

Sunday, June 18, 2023—Galatians 4:1-5 Tutors, Governors, & Adoption

Galatians 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;**
- Paul opens chapter 4 by using a well-known human illustration to depict Israel’s subjection to the Mosaic Law in time past.
- Regardless of who the person might be, whether born free or slave, all children were subject to the same rules and regulations while they were children. There was no difference between them.
- The word “child” in this verse is different from the word “child” used in Galatians 3:26. Here the word means not speaking or infant.
 - *Nēpios*—not speaking, i.e. an infant (minor); figuratively, a simple-minded person, an immature Christian:—babe, child (+ -ish). (*Strong’s Concordance*)
 - Matthew 11:25
 - Matthew 21:16
 - I Corinthians 3:1; 13:11
 - Hebrews 5:13
 - *Yhios*—carries the idea of full grown and mature.
 - Romans 8:14, 19
- While the heir is still a child, he is no different from a servant.

Galatians 4:2

- **But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.**
- The heir, while he is still a child, is under tutors and governors.
- Tutors—one who has the care and tutelage of children, either where the father is dead (a guardian of minors), or where the father is still alive
 - “a commissioner, a domestic manager, a guardian” (*Strong’s Concordance*)
- Governors—the manager of household or of household affairs.
 - “especially a steward, manager, superintendent (whether free-born or, as was usually the case, a freed-man or a slave) to whom the head of the house or proprietor has entrusted

the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures, and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age.”
(*Strong's Concordance*)

- The time when the heir would be released from tutors and governors was at the discretion of the father.
- Genesis 15:2—Eliezer was the steward of Abraham’s house even though Isaac would be the heir.
- Galatians 4:1-2—Paul says that an heir, even though he be lord of all, is no different from a servant when he is a child (*nēpios* i.e., an infant, little child, a minor, or one who is not of age). As a child, he is under “tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.”
- Following Paul’s illustration, the tutors and governors in this verse are clearly the Mosaic Law.

Galatians 4:3

- **Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:**
- **Even so**—this phrase connects this verse with the illustration of verses 1 and 2.
- Also notice once again, that Paul uses the word “we.” Remember that when Paul uses the word “we” in this epistle, he is referring to Israel.
 - Galatians 2:15
 - Galatians 3:23-25
- The Greek word for “children” is that same word translated “child” in verse 1 i.e., *nēpios*.
- Notice Paul’s use to the phrase “elements of the world” to refer to the Mosaic Law. The Greek word translated “elements” carries the idea of first principles or foundational premises. Paul is obviously referring to the elementary principles of the Mosaic Law.
 - Galatians 3:23—being “shut up” equals being in “bondage” in Gal. 4:3.
 - Colossians 2:20-22—the elementary things are touch not, taste not, and handle not. All of these elementary things are associated with the physical world like Paul says in Galatians 4:3.
- Galatians 4:3—“Even so we, when we were children (*nēpios*);” the verb rendered “we were” is in the imperfect tense and is thereby referring to a continuous or linear action in past time. The same is true for the second “were” in the verse. So, whomever Paul is referring to in verse 3 in past time was in a continuous state of childhood and in a state of bondage under the elements of the world.
- So, Israel, as children, was in bondage to the foundational elements of the Law.

Galatians 4:4

- **But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,**
- **But**—the word “but” introduces a contrast to the situation outlined in the previous verse.
- **Fulness of time**—the phrase, “the fulness of time ” corresponds with the “time appointed of the father” in verse 2. The basic idea here is when the time was right. This ought not to be confused with the Dispensation of the Fullness of Time in Ephesians 1:10.
- **made of a woman**—is clearly talking about the virgin birth of Christ.
 - Matthew 1:20
 - Luke 1:35
- Jesus Christ was born a Jew, therefore, He was subject to the Law of Moses.
 - Luke 2:21, 39
 - Matthew 5:17—Christ said He came to fulfill the Law.
 - Luke 24:44—even after His death, burial, and resurrection, He is still aware of His relationship to the Law.
- WWJD—Jesus would follow the Law.

Galatians 4:5

- **To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.**
- Christ was made under the Law in verse 4 so that He could redeem them that were under the Law in verse 5.
- Galatians 4:5—notice again the use of the word “we”. It was through the work of Christ that Israel was going to receive the adoption of sons.
- Why was the Son “made under the law” in verse 4—so that he might “redeem them that were under the law” in verse 5. These are some people who were under bondage to “the elements of the world” in verse 3.