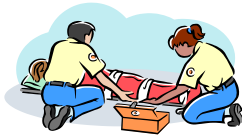


The Study of Galatians



The Defense of Justification by Faith
Galatians 4:1-7

- Sonship defines our Identity
- Sonship establishes our Rights
- Sonship explains our Access



Key Verses: Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

INTRODUCTION: When the books of the Bible were originally written they did not contain chapter or verse reference. The Bible was divided into chapters and verses to help us to find Scriptures more quickly and easily. However, in a few places chapter breaks are poorly placed and as a result divide content that should flow together. Galatians chapter 3 and 4 is just one example. Chapter and Verse Division

Paul continues with three more arguments in chapter 4 to prove that salvation is by grace and not by keeping the Law of Moses: The Dispensational Argument, the Sentimental Argument and the Allegorical Argument.

IV. The Dispensational Argument: vv.1-11 anyone who reads the Bible carefully must admit that at different times, God deals in different ways with different people. When we speak of Dispensational Truth we mean the truth of the Bible as it relates to God's program of the ages for the Jews, the Gentiles and the church of God. **1 Corinthians 10:32** and **Titus 2:11**

Paul explains that the Law of Moses was a dispensation, a special way in which God dealt with Israel for a special purpose. But this dispensation of law ran its course, having prepared the way for Christ. Moses is honored as the lawgiver, but Abraham is honored as father of God's people.

1. Sonship defines our Identity: chp. 3:26-29 for we are all children of God. When Paul writes that there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ, he is not suggesting that these important social distinctions no longer exist:

- For there are Jewish Christians and Christian slaves; Christian men and Christian women. These are merely descriptive terms, none of which is relevant when defining those who are children of God. All who trust Jesus Christ for salvation are Abraham's seed and heirs. v.29

2. Sonship establishes our Rights: chp.4:1-5 The word "sons" indicates something more than biological descent, it is a legal term and denotes the standing enjoyed by an individual after he or she has been acknowledged by a natural or adoptive father.

Our former position before God: vv.1-3 Paul uses two illustrations to show the contrast between the believers' former position and what they now enjoy: That of an heir "*coming of age*" and that of a person "*being adopted*" into a Roman family

Coming of age: It was extremely significant in both Jewish and Hellenistic (Jews influenced by Greek culture) societies. In both cultures rites of passage underline the importance of the event.

- In Judaism a boy passed from childhood to adulthood about the age of 12. In the Hellenistic world an adolescent became an adult about the age of 18. i.e. "*Age of Majority*" for girls and boys in most of our States.
- In Judaism a boy was responsible to his parents and they were responsible for him.
- After his "*bar mitzvah*" (age 12) the boy accepted full responsibility for his own actions, and pledged himself to be obedient to God's Law.

Being adopted into a Roman family: It was Roman custom to mark the passage with a sacred family festival, which took place on March 17. It included formal adoption of the child by the father.

- The ceremony marked the father's acknowledgement of the child as both son and heir, and the father had the prerogative to set the age of a son when this event would take place.
- As a child "*minor child*" they were kept in subservience like a slave, and they had no freedom and could not make decisions for themselves.
- As an heir, though by birthright was owner of the whole estate, the child remained under a guardian who watched over his person, and a trustee who protected his estate.

Established in our new identity as sons, our old relationship with the Law has come to a complete and final end. The Law no longer has any authority over us.vv.4-5

- This changed when God sent His Son to redeem those who were under the Law, with the goal that through Christ we might "*receive the full rights of sons*"

3. Sonship explains our Access: vv.6-7 Paul reminds the Galatians of that access to their inheritance in Christ which is the true resource for holy living.

- The Judaizers promoted their false gospel by claiming that the Law of Moses was a resource intended by God to aid righteous living.
- God has sent "*the Spirit of His Son*" into our hearts. v.6
- The Holy Spirit provides "*immediate and direct*" access to God, and he alone serves as the conduit through which enablement flows to us from God.
- We have a relationship with God which could never have been established by reliance on works.

Abba, Father (Daddy). How could anyone who truly understands the relationship between father and son ever imagine that God wants to relate to us through law, or that the blessings that are ours are to be earned rather than received by faith?