

“Born Under the Law”
Galatians 4:1-5
(Preached at Trinity, March 17, 2013)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul has been setting forth the antithesis of the law and faith, of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.
Galatians 3:23-25 NAU - "But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."
2. In **Verse 4** Paul describes the great blessing of the New Covenant – God’s promise fully revealed in Christ.
Galatians 4:4 NAU - "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son"
The fullness of time has come. That which was foretold by the prophets and displayed through types and foreshadows in the Old Covenant has now been revealed.
3. Jesus was sent forth from eternity and entered time in the form of humanity. He was “born of a woman.” He became the perfect God/man.
4. Paul adds an important and essential aspect of the coming of Christ. He had to be a suitable substitute for us. He had to fulfill all righteousness. He had to meet the demands of the Law.
5. God made a covenant with Adam – a Covenant of Works.
Genesis 2:16-17 NAU - "The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."
Adam’s continued enjoyment of God’s blessing of life was contingent upon his continued obedience. This would continue throughout Adam’s probationary period. God threatened death upon his disobedience.
6. Adam represented all of his posterity in this covenant. When he sinned and suffered the loss of original righteousness and came under God’s condemnation, we too came under corruption.
7. The Covenant of Works was reaffirmed in the Old Covenant. On Mount Sinai God gave His Law and demanded perfect obedience. Like the Covenant of Works, the Old Covenant demanded perfect obedience.
8. In **Verse 3** Paul summarizes our condition under the Law.
The Law served to point us to the righteousness that can only come by faith. Just like the child under the pedagogue we were held under the discipline and instruction of the Law. The Law provided instruction regarding how we should live before God. It was strict and demanded perfect submission, but it could not give us the new heart essential for us to meet its demands. And it could not provide the faith that was essential for God’s righteousness.

9. But then we come to **Verse 4** - "But when the fullness of the time came"
The sending forth of Christ was the great epoch of redemptive history. All of God's shadows came into clear focus. Through Jesus Christ God's people were enabled to enter into their inheritance as the children of God. Leaving behind the elementary things the people of God could now enter into their spiritual maturity.
10. In **Verse 4** Paul writes, "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law"
The eternal Son of God was born
Jesus took upon himself the full nature of a man.
But this baby did not have an earthly father
Although Paul does not hint of the virgin birth in this verse it is surely implied. The virgin birth was absolutely essential. It was necessary for Him to be sinless in every way. All men are born in sin except for Christ.
11. Jesus Christ had to be born unaffected by original sin. But He also had to demonstrate an active obedience. He had to meet the demands of the Law in order to be able to impart to us perfect righteousness. He had to be born under the demands of the Law.
- I. Paul says the Son of God was born under the Law
- A. At the heart of Jesus being sent forth is the nature of His mission
1. He came to save His people from their sins
Matthew 1:21 NAU - "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
 2. We'll look at this in greater detail in the next point but we must understand the nature of His mission. He came to die; to lay down His life as a substitute. This demanded perfection
 3. As I pointed out last time, the virgin birth was significant. Jesus was not corrupted by original sin. He wasn't born guilty. And He wasn't born with a corrupt nature
 4. But not only was He born in righteousness, He also had to live in righteousness. He had to meet the Law's demands
- B. Jesus was born under the Law
1. This means that He was born under the requirements of the Law
 - a. This is also our situation. We are all born under the Law. What does the Law require? It requires perfection.
James 2:10 NAU - "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all."
Galatians 3:10 NAS - "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them."
 - b. The Law is unforgiving and unbending. It requires perfect obedience. One single infraction condemns
Few recognize just how dangerous their position is. Every second of their life brings them closer to the judgment and eternal damnation.

- c. Jonathan Edwards described it as hanging by a thread. The Wrath of God burns against them, their Damnation doesn't slumber, the Pit is prepared, the Fire is made ready, the Furnace is now hot, ready to receive them, the Flames do now rage and glow. The glittering Sword is whet, and held over them, and the Pit hath opened her Mouth under them. Unconverted Men walk over the Pit of Hell on a rotten Covering, and there are innumerable Places in this Covering so weak that they won't bear their Weight, and these Places are not seen. O Sinner! Consider the fearful Danger you are in: 'Tis a great Furnace of Wrath, a wide and bottomless Pit, full of the Fire of Wrath, that you are held over in the Hand of that God, whose Wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the Damned in Hell: You hang by a slender Thread, with the Flames of divine Wrath flashing about it, and ready every Moment to singe it, and burn it asunder"
- d. This is the condition of every man and woman since Adam. We have all sinned. All are guilty. All are condemned.
- e. But Jesus never sinned, even once. He never disrespected his parents. He never told a lie, never coveted. His whole life was focused upon honoring and pleasing His Father.
- f. Jesus was born under the requirements of the Law so He could fulfill all righteousness.
2. In the Covenant of Redemption the Son of God agreed to become liable to God's holy law in order to satisfy the debts of his elect people
- a. He was born under the demands of the Law – it was His duty to obey
- b. He fulfilled His duty – He obeyed
He lived a perfect life remaining pure and undefiled
Hebrews 7:26 – “For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;”
- c. This was the first step in Him being the Surety for his people.
3. Jesus Christ, our perfect Surety lived perfectly in this world as the Representative of his people, fulfilling our obligation to God's law, establishing in our stead a perfect righteousness.
Romans 5:17-19 – “For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)¹⁸ Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

