

**GALATIANS**  
**CHAPTER FOUR**

1. What is the status of an heir prior to maturity?

*“Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father” (Galatians 4:1-2).*

*This continues the thought previously presented that “before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Galatians 3:23-25).*

2. What were the children in bondage under?

*“Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world” (Galatians 4:3).*

*The word translated “elements” has reference to the periodic table of elements, the very building blocks of matter throughout the universe, which will be destroyed on the Judgment Day (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:10, 12). The word applies to elementary or rudimentary aspects of worldliness (Colossians 2:8, 20), as well as to the Old Covenant (Galatians 4:9), and even to basics of the gospel meant to be accepted and mastered early in discipleship (Hebrews 5:12).*

3. When did God send forth His Son?

*“When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son” (Galatians 4:4).*

In immediate context, using the allegory presented, the fullness of time refers to when the minor heir reached maturity. In the greater context of New Testament inspiration, it means God had a precise time in history (Daniel 2:44) predetermined for Christ's arrival on earth (Ephesians 1:10; Romans 5:6; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:6). Earlier in history was not God's intention (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:10-12).

4. Why is it relevant that He was *"born of a woman?"*

That He was *"born of a woman"* (Galatians 4:4) fulfilled the very first prophecy made concerning Christ (Genesis 3:15) – a prophecy about defeating Satan who first corrupted mankind by deceiving a woman (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:14).

Moreover, it emphasizes His humanity, which was necessary for Him to prove humble under God (Philippians 2:7-8), sympathetic toward men under temptation (Hebrews 4:15), and victorious over death (Hebrews 2:14).

5. Why is it relevant that He was *"born under the law?"*

That He was *"born under the law"* (Galatians 4:4) means He was able to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17-18) and thereby end it (Romans 10:4), and thus *"to redeem those who were under the law"* (Galatians 4:5).

6. Why did God send forth His Son?

*"That we might receive the adoption as sons"* (Galatians 4:5). By His only begotten Son, God means for us to know we are sons, too! That we enjoy the parent/child relationship with our Maker is proof we are loved (1<sup>st</sup> John 3:1). Love displaces fear (1<sup>st</sup> John 4:18). Displacing fear is the whole point of adoption (Romans 8:14-17)!

7. Whom did God send forth after sending His Son?

*“Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’”* (Galatians 4:6). As Jesus cried, *“Abba, Father!”* in the garden (Mark 14:36), we who have His Spirit within do likewise (Romans 8:15).

8. As a son, no longer under guardianship, what is each Christian?

*“Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ”* (Galatians 4:7). The inheritance we anticipate is eternal salvation in heaven (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:3-5).

9. What had the Galatians been doing when they *“did not know God?”*

*“When you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods”* (Galatians 4:7).

Whereas Paul has been implying a Jewish audience in the previous verses, those who were under the temporary guardianship of the Law of Moses, he moves now to address the Gentiles of Galatia inasmuch as they previously *“did not know God,”* which could not have been said of Jews.

In their ignorance of God, these Gentiles submitted themselves under false deities, being idolaters. That’s how idolatry goes—false gods are worshiped because the true God is unknown (Acts 17:22-23).

10. As disciples of the Lord, who knows whom?

*“But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God” (Galatians 4:9).*

The disciple knows God, but, much more importantly, God knows the disciple. That was Jesus’ point: *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Matthew 7:21-23).*

11. How were the Galatians *“turn[ing] again?”*

*“How is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?” (Galatians 4:9).*

They were in bondage to false gods before they obeyed the gospel to gain its freedom, but they were resuming bondage by submitting to Judaism, the *“elements”* of which were *“beggarly,”* meaning *“poor.”* This poverty is in contrast to the wealth of the gospel (Ephesians 1:7, 18; 3:8).

12. What examples did Paul cite to demonstrate the Galatians’ submission to *“weak and beggarly elements?”*

*“You observe days and months and seasons and years” (Galatians 4:10).*

The religious observance of holy days cannot be rightly imposed on anyone because they are part of a system that anticipated the gospel, not a part of the gospel itself (Colossians 2:16-17). Observing Jewish customs wasn’t the problem, exactly, because that could be done in good conscience (Romans 14:5-6). The problem was Gentiles assuming these practices from and falling into servitude under a dead Law.

13. What did Paul fear?

*"I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain" (Galatians 4:11).*

He was afraid his work in the gospel on behalf of the Galatians would be wasted by them turning from Christ to Moses. Salvation is at stake when Christians prefer the former Covenant to the present one.

14. Why did Paul urge his readers to become like him?

*"Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I became like you" (Galatians 4:12).*

He had *"become all things to all men"* in order to win souls to Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:19-23), which included counting his gains in Judaism loss for Christ (Philippians 3:3-7). Herein, he beseeches the Galatians to do what he had done in surrendering Old Covenant obedience.

15. Had the Galatians mistreated Paul?

*"You have not injured me at all. You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject... For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me" (Galatians 4:12-15).*

Not only had they not mistreated him previously (12), but they welcomed him despite ill health (13), and were willing to help him sacrificially (15).

