

Gal. 4:4-7, Law and Faith (Second Panel)
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A. Overview, 4:4-7

These verses describe our present situation, delivered from the bondage of the law. As the time comes when a child outgrows prohibitions and undertakes obligations; moves from being ruled to ruling; so God has appointed a time of our majority, and it is inaugurated in Christ. The section has three independent clauses, indicating respectively the *cause* of our sonship, its *evidence*, and its *consequences*. The first two both have the form, "God sent forth X," where the one sent is first his Son, then his Son's Spirit. Thus we have once again the Triune God, the Father planning our sonship, the Son procuring it, and the Spirit proclaiming it.

B. 4:4-5, The Cause of our Sonship.

1. *What* God did: "sent forth his Son."

a) Reflects the pre-existence of our Lord in heaven, whence the Father sent him on this mission.

b) Assumes a definite mission--more below.

2. *When* God did it: "when the fulness of time was come." Cf. 4:2. This is the time fixed by the Father for his offspring (Acts 17:28,29) to become sons.

3. *How* God did it: two statements.

a) "Made of a woman." Job. 14:1; Matt. 11:11 show that this means "human."

b) "Made under law."

1) (NOT IN SERMON) Other references, all anarthrous. 5/8 are in Galatians.

a> Believers are not under law.

1> ROM 6:14 a(marti/a ga\r u(mw^n ou) kurieu/sei, ou) ga/r e)ste u(po\ no/mon a)lla\ u(po\ xa/rin.

2> ROM 6:15 Ti/ ou)^n; a(marth/swmen o(/ti ou)k e)sme\n u(po\ no/mon a)lla\ u(po\ xa/rin; mh\ ge/noito.

3> GAL 5:18 ei) de\ pneu/mati a)/gesqe, ou)k e)ste\ u(po\ no/mon.

b> A certain category of unsaved people, parallel to "Jews" and "lawless" (*anomos*) in 1 Cor. 9:20f.

1> 1CO 9:20 kai\ e)geno/mhn toi^s)Ioudai/ois w(s)Ioudai^os, i(/na)Ioudai/ous kerdh/sw: toi^s u(po\ no/mon w(s u(po\ no/mon, mh\ w)\n au)to\s u(po\ no/mon, i(/na tou\s u(po\ no/mon kerdh/sw:

2> GAL 3:23 Pro\ tou^ de\ e)lqei^ th\n pi/stin u(po\ no/mon e)frourou/meqa sugkleio/menoi ei)s th\n me/llousan pi/stin a)pokalufqh^nai.

- 3> GAL 4:5 i(/na tou\s u(po\ no/mon e)cagora/sh|, i(/na th\n ui(oqesi/an a)pola/bwmen.
- c> The state in which Christ came
- 1> GAL 4:4 o(/te de\ h)^lqen to\ plh/rwma tou^ xro/nou, e)cape/steilen o(qeo\s to\n ui(o\n au)tou^, geno/menon e)k gunaiko/s, geno/menon u(po\ no/mon,
- d> What the Galatians wanted to be
- 1> GAL 4:21 Le/gete/ moi, oi(u(po\ no/mon qe/lontes ei)^nai, to\n no/mon ou)k a)kou/ete;
- 2) 1 Cor. 9:20,21 is most helpful.
- a> Not = Jew, for "the stranger that dwells among you," who is circumcised and keeps the passover, is still a stranger, but lives under law. But Paul's having been in this state (Gal. 3:23) shows that Jews were included in it.
- b> Not = *anomos*. Thus the expression does not cover the broader set of heathen, even though they have a "law" of their own (Rom. 2:14). Thus "law" in this expression has the distinctive sense of the Law of Moses, not just the principle of law in general.
- c> Cf. Gal. 4:21; this is what the Galatians wanted to be, and what they would become through circumcision.
- d> Thus
- 1> *anomos* + *upo nomon* = universe
- 2> Jew + circumcised Gentile = *upo nomon*
- 3) Relation between this and "elements of the world" is curious. 4:9 refers to "the elements," where the article is apparently resumptive of v.3, and "again" (2x) suggests that these are not distinctively Jewish. But *upo nomon* appears to be just that. So the correspondence is skewed. What is the point of this skewing?
- a> He is writing specifically about Christ, so uses *upo nomon* as a special case of *upo ta stoixeia*.... But the statement about redemption is not specific to Christ; makes it sound as though he only redeemed the Jews.
- b> Because the law of God is the ultimate restriction. Pagan laws are arbitrary and man-made; the law of Moses is the expression of God's holy will, and sanctions for violating it are real and unavoidable.
- c> Because the Galatians are being tempted to turn to Judaism, not to return to paganism, and by focusing Christ's work as delivery from that system in particular, he emphasizes that there of all places they should not seek to go. (4:8 does speak of "returning," making the larger argument that they should not go back to a legalistic religion.)
- d> Graphically, consider the upward movement along (1) and (2):