- II. The Son of God came that He might redeem those who were under the Law
Galatians 4:4-5 NAU - "born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law"
- A. Once again, we find a duality of meaning
1. On one hand Paul is speaking of the contrast between the Old Covenant and the New. Paul is speaking of the Galatian Jewish Christians. Jesus delivered them from the legal system of the Old Covenant.
 2. On the other hand, every Christian was under the Law like every other human being. He has been redeemed by the righteousness of Christ. These verses must include Jews and Gentiles. This is consistent with the inclusive language in **Chapter 3**
Galatians 3:28 NAU - "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
- B. The word redemption implies that we were held captive or in bondage to someone or something. ἐξαγοράζω literally refers to the paying of a ransom.
Matthew 20:28 NAU - "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
1. To whom was the ransom paid? Some have presumed that the ransom was paid to Satan.
2 Timothy 2:25-26 NAU - "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will."
 2. While it is true that we were held captive by Satan we had no debt to Satan. Our debt was owed to God. From what did we need to be delivered? What do we mean by the word "saved?" Saved from what?
Romans 5:8-10 NAU - "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."
1 Thessalonians 1:10 NAU - "and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come."
 3. God's wrath had to be appeased – this is the meaning of propitiation. His justice had to be satisfied; a price had to be paid – this is the meaning of redemption.
 We needed to be made right before God. We needed atonement. Atonement is actually an OT word. It is found only once in the NT.

- a. Atonement demands a sacrifice – a substitute to carry away our guilt. Blood had to be shed.
Acts 20:28 NAU - "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."
- b. Atonement implies reconciliation. Through the atonement of Christ we have been reconciled and brought into a relationship with God. In the Greek there is a word that often denotes purpose—often translated “that, or in order that.”
There are two ἵνα clauses in **Verse 5**. The second is conditional upon the first.
Galatians 4:5 NAU - "so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

- C. How is it that Jesus redeemed those who were under the Law?
 - 1. Remember, the Law demands perfect obedience. The Law’s demands must be fulfilled. Jesus was made under the Law and fulfilled the Law.
 - 2. We are now delivered from the Law. How is this?
 - 3. First, Jesus obeyed the Law thus fulfilling all righteousness. This righteousness is then imputed to God’s people by faith.
 - 4. Second, Jesus went to the cross and satisfied God’s judgment upon the sins of His people through His sacrifice of substitution. He suffered the penalty we deserved because we broke the Law
Galatians 3:10 NAS - "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them."
Galatians 3:13 NAS - "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree "--"

- III. This redemption has made possible our adoption
The Son of God came that He might bring us to our fullness as the sons of God.
Verse 5 - "that we might receive the adoption as sons."
 - A. This is the fulness of the Covenant of Redemption
 - 1. God determined to save a people unto Himself and adopt them as His own dear children.
 - 2. He sent forth His own Son to accomplish this work
 - B. Those for whom Christ has come and redeemed have become the sons of God
 - 1. We have the blessedness of having God as our Father
 - 2. We have the Spirit of God in our hearts whereby we cry out Abba Father – a term of the tender relationship of a child and his or her father
 - 3. Paul has stressed the greatness of our salvation.
In **Chapter 3:2** he stressed the receiving of the Spirit by faith.
In **Verse 26** he wrote of becoming sons through faith in Christ.
Now he writes of the Spirit of Christ whom we have received by faith declaring within our own hearts that we are the sons of God.
It is all by faith in Christ alone!

Conclusion:

1. These truths will seem meaningless to those unaffected by them. But to the sons of God they are glorious.
2. The wonderful news is it is available to all who will have it—all who will trust in Christ alone.
John 3:16 KJV - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
3. Will you have Him? Will you forsake all else and embrace Him.