes if that had been possible. (This indicates that his illness concerned his eyes and was evidently repulsive.)

Gal. 4:16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

Paul is confronting them - Do they now consider him an enemy for telling them the truth? This is a responsibility that we often shy away from because we want to be liked. Confrontation is hard - especially when the heart is so tied up in those you need to confront. Bottom line is God tells us that those He loves, He chastens. Not that we have the same position, but we have the same authority and responsibility thru Him to chastise one another as well as comfort, encourage, serve, etc.

Gal. 4:17 They zealously affect you, *but not well*; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

Gal. 4:18 But *it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.*

What a description of the human spirit--usually motivated by selfishness - I - me - pride. Those who were trying to pervert the teaching that Paul had given were evidently very zealous in their efforts towards the Galatians. (Isn't it sad that so often those who are most zealous are those who are teaching a false gospel.) What he wanted the Galatians to recognize was that the motivation for the zealousness was to make the Galatians zealous on their behalf and to forget about Paul. (In other words they wanted to use them for their own purposes.)

Paul lets them know that to be zealous is wonderful when it is toward the right thing. They should always be eager to do good whether Paul was with them or not.

Gal. 4:19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

"My little children" - Paul has a feeling of family towards these for whom he labored; he worked hard, to bring them to saving faith in the Savior. The work was a process, like childbirth is a process. Now he feels like he is starting the process all over again and is determined not to give up until "Christ be formed in you." It's like he is talking to children who have been taught well and grounded in the truth, but they have gone off like rebellious adolescents to try out something new in spite of what Mom and Dad have taught them. (They haven't lost their position in the family, but they have lost fellowship.) He is determined to stick with them until they recognize that they are on the wrong path.

Gal. 4:20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

Paul is far away and having to be direct. He would rather be with them so that they could hear his tone and know his heart, a heart full of love and compassion for them. (That's always the limitation of the written word. You can never be sure it is conveying your heart. It is very dependent on the perception of the one in receipt of it. This is often a feeling I have especially when communicating with those I love—Will they hear my heart through the words?) He has doubt about how they will hear what he has to say. A couple of other translations use the phrase, "I am perplexed about you." That may be more of an indication that he doesn't understand how they could be so easily led astray.

Gal. 4:21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

I think my paraphrase of this verse would be - OK, so you think you want to live under the law; do you really know what the law says?

Gal. 4:22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

"it is written" - the source is the word of God. Abraham had two sons--one by a slave, Hagar, and one by a free woman, Sarah.

Gal. 4:23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise.

The child that was born of the slave was born out of man's attempt to fulfill the promise of God; the son of his chosen wife was born as a result of God's promise in God's time.

Gal. 4:24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

This story is an allegory; it has a deeper meaning. Agar, the bondwoman, represents the covenant of the law as given from Mount Sinai; the law places one under bondage.

Gal. 4:25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

Note: Mt. Sinai is in Arabia.

Paul then compares this to the condition in Jerusalem at that time--still under the bondage of the law. In spite of the sacrifice of Jesus who paid the penalty once for all, the temple was still doing a booming business.

Gal. 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Paul has evidently had a vision of the new Jerusalem, which is built on the grace and mercy and promise of God (represented by Sarah) and is free (as opposed to in bondage--not under the law). It's a gift, not of works lest any man should boast. (Eph 2:8-9)

I thought it would be helpful to chart all my observations in this difficult passage.

Religion of works/law	Christianity
Ishmael – natural birth - flesh	Isaac – supernatural birth - Spirit
Hagar – bondmaid	Sarah – freewoman
Old covenant	New covenant
Earthly Jerusalem	Heavenly Jerusalem
Judaism – legalism	Christianity – grace
Cast out	Inherits

- Abraham fathers both.
- Ishmael and Isaac are half-brothers. Ishmael's descendants have persecuted the Jews throughout history. So too, the child of the flesh has persecuted the child of the Spirit. (see v29)

Gal. 4:27 For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, *thou* that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

"it is written" - again identifying the source as the word of God. This is a quote of **Isaiah 54:1**— Sing, O barren, *thou that* didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, *thou that* didst not travail with child: for more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

Sarah was the barren woman through whom was to come the child of promise. Through this woman would come the nation of Israel and, spiritually speaking, the church. This nation would have more children than those of "she that hath a husband." After looking at this section of verses many times, the last half of verse 27 still doesn't compute.

(6/1/05) In researching to proceed with my journal in Isaiah 54, I found the following:

The explanation that seemed to make the most sense referenced Israel as both the desolate woman and the married wife. She has been *desolate* (out of relationship with the Lord) for much longer than she has been *married* (in fellowship with the Lord). The "children of the desolate" could be a reference to the "church," the spiritual children of Abraham since the time of Christ.

I'm still not confident of my understanding, but I'm sure the Lord will enlighten me eventually.

Gal. 4:28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Paul goes on to affirm my thought - we are the children of promise just surely as Isaac was.

Gal. 4:29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.*

Just as Ishmael (the child of the flesh) persecuted Isaac (the child of the promise) so the same thing is happening now.

Gal. 4:30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Then he reminds them what God instructed Abraham - "Cast out the bondwoman and her son"; for he shall not receive the same inheritance as the son of promise, the son of the free woman. Those who choose to live under the law will die under the law and will be judged accordingly; their inheritance is hell (with their chosen father, the father of lies). Those who choose the gift of salvation provided by the Savior will also be judged accordingly--on the merits of Jesus; their inheritance is heaven (with their chosen father, The Father of Love and Truth; the Father who made the promise).

Gal. 4:31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Brethren (fellow believers), we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. We are children of the Spirit—not of the flesh.