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      upo nomon < stoixeia\
                                2
                                \
                                Galatians
                                /
                                1
      paganism < stoixeia/

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4:5 shows that 2 is a bad idea because the destination is one that was shown to be a bondage by Christ's work, and from which he has delivered those who were once under it. 4:8 shows that 2 is a bad idea because it reverses the direction of 1, their original salvation.

4) *** Christ *geno/menon u(po\ no/mon*: "became 'under-law.'" He was in the position of one ruled by the law, responsible to meet its demands. Not just under "worldly elements," which might be arbitrary, but under the law of God, with its absolute and inflexible rule. He joined us in our prison, 3:23, that he might lead us out of it. In fact, he came into the same bondage that the Galatians are seeking to enter, in order to lead people out of it!

4. *Why* God did it. Again two statements. The first explains the "how," the second the "what." That is, the second explains why he sent his son; the first explains why he did it by incarnation under the law. (Chiastic ordering)

a) Reason for sending his son: to convey to us the *huioghsian*, adoption as sons.

1) Common Pauline concept:

- a> ROM 8:15 ou) ga\r e)la/bete pneu^ma doulei/as pa/lin ei)s fo/bon, a)lla\ e)la/bete pneu^ma ui(oqesi/as, e)n w(^| kra/zomen, Abba o(path/r:
- b> ROM 8:23 ou) mo/non de/, a)lla\ kai\ au)toi\ th\n a)parxh\n tou^ pneu/matos e)/xontes h(mei^s kai\ au)toi\ e)n e(autoi^s stena/zomen ui(oqesi/an a)pekde/xomenoi, th\n a)polu/trwsin tou^ sw/matos h(mw^h).
- c> ROM 9:4 oi(/tine/s ei)sin)Israhli^tai, w(^n h(ui(oqesi/a kai\ h(do/ca kai\ ai(diagh^kai kai\ h(nomoqesi/a kai\ h(latrei/a kai\ ai(e)paggeli/ai,
- d> GAL 4:5 i(/na tou\s u(po\ no/mon e)cagora/sh|, i(/na th\n ui(oqesi/an a)polu/bwmen.
- e> EPH 1:5 proori/sas h(ma^s ei)s ui(oqesi/an dia\)Ihsou^ Xristou^ ei)s au)to/n, kata\ th\n eu)doki/an tou^ qelh/matos au)tou^,

2) The picture of the father sending one son for others has OT roots:

a> Gen. 37:12-14, Joseph going to his brothers.

b> 1 Sam. 17:12-18, David going to his brothers.

c> Common features:

1> The elder sons are off somewhere on some business

a: Joseph: tending sheep. Gen. 37:12

b: David: in Saul's army. 1 Sam. 17:13

2> Father sends a younger son to the others.

3> Father is concerned for the welfare of the sons, and asks for a word from them.

a: Gen. 37:14

b: 1 Sam. 17:18

4> The other sons abuse the one son.

a: Joseph: sell him into Egypt, Gen. 37:28

b: David: mock and scorn him, 1 Sam. 17:18

5> In spite of the abuse, he prospers miraculously.

a: Joseph: becomes prime minister of Egypt.

b: David: slays Goliath.

