

TITLE: WHO WANTS TO BE A SLAVE?

TEXT: GAL 4:1-7

INTRO: “Pierce My Ear” is a devotional song based on Ex 21:5-6, where a servant who could otherwise go free, chooses to stay and serve his master forever. He doesn’t do this because he likes being a slave, but because his master doesn’t treat him like a slave. Otherwise why would he stay? Why would anyone return to slavery when he has the option to go free? This is the point of Gal 4. Gal 3 closed saying Christians are children of God, and therefore **heirs** according to the promise. It’s this idea of being an “heir” that he develops in ch. 4. We are sons/heirs, and have been removed from slavery.

I. ENSLAVED UNDER THE LAW (v. 1-3):

- A. (v. 1-2) The example of a child, the son (the heir of the family), who looks no different than the servant children.
1. The “heir” is not just Jews. It’s a reference to **3:29** – those who are Christ’s (i.e., have been baptized – **3:27**) - this is Jew & Gentile alike; they are “*heirs according to the promise.*” As heirs, at one point, you were children, no different than slaves.
 2. “*Though he be Lord of all*” – in this analogy, the heir will eventually be master of the house. But not yet!
 3. The heir is taught by the tutors (**3:24-25**) until a certain time appointed by the father (when he is of proper age and maturity).
- B. (v. 3) Application – Likewise, God’s people (“*heirs*” – **3:29**) were slaves under the old law (the elements-**Col 2:20**; basics-like school children), until the specified time. It doesn’t matter whether he’s talking to Jews or Gentiles - Judaism is bondage!

II. REDEEMED AS SONS (v. 4-5):

- A. (v. 4) But in the fullness (completion) of time – Jesus came at exactly the right time. He was not an afterthought or a Plan B (**1 Pet 1:18**-chosen from the foundation of the world). God knew when...in the 4th kingdom (**Dan 2**), when the sociopolitical setting would be most acceptable to His coming. The Roman Republic had been in upheaval for years (power struggles; dictators, civil wars, etc.). Finally Octavian succeeded in becoming the 1st emperor. He brought needed reform, and relative peace. These, along with a common coinage, language, and great road systems made for the right time for Christ to come – the fullness of time.
1. God could’ve brought Jesus into the world in any number of ways. But He was *born of a woman* in order to be The Seed.
 2. Born under the law – and was completely subject to it (and obedient to it). It told of Him, and in order to fulfill it, He had to live in obedience to it, showing that He wasn’t just there to start His own new religion, but rather was fulfilling the old law.
- B. (v. 5) *Born under the law (v.4), in order to redeem (rescue) those under the law...*
1. His purpose was to redeem us! Lit. “buy out” – he bought us out of our contract (so to speak).
 2. *Those under the law* – Jews, but this doesn’t matter, since the end result is “*that we might receive adoption as sons.*” Whether *we* were ‘sons’ or ‘servants’ as children (prior to His coming) doesn’t matter – the two “differed nothing” (v.1); we were under bondage (v.2). Now, because of Jesus (the only true Son), we are all adopted sons.

III. REWARDED AS HEIRS (v. 6-7):

- A. (v. 6) *Because we’re sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, (the Spirit) crying Abba, Father.*
1. It is said in Jewish history that slaves were not permitted to use the title of Abba to address his master (Barnes). So this shows the gift that was given by Jesus in redeeming us, adopting us as sons, allowing us to approach God in this personal manner.
 2. This is to be understood in its overall context: **3:2**-Did you receive the Spirit by works of law or by hearing of faith? They *had* received the Spirit, and it was in miraculous measure, by the laying on of Paul’s hands (**3:5**). They did not receive the Spirit by following the Judaizers & circumcision (a system of bondage – **4:3**). This is Paul’s argument – you received the Spirit by *my* hands, not theirs! This proves that you have been redeemed as adopted children, and by *my* gospel, not by Judaism! A non-miraculous indwelling would not prove anything.
 3. Application: What they had received was miraculous in nature (to show a distinction in the old & new laws, and to confirm the new). Once the new was completed & confirmed, those miraculous abilities aren’t needed or available. Everything we need, every influence of the Spirit, we receive through His written Word.
*This Word gives us a closer relationship to God than any Jew had in the OT. So we too can have this same close relationship with our Father (by the Spirit). By the Spirit’s Word, we know how to worship God. Our worship is more personal, emotional, & meaningful than under the old law, because of our knowledge of the Word.
- B. (v. 7) Here is the point that Paul is proving – you are no longer servants, but sons; and if sons, then heirs!
1. You are no longer slaves, so stop acting like slaves! Stop submitting to all these regulations (v.3)– circumcision, “observing days, months, times, & years” (v. 10). Paul equates this activity with submitting to slavery, from which you’ve already been freed (**Col 2:16-23** – “*wherefore if ye be dead w/Christ from the rudiments (Gal 4:3) why are you still subject to them? Touch not, taste not, handle not...?*”). Surely they didn’t fully understand the implications of their actions, but now they do!
 2. You are sons in God’s house because of Christ, the true Son.
 3. Remember, that this sonship happened when we were baptized into Christ (**3:26-27**), clothing ourselves with Him.

CONCLUSION: Whether these Galatians, or us today, we ought to understand that we aren’t to hold to **ANY** part of the old law (this includes the Ten Commandments). Rather we should understand the incredible blessings of being a part of true Christianity, being invited into God’s house as adopted sons (v. 5), not servants! Are you living with this recognition? Are you living like a son? Are you living like The Son?