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# Galatians

**...to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Galatians 4:5**

Giving the full thought of this sentence will help provide context -

"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

Paul has been speaking of the purpose of giving the law and how it is not some type of replacement to the promises made to Abraham and his seed. Instead, it was given as a tutor to lead us to Christ. At the right moment, Christ came "to redeem those who were under the law." Redemption from the law was necessary because, as he has already shown, "...as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" (verse 3:10). This is because one must fulfill the law perfectly; something no one is capable of doing.

Further, he showed "that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for 'the just shall live by faith'" (verse 3:11). Because of this, Christ came in order to redeem us from the power of the law and from the curse it brings. He explained how this was accomplished in verses 3:13, 14. And the reason for accomplishing this is so "that we might receive the adoption as sons."

The logical order of what occurs is redemption from the law followed by adoption as sons into the messianic body; Christ being "the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). The knowledge of sin, and the penalty for committing sin, came about through the law. Through adoption, release from the power of the law, and immunity from the penalty of sin is realized.

It should be noted that being received as adopted sons implies a first-time entrance into son-ship, not a receiving back as a son. In other words, the parable of Luke 15 concerning the prodigal son is not what Paul is referring to here. It is through faith in Christ that we are brought into the family of God. Adoption apart from faith in the promises of God is not possible. It is another indication that the law was unable to save.

Life application: If we had to be redeemed from the law in order to be adopted as sons, then why would we insert (or re-insert) deeds of the law after becoming sons? The two thoughts are contradictory. We, by faith in Christ's accomplished work (plus nothing), are saved unto eternal life.

**And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Galatians 4:6**

As noted in 4:5, the logical order is redemption and then adoption. For those who have been redeemed, God includes them in His family. What would be the purpose of redeeming a person and then leaving them under the very law they were redeemed from? Instead, we are adopted as sons into a new economy. This is Paul's logical argument to the Galatians. And because we are adopted something wonderful is the result.

He says, "...because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." The word "because" indicates a result; one thing logically follows after another. As sons, the logical result is that we receive the Spirit of Christ into our hearts. Christ is the Son of God. He was able to lovingly call out to His Father as a

Son. Now, because we are adopted as sons, we too are enabled to call out in this same filial manner.

Does this mean that we will be free from life's trials? Does this mean that we will be kept from harm, sadness, or pain? The answer to these questions is "No." What it does mean is that we can come to God in good times or bad with the same courage and hope as Christ did. No matter what we face, we know that the will of our heavenly Father is what is right and appropriate. The only time Jesus is recorded as having called out, "Abba, Father" was during the darkest moment of His life -

"And He said, 'Abba, Father, all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will*.'" Mark 14:36

Like Christ, who shortly after His words to God was beaten and nailed to the cross, we too can have the same courage, resolve, and determination that no matter what occurs, our heavenly Father is with us in it. We too can cry out "Abba, Father!" In both times of joy and in times of great agony, we have a right, and the honor, to pour out our hearts to Him.

The word "crying" is *krázō*. It is "an onomatopoetic term for a raven's piercing cry ("caw"); (figuratively) cry out *loudly* with an *urgent scream* or shriek, using 'inarticulate shouts that express *deep* emotion.'" (HELPS Word Studies).

When we have emotion so deeply confined in our souls that no words can properly express them, it is the Spirit of Christ which calls out for us to His father on our behalf. He suffered the same (and worse) than we suffer. He has been exalted to levels higher than we can know. In all ways, He is able to empathize with our situation and to call out on our behalf for us. This is the idea of what Paul is saying. Tying this together with Romans 8, we can see the full meaning of what is occurring -

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'" Romans 8:14, 15

It is we who cry actually, but it is the Spirit of Christ who carries our cry to our heavenly Father. He is the One who makes this wondrous display of son-ship to the God of the universe possible.

Life application: God no less hears our cries to Him than He heard the cries of Christ Jesus there in the Garden of Gethsemane. We are His sons through adoption and no petition of ours is unheard. Be comforted in this as you walk through this world of both joys and trials.

**Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.** Galatians 4:7

"Therefore" is based on the fact that "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." Because of this fact, a change has taken place in each one of us. This is made poignant now because Paul switches from the second person plural (you all) of the previous verse to the 2nd person singular in this verse (you as an individual). Thus he is making this a personal statement to each recipient of this letter.

As you have received the Spirit of His Son, "you are no longer a slave but a son." A change has taken place. We go from a state of bondage (verse 4:3) to a state of freedom. We are no longer under the yoke of the law, but we have full rights within the house. This doesn't just mean that we can now participate in the family life God has prepared, but that it is an eternal inheritance. This is evidenced by the finishing words, "...and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

As God is eternal, and we are heirs of God, then we have been granted His same eternity (Hebrews 9:15). We have an inheritance "incorruptible and undefiled

and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven" (1 Peter 1:4). Vincent's Word Studies notes the following concerning this inheritance -

"The figure is based upon Roman, not upon Jewish, law. According to Roman law, all the children, sons and daughters, inherited alike. According to Jewish law, the inheritance of the sons was unequal, and the daughters were excluded, except where there were no male heirs. Thus the Roman law furnished a more truthful illustration of the privileges of Christians."

This is especially evident from Galatians 3:26-28 which said, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Life application: The overall intent of Paul's words should not be overlooked in the analysis of each clause. He is constantly making a contrast between the bondage of the law and the freedom of God which is found in Christ. For those who fail to trust Christ alone for their salvation, they remain in bondage. They have failed the test and remain bound as slaves. They have not become sons of God. Be sure to evaluate yourself. Are you still attempting to be justified by deeds of the law? If so, you are not a true son of God.

**But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.** Galatians 4:8

Paul, addressing the Galatians specifically (he says "you" rather than "we" and the verb is plural) gives them a contrast to what he just said concerning their being sons of God and heirs of God through Christ. Before that time, they "did not know God." At that time, there was no knowledge of the true God and how to serve Him properly.

Like people from any pagan culture, some may have known there was a God who created all things, but they only had the knowledge from general revelation. They had no specific knowledge of Him as the Jews did. For the most part, such people "served those which by nature are not gods." In an attempt to either be reconciled to the God they were sure existed, or to appease the "gods" they thought controlled their lives and destiny, they "served" idols.

They became slaves to these false gods. They were under a type of bondage to them in that they felt obligated to them through sacrifices, rites, gifts, etc. When they heard and received the gospel of God's grace in Christ, they were freed from these things. They were no longer under bondage, but liberated to serve the true God as sons with the promise of a full inheritance.

From this thought of where they were, and where they had now come to in Christ, Paul will next show where they were heading because of the lies of the Judaizers. He is making a logical defense against the insertion of the Law of Moses into their lives by showing them where they had been in their own lives.

Life application: We all started somewhere in our walk towards true faith in Christ. Some of us were raised in Christian homes and our walk was short and direct to His throne of grace. Others of us traveled long roads of false worship, finally ending at that same marvelous spot. However we came to Him, we were freed from the ineffective types of worship that permeate both the law and the misdirected worship of false religions. Only in Christ is the true and free expression of worshipping God realized. Why would we want to give up on that and return to something less than what Christ offers?