

## Galatians 3:22-4:4

*(Galatians 3:22 NKJV) But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that **the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.** (23) But before faith came, we were **kept under guard by the law**, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. (24) Therefore the law was **our tutor** to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

Note the constant comparison of purpose of the Law and of faith in Christ.

Confined under the law, under guard, under the restraint of a slave... vs faith in Jesus Christ

The word tutor or schoolmaster are 2 typical translations. But the Greek word implies a slave whose duty it was to **bring** a child to school and to watch over them or even restrain them so that they would behave. They might help with their studies but more often or not, it wasn't their main function. How ironic is it that a slave has power over a child of a free man.

This, in a real sense, describes the primary purpose of the Law – it is its spiritual purpose:

it reveals to a person his pride, sin, blindness, misery, his ignorance, hatred, and all manner of self. It does this by being a harsh taskmaster whose uses the Law as a hammer to bring down proud, the self-righteous, the hypocrites, the idolaters, the transgressors – that is – all those who think that they are right and God is wrong. These types have existed since day 6; instead of learning from Him, they are offended by Him. Even under the threats of death and cursing – these types say “bring it on...”.

*Luther rightly said, “This monster of self-righteousness, this stiff-necked beast, needs a big axe. And that is what the Law is, a big axe. Accordingly, the proper use and function of the Law is to threaten until the conscience is scared stiff.” It was given after the blessed promises were made so that they might come to their senses and stop needless warring with the One who would never lose!*

*(Galatians 3:25 NKJV) But after faith has come, **we are no longer under a tutor.***

We are no longer compelled and restrained by this “tutor”.  
“after faith has come” – I think this “faith” is referring to Christ Himself.

Paul doesn't explicitly state that we are under anything or anyone else. But we know from Romans:

*Romans 6:14 NKJV* For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Before grace came through faith, sin had complete dominion over us. Now, you must understand that this includes even those who had led an exemplary life of right behavior, never really disobeying your parents, teachers or the law. These are the “good ones”, so to speak, the “goodie-two-shoes” who, on the outside seem righteous. God even called Job “blameless or complete and upright; one who fears God and shuns evil”. While he never cursed God and

correctly claimed his innocence, when he appeared before God, his self-righteous melted away and at the end he finally understood and was forced to declare,

**Job 42:2-6 NKJV** "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose *of Yours* can be withheld from You. (3) *You asked*, 'Who *is* this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. (4) Listen, please, and let me speak; *You said*, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' (5) "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. (6) Therefore I abhor *myself*, And repent in dust and ashes."

**(Galatians 3:26 NKJV)** For you are all **sons of God through faith** in Christ Jesus.

By faith in Christ we are all children of God. We all inherit the same life;

**(Galatians 3:27 NKJV)** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ **have put on Christ**.

Being baptized into Christ, we can **identify** with His death and new life; We can "put on Christ", that is, follow Him; but perhaps more importantly, we "clothe" ourselves with His righteousness, His power, His life. By contrast, before Jesus, we were clothed in Adam, in the skins of bloody animals, always bearing the shame and guilt of sin. But in Christ,

**1 Peter 2:9 NKJV** But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

**(Galatians 3:28 NKJV)** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

*Certainly, by our standards of judgment, we distinguish between the Jew and Gentile, a man and a woman, a slave and free man. But, in God's economy, we are ALL one in Christ. We have our worldly differences but if we are all ONE in Christ, we are equal in God's eyes. We may have different roles to play, but the sheep have as much value to God than the shepherd, and the slave as much as his master.*

*To the Jews and the Greeks this was a difficult concept: A Jew eating with a Greek; a slave sharing communion with his master; Men would separate themselves from the women in the synagogues and the Temple. But in the sight of God, they are equal; Paul proved this by approaching and praying with a group of women on the Sabbath in the city of Philippi as recorded in Acts 16.*

**(Galatians 3:29 NKJV)** And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and **heirs** according to the promise.

So simple, so profound – we believers are Christ's; we have been purchased with His precious blood; we are the seed of Abraham from all nations and, we are heirs and joint heirs with Christ!

What do we inherit?