His *“thorn in the flesh”* is well known (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:7), and may have involved some visual impairment (Galatians 6:11), but they wanted to help. This diverges greatly from the Corinthians who had a very low regard for Paul’s bodily presence (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 10:10).

16. How did they regard him initially versus later on?

At first, he says, *“You received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus”* (Galatians 4:14), but he was concerned, *“Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?”* (16).

Receiving the apostles sent by Christ as God’s messenger, or even as Christ, is appropriate (John 13:20). But Christ was hated for telling the truth (John 15:18), so His apostles would be, too.

17. Is zeal good or bad? How was zeal affecting the churches of Galatia?

*“They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you”* (Galatians 4:17-18).

Zeal is good if properly directed (Romans 10:2), but the Judaizers were zealous in trying to win the Galatians’ attention and admiration only for the purpose of excluding them if they didn’t act Jewish so that the Gentiles would be zealous in pursuing them, to the point of taking on Jewish behavior.

18. What was Paul still doing for the Galatians that should have been completed already?

*“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you”* (Galatians 4:19). They should already be sons of God through adoption and rebirth, but he was still in labor for them. Formation remained incomplete!

This is the only kind of “getting in touch with your feminine side” that a man is allowed – to have maternal nurturing instincts for weak souls (Matthew 23:37)!

19. How was Paul concerned about his tone?

*“I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you”* (Galatians 4:20).

He has been hard on them throughout this epistle, especially in the first chapter, where he skipped over the usual niceties contained in most introductions to chastise them immediately. Now, he employs terms of endearment, calling them his *“little children”* (19) and regarding himself as their birth-giver (19), spiritually. He wants the relationship to improve, but that is up to them.

20. How could Paul *“have doubts about”* the Galatians?

If the basic tenet of Calvinism, *“Perseverance of the Saints,”* or *“Once Saved – Always Saved,”* was the least bit true, then there could be zero cause for Paul’s expressed doubts. That such a one as the apostle Paul could be uncertain of the salvation of people he converted is proof that salvation is not a one and done proposition.

21. What should people under the law know about the law?

*“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?”* (Galatians 4:21). The difference between *“the two covenants”* (24) should be obvious!

22. What metaphors did Paul present to teach “the two covenants?”

*“For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar — for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children — but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:22-26).*

*“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise” (Galatians 4:28).*

*Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? ‘Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.’ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free” (Galatians 4:30-31).*

The two covenants are represented by the two sons of Abraham. Yes, he had six more sons by Keturah (Genesis 25:1-2), but his first two sons were born in pursuit of fulfilling God’s promise – one in vain (Genesis 16:1-12), and the other in righteousness (Genesis 17:15-21).

The two covenants are also represented by two mountains. Mount Sinai is where Jehovah descended and gave Israel the Ten Commandments and all the Law of Moses (Exodus 19:1-31:18). Mount Zion, situated in Jerusalem (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8:1), was prophesied as the location from which God’s new Law in Christ would be established (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-3). Because of this, the bride of Christ, the church, is pictured as “New Jerusalem” (Revelation 3:12; 21:2).

<b>2 SONS, 2 MOUNTAINS = 2 COVENANTS</b>	
<i>“By a bondwoman”</i>	<i>“By a freewoman”</i>
<i>“Born according to the flesh”</i>	<i>“Born... through promise”</i>

<i>"Hagar"</i>	<i>"The mother of us all"</i>
<i>"Mount Sinai in Arabia"</i>	
<i>"Jerusalem which now is"</i>	<i>"The Jerusalem above is free"</i>
<i>"In bondage with her children"</i>	<i>"Children of promise"</i>
<i>"Cast out the bondwoman and her son"</i>	<i>"We are not children of the bondwoman but of the free"</i>

23. How is the quotation from Isaiah 54 meant to be applied?

*"For it is written:*

*'Rejoice, O barren,*

*You who do not bear!*

*Break forth and shout,*

*You who are not in labor!*

*For the desolate has many more children*

*Than she who has a husband'" (Galatians 4:27; Isaiah 54:1-6).*

While there is some comparison to recognize with Sarai (Genesis 11:30), the prophecy was given to Judah in captivity, where they were to learn their punishment and grief were brief in contrast to the blessings that would follow (Isaiah 54:7-10). The New Testament, the gospel of Jesus Christ the Savior, is where those blessings are found!

24. What transpired between Ishmael and Isaac that is still going on?

*"But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now" (Galatians 4:29).*

Ishmael, born according to the flesh, mistreated his brother Isaac, born according to the Spirit (Genesis 21:8-9), and so it continues now that spiritual people should expect persecution from fleshly-minded people (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:12).

Notice that what Paul describes as persecution was a boy “*scoffing*” at his little brother. Persecution manifests in varying levels of severity and we should not disregard verbal insults of what is true simply because they are not physically violent.

25. What consequence did Hagar and Ishmael experience and what does that mean now?

*“Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? ‘Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.’ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free” (Galatians 4:30-31; Genesis 21:10).*

Since Hagar and Ishmael were cast out because of Ishmael’s mockery toward Isaac, then, certainly, Christians must remove from fellowship those Christians were trying to impose the Law of Moses on their brethren.