3) Paul adapts this picture to the coming of Christ. Note the features:

a> We are away from God, just as the elder brothers in the stories are away from their fathers.

b> God sends out his Son to find us, as Jacob sent Joseph and as Jesse sent David.

c> God sent his son for our welfare: John 3:17, "God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

d> We abused the LJC, rejecting and despising him.

e> In spite of the abuse, he prospers miraculously, triumphing in the resurrection from the dead.

f> BUT: Two important differences.

1> God sent his son to seek our welfare, not because we were his sons, but in order to make us his sons! "God sent forth his son ... that we might receive the adoption of sons." We were not caring for the Father's sheep (as were Joseph's brothers), or defending the Father's interests in war against the enemy (as were David's brothers). We were ourselves the enemy. Yet the Father still sends out his Son, bearing not David's grain, bread, and cheese, but the heavenly manna of his own body and blood, to call us from our rebellion into his family.

2> Thus Christ is not the younger son, but "the firstborn among many brethren," Rom. 8:29.

- b) Reason for coming "of a woman, under the law": to redeem those "under-law". His redemptive work depends on both aspects of his coming.
- 1) The redeemer in the OT (Lev. 25:48,49) had to be a kinsman, and had to have the resources to pay the debt of the enslaved kinsman.
 - 2) By coming "of a woman," our Lord became our kinsman.
 - 3) By coming "under law," and satisfying its claims as we never could, he can qualify to offer himself as our substitute. Thus he has the wherewithall to redeem us.

C. 4:6, The Evidence of our Sonship.

1. "Because you are sons." The presence of the HS is the evidence that we are believers. Cf. 3:2-5. The believer is presumed to know that he has the HS. If there is nothing in your life that you cannot explain apart from the work of the HS, you may not be a Christian. (Which comes first--sonship or HS? Rom. 8:9, can't be son without the Spirit. Gal. 3:27 makes HS baptism the introduction into the Christian life, not a result of it. Answer: the "because" is logical, not temporal. The two are part and parcel of the same event.)

The Galatians know that they have the HS. They ought to realize that this proves they are already sons, delivered by Christ from the very state of being "under law" into which they are rushing!

2. "The spirit of his Son."
 - a) See Rom. 8:9,10 for the close relation between "spirit of God," "spirit of Christ," and the indwelling "Christ." Suggested by our Lord when he promised the HS as "another comforter" like himself, to take his place with the believers.
 - b) The emphasis here is that the Galatians have experienced all of Christ there is to experience. He dwells in them in the person of his Spirit. No need for them to press on for a "second blessing."
3. "Crying, 'Abba, Father.'"
 - a) The Greek makes it clear that it is the Spirit who cries. Cf. Rom. 8:15, where we are said to cry this, but with the Spirit's aid. The point is that our turning to God as Father is an evidence of the Spirit's work. But what constitutes

such a turning?

The cry originates with our Lord, Mark 14:36, where it introduces three statements that reflect filial devotion and are evidence of true salvation:

- 1) Trust in God's omnipotence.
- 2) Request for help--thus recognition of our own impotence.
- 3) Yieldedness to God's will.

b) Note the use both of Aramaic and Greek: no need for the Galatians to become Jews. Their cry of *pathr* is as much a result of the Spirit's work as is the cry of the Jewish Christian, *abba*.

D. 4:7, The Consequences of our Sonship.

1. "No more a servant," which was virtually our state before, 4:1b.
2. "Heir of God through Christ"
 - a) Heir: recall 3:29. We are the ones who receive the promise. And recall what the promise is, 3:14--the Spirit.
 - b) Of God: he is the source of the promise, the giver of the inheritance. Cf. 1 Pet. 1:4.
 - c) Through Christ: He is the promised Seed, and it is only through our membership in him (recall 3:27) that we enjoy the promises.

Hymn: "Abba, Father, We Adore Thee"