(Galatians 4:1 NKJV) 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, (2) but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

The heir, a son, even though he will become a master of his own household, is like the slave of the household in that, the child-heir is taken care of and in many senses, under the authority of his guardian. We saw this in chapter 3:22-25; This was the case until the child came of age and took on adult responsibilities.

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

Paul extends this guardianship/stewardship into the spiritual world. The “elements” of the world is a strange concept. We might think of these as water, wind, fire, earth or even molecules. But the Greek word for element implies an orderly arrangement or even a serial arrangement of something. It was used to describe a military march. So, many believe that what Paul was getting at might be something like the “ABC’s” of how the world operates. This makes sense when one considers the worldly philosophies.

Luther, however, makes a case that Paul was referring to the ceremonial Law of Moses. These rites, rituals, feasts etc, were like mundane ‘elements’ of the earth which do not save, do not justify a person before a Holy God. But, others believe Paul is referring to the culture of the day which had spread far and wide into the known world.

One of the most pervasive philosophies in the world is “karma”. You get what you deserve – whether good or bad. Do good, get good. Do bad, get bad. How this was meted out no one knows because it is part of a godless life. Those who hold to this idea cannot explain how the good or bad response happens, that is, who decides and who gives something good or bad as a result? This is all shifting sands; cultural morals and standards change with every generation – today, good is called evil and evil is called good!!!!

In opposition to this nonsense comes Grace. First, for earthly relationships, sometimes we must use deserving and earning, else we might not ever get a promotion or a bonus or might be fired according to our behavior. **BUT God** never deals with us based on what we deserve. The simple matter is, no one deserves anything for doing good, and compared to Him, there is no one who does good! It is purely a God thing to show favor even when we **do not** deserve it; the same holds true for good because our righteousness is as filthy rags; We can easily see why Paul considered the Law as slavery – we were in bondage to it and the same with those who never had this Law; they were in bondage to “karma”.

Even in the OT, blessing and cursing was for earthly reasons to drive people to Messiah; only the faithful were justified not those who “worked at it”.

**Colossians 2:6-8 NKJV** As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, (7) rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. (8) **Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.**

**Colossians 2:20-23 NKJV** (20) Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— (21) "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," (22) which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? (23) These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, **but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.**

**(Galatians 4:4 NKJV)** **But** when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, **born of a woman**, born under the law,

Note how Paul says "But when...". The Law and the elements of the world were "placeholders" until the time determined by the Father who sent His Son. The fullness of time can be thought of as "at just the right time".

Many make much of the advances made by the Romans, particularly with highways and roads that were under Roman protection – this allowed people to travel far distances in safety. Also, the Roman empire had a common language, Greek. We cannot ignore the rampant paganism and its affect on living immorally. We cannot ignore that Israel was dealing with the over-emphasis on works and adherence to the Oral Law which was, in a sense, worse than the Mosaic Law. The priesthood was a sham and the Aaronic descent was all but gone. High Priests were appointed, and their corrupt behavior was known throughout Israel.

All of this is true, but we cannot forget another promise of God:

**Daniel 9:24-26 NKJV** "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. (25) "Know therefore and understand, *That* from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, *There shall be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. (26) "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

When Jesus came, it had been 483 years or 69 weeks. The Promised Seed came!

SIDE NOTE: Paul doesn't say born of a man and woman! A definite reference to the virgin birth!

**(Galatians 4:5 NKJV)** to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption

as sons.

Jesus came for the lost sheep of Israel, to redeem them from bondage to the Law. He never intended to forsake the nations because they were in bondage as well.

His saving Grace allowed us to be adopted into God's family. Adoption in the Greek and Jewish cultures was similar in intent. The adopted son had all of the rights and privileges of any other child. If he was the oldest son, he had full rights to the inheritance even if there was a natural but younger son.

GUZIK: We **receive** the adoption of sons; we do not *recover* it. In this sense, we gain something in Jesus that is greater than what Adam ever possessed. Adam was never adopted as a son of God in the way believers are. So we are mistaken when we think of redemption as merely a restoration of what was lost with Adam. We are granted more in Jesus than Adam ever had.

