

Galatians 3:26–4:7

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1. How were we made “children of God”?

- “For ye are all the children of God....” We are “children” or “sons” of God (John 1:12; Romans 8:14–16; Galatians 4:5; 1 John 3:1–2). There are two figures at work concerning sonship. One the New Birth (John 3:1–8), the other Adoption (Ephesians 1:5). In either, we are granted the eternal inheritance (1 Peter 1:3–5, 21–23; Ephesians 1:11).
- “by faith in Christ Jesus...” Christ is the means of our adoption, belief of the Gospel is the condition upon which it occurs.
- “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Baptism into Christ manifests the belief for which God is looking (Genesis 15:6; Hebrews 11:8) and upon which He reckons righteousness (Colossians 2:10–14).

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2. How had the Galatians “put on Christ”?

- “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,” *enduo*, “to dress” or “to clothe someone” (either oneself or to be clothed upon). The baptized believer is clothed with Christ, he comes into fellowship with God and inherits the promise to Abraham (3:29), adoption as a son (4:5; *cf.* Romans 8:15).
- “Into Christ...” that is, into the benefits and blessings of Christ: his death (Romans 6:3–4), forgiveness (Colossians 2:11–12), salvation (1 Peter 3:21), the name of the Father, the Son & the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19), the one body (1 Corinthians 12:13).

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3. What is the significance of “there is neither Jew nor Greek...for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

- “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female...” Keep before your mind Paul’s fundamental argument from the beginning of the letter: “God accepteth no man’s person” (Galatians 2:6; *cf.* Romans 2:11).
- “There is neither male nor female...” Paul is not setting aside racial or cultural realities (1 Corinthians 7:18), gender roles (1 Timothy 3:1), or societal and economic norms (1 Corinthians 7:20–24). Rather, he is affirming “there is no difference” respecting salvation by faith (Acts 15:19; Romans 3:22; 10:12; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17).

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4. Unto what are Christians heirs?

- “And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs...” Christ is the seed of Abraham to whom the promise was made (v. 16) and all believers belong to Christ (v. 22, 29). Thus, all who belong to Christ inherit with from Abraham (Galatians 3:14). The seed was called in Isaac, and that seed is Christ, through Him all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; 22:18).
- “According to the promise...” The promise in this context is the “blessing” of the Abrahamic covenant (I do not equate this promise (*cf.* 3:14) with “receiving the Spirit” in v. 2).

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5. What are “the elements of the world” to which Paul says he was in bondage?

- “Even so we, when we were children...” Prior to having believed Paul was a “child” under the “tutor”, but once he came to “the faith” he was regarded as having reached majority and set free (1 Corinthians 13:11). The illustration bears out the impropriety of continuing under the tutor.
- “Were in bondage under the elements of the world...” You must follow the figure from verses 1 & 2 and, previously, in 3:24. In the figure Paul has in view the Law of Moses. He had said in 2:4 that the Circumcision sought to bring him and all believers into bondage (*cf.* 4:9; 5:1; Colossians 2:8, 20). The Law once faith came necessarily had to come to an end (see: Colossians 2:16, 20–23).

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6. To when does “the fulness of time” refer?

- “But when the fulness of the time was come...” Fulness signifies that which is “complete” or “replete”, thus it is full and can hold no more. Simply, when Christ came it was the right time from God’s perspective. The transcendent God who lives outside of time, but is in control of time, knows when the exactly right moment in history to act to accomplish His eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:1–11).
- “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law...” This is the Scripture proof that God had a plan and purpose regarding Christ and man’s redemption from before the foundation of the world (Matthew 13:35; Mark 1:15; 25:34; John 17:24; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:23).

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7. How was Paul “adopted”?

- “To redeem them that were under the law...” Fulness signifies that which is “complete” or “replete”, thus it is full and can hold no more. Simply, when Christ came it was the right time from God’s perspective. The transcendent God who lives outside of time, but is in control of time, knows when the exactly right moment in history to act to accomplish His eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:1–11).
- “That we might receive the adoption of sons...” The figure of adoption is a strong one in the argument against circumcision. The Jew already regarded himself a child of God and the seed of Abraham by birth. However, Paul, by including himself, demonstrates that the Jews were as much in need of adoption as the Gentiles (Deuteronomy 7:6; 32:6; Hosea 11:1; *cf.* Ephesians 2:12).

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8. How does God send the “spirit of His Son into our hearts”?
- “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father...” Is “spirit of His Son” the person or an attitude? Consider the context. Consider cause and effect: “because you are sons.” Not the Holy Spirit but the spirit of sonship (Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:5–6). Redeemed in Christ we are adopted and cry: “Father, Father.”
 - “Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ...” Complete the figure of the context. When we believe on Christ we are released from the tutor, we are given majority and treated as sons, not servants.

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Today’s Take Aways

1. Children of God are not born but “born again.”
2. The heirs of Abraham are not circumcised in the flesh but in the heart (Colossians 2:11–12; Romans 2:28–29; Galatians 3:26–27).
3. There is no respect of persons with God, all who believe on Jesus will be saved (Romans 2:11; Acts 10:34–35, 43; Galatians 3:28).
4. It is the spirit of adoption and not the person of the Holy Spirit which is sent into the heart of the believer (Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:15).
5. Those that remain under or return to the Law are slaves and not sons of God (Galatians 4:1–7).

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