

Galatians Chapter 4

1. The Jewish legalists had infiltrated the churches of Galatia and brought with them the false doctrine of legalism.
 - Webster's Dictionary definition of legalism - "Strict, literal, or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code"
2. In the case of the Galatians, they had become obsessed with keeping the Old Testament Law, believing that this would find them favor with God. 4:21
3. The Galatians falsely believed that they were maturing and advancing in their faith because of their obsession with the law.
4. In this chapter, Paul will reveal to them that they have, in fact, regressed in their spiritual walk. They were going through a second childhood, so to speak.
5. In several different ways, Paul will demonstrate in this chapter that true maturity and growth is found in Christ, not in keeping a list of laws and rules.
6. A life of legalism is for children - a life of grace is for full grown adults in Christ.

Verse 1-2

1. In these first two verses, Paul will use an analogy that they can clearly understand.
2. In many cultures (both Roman and Jewish), a child would live under the authority of tutors (managers, guardians) and governors (overseers). Many times slaves were used in this capacity. They would oversee the master's child.
3. Although the child may have been the heir to all that the father possessed, he was no different than a slave, in that he took orders and was told what to do and when to do it.
4. But notice, it is *"until the time appointed of the father."*
5. In Roman and Jewish culture, at a certain age, a child would pass from childhood to adulthood. It was a very ceremonious event and it signaled a new relationship between the father and son.
 - No longer would the son be under tutors, but he would deal directly with the father.
 - He would no longer be treated as a servant, but as a full grown son, with all the privileges that go along with that title.

Verse 3

1. Paul applies this illustration in regards to the Galatians and their fascination with the law.
 - *"Even so we (the Jewish nation), when we were children (spiritually), were in bondage under the elements of the world (the Law of Moses)."*
2. We learned in Galatians 3:24 that the law was Israel's schoolmaster (guardian).
 - God declared Israel to be His firstborn son in **Exodus 4:22**. cf. **Hosea 11:1**
 - God gave Israel the law after he took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. **Jeremiah 31:32**
 - Though Israel was to be the heir of the world (**Romans 4:13**), they were first placed under the tutorage of the law.

3. The law gave strict orders and required strict obedience, just as a guardian would over a child. The law told Israel what to do, when to do it, where to go, what to wear, how to act, etc. It was precise and detailed, just as you have to be with a child.
 - **Illustration:** A child must be told when to bathe, when to brush his teeth, how far he can wander from home, where he can go, what he can play with, whom he can play with, when to change his underwear, when to clean his room, etc.
 - A little child does not yet have the capacity to know when to do these things.
4. The law gave no freedom to the person under it. No matter how hard a person tried, the law's demands continued to lord over him, revealing where he had fallen short.
5. Just as there are no perfect children, there was nobody that kept the law perfectly. It kept Israel in a state of continual bondage and spiritual infancy.
6. The Jewish legalists were leading the Galatians back into bondage and spiritual childhood by leading them back under the law. Imagine a full grown adult going back to elementary school!

Verse 4

1. But praise God, the law was never meant to be a permanent fixture.
2. Just as a guardian over a child is a temporary arrangement until the child matures, so the law was temporary until the Deliverer should come! **Galatians 3:24-25**
3. This verse makes it clear that Christ is the Deliverer. He alone is the great Emancipator.
 - Israel was looking for a Messiah to deliver them from the bondage and tyranny of the Roman Empire.
 - Christ did something far greater - He delivered them from centuries of bondage under the Mosaic Law.
 - They were looking for physical deliverance, but Christ came to give them spiritual deliverance. They were too blind to see the eternal riches of Christ's deliverance.
4. *"But when the fulness of the time was come...."*
 - We see that Bethlehem was not an accident, nor was it a spontaneous reaction by God.
 - The exact time was planned and ordained by God. At the exact moment in history when the time was right, Jesus entered this world.
5. There are three statements made about Christ in this verse:
 - **"God sent forth his Son"** - this speaks of Christ's divinity - eternally co-existing with the Father from eternity past. **John 1:1, 14:9-10**
 - **"Made of a woman"** - this speaks of Christ's humanity. God took on flesh (1 Timothy 3:16), so that He could die for our sins. **Hebrews 2:9, 14-16**
 - **"Made under the law"** - this speaks of Christ's national identity. Christ was born a Jew of the seed of Abraham. As a child of Jewish parents, He was born **under** the Old Testament Law system. **Luke 2:21-24**
6. As Warren Weirsbe accurately states, "The law was not God's final revelation; it was but the preparation for that final revelation in Christ."
7. We can all praise the Lord for that wonderful truth.