**(Galatians 4:6 NKJV)** And because you are sons, God has sent forth the **Spirit of His Son into your hearts**, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

Some do not like the idea of calling the Creator of the Universe, "daddy". It sounds too familiar. But what a wonderful picture it is to have that kind of relationship with God!

Even the Man Jesus cried out:

**Mark 14:36 NKJV** And He said, "**Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.**"

It is only by the Spirit of His Son, given to us when we first believed, that we can cry out "Abba Father!". It is this same Spirit that Paul teaches when he wrote:

**Romans 8:13-17 NKJV** For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **(14)** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. **(15)** For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." **(16)** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **(17)** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

AND

**Romans 8:26 NKJV** Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

LUTHER: The Spirit intercedes for us not in many words or long prayers, but with groanings, with little sounds like "Abba." Small as this word is, it says ever so much. It says: "My Father, I am in great trouble and you seem so far away. But I know I am your child, because you are my Father for Christ's sake. I am loved by you because of the Beloved." This one little word "Abba" surpasses the eloquence of a Demosthenes and a Cicero.

(Galatians 4:7 NKJV) Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

A slave may not be a permanent position, especially if he/she worked off their debt. The master could, at any moment, release the slave for any reason.

BUT A SON!!!! And, a son of God, is never forsaken, never rejected or kicked out of the house! The prodigal son left on his own! When he returned, it was to open arms and a feast! That's the Father love!!!

Add to that we are an heir of God! We receive blessings! Not always earthly or material blessings but eternal blessings that will never rust or decay!

LUTHER: What ever induced God to adopt us for His children and heirs? What claim can men who are subservient to sin, subject to the curse of the Law, and worthy of everlasting death, have on God and eternal life? That God adopted us is due to the merit of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who humbled Himself under the Law and redeemed us law-ridden sinners.

(Galatians 4:8 NKJV) But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.

Paul reminds them of their spiritual roots. They did not know God and they served idols made of clay, wood or metal.

Isaiah 44:9-10 NKJV Those who make an image, all of them *are* useless, And their precious things shall not profit; They *are* their own witnesses; They neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed. (10) Who would form a god or mold an image *That* profits him nothing?

Isaiah 44:17-18 NKJV And the rest of it he makes into a god, His carved image. He falls down before it and worships *it*, Prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you *are* my god!" (18) They do not know nor understand; For He has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, *And* their hearts, so that they cannot understand.

(Galatians 4:9 NKJV) But now after you have known God, **or rather are known by God**, how *is it that* you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?

Do not say, "I came to God; I found Jesus" – but rather say, "God found me and I was known by Him – and He saved me anyway!"

But the Galatians were falling into a deep pit; they were snared by the lies of the devil who promised them much if they would only obey the Law. He appealed to their covetousness; he appealed to their worldly philosophies that on the surface seemed right but were just dressed up lies – like putting lipstick on a pig.

(Galatians 4:10 NKJV) You observe days and months and seasons and years.

They were legalistically observing feasts and holidays and sabbaths – all for the expressed purpose of pleasing God and getting on "His good side". His good side is already occupied by Jesus and God can never be pleased with anything other than faith and the good works that

faith brings!

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

**Labored** is literally “to labor to the point of exhaustion.” Paul worked hard among the Galatians, just like he always worked hard ([1Co 15:10](#)). Paul never thought that his gospel of free grace meant laziness in serving God.

**In vain:** At the end of this section, Paul puts a choice before the Galatians, **and before us**. We can have a living, free, relationship with God as a loving Father based on what Jesus did for us and who we are in Him. Or we can try to please God by our best efforts of keeping the rules, living in bondage as slaves, not sons. Living that way makes the whole gospel **in vain**.

The Book of Hebrews warned Christian Jews of the dangers of going back under the Law. Galatians warns the Christian Gentiles not to go under the Law!

What is it that appeals to people about the Law? They may even find it burdensome and joyless. But, they won't budge! Why do churches teach Christ crucified and the remission of ALL sin and at the same time heap on “do this, don't do that” with the implied “you know the consequences if you sin....”.

Discuss if there's time!