

The Epistle To The Galatians¹

The Spirit of Sonship Replacing the Custody of the Law (Gal.4:1-7)

I Some Crucial Points

- A. The introduction of Galatians is found in **1:1-5** and the conclusion in **6:18**. The Lord gave Himself for our sins to rescue us out of the present evil age. The need of all the saints is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in our spirit
- B. The revelation of the Apostle's gospel is found in **Gal.1:6 to 4:31** and the walk of God's children is seen in **5:1 to 6:17**. In the Apostle's gospel we have seen thus far that God's Son is versus man's religion (**1:6-2:10**) and that Christ replaces the Law (**2:11-21**). We have also seen that the Spirit by faith is versus the flesh by law (**3:1-4:31**) In **3:1-14**, the Spirit is the blessing of the promise by faith in Christ and that in **3:15-29** that the law is the custodian of the heirs of promise
- C. Now in **4:1-7** we will see that the Spirit of sonship replaces the custody of the law, that in **4:8-20**, that Christ must be formed in the heirs of promise and in **4:21-31**, that the children according to Spirit are versus the children according to the flesh.

II The Time Appointed of the Father

- A. The child, mankind, especially the Jews, is a mere infant or minor and is under a guardian (warden) and a steward (administrator), the law, until the appointed time of the Father, i.e., until Christ came in His first coming. (**Gal.4:1-2**).
- B. We, too, were kept in slavery under the elements of the world, i.e., the elementary principles, the rudimentary teachings of the law. (**Gal.4:3, Col.2:8**)

III Sonship-the Focal Point of God's Economy

- A. The Lord came in the fullness of time, the completion of the Old Testament era (**Gal.4:4**), which occurred at the time appointed by the Father (**v.2**). The Son of God came as the seed of woman, promised in Gen.3:15, born under the Law as revealed in Luke (**2:21-24, & 27**) and lived a life that kept and even fulfilled the Law as revealed in the Gospels.
- B. God's people were shut up under the custody of the Law (**Gal.3:23**). So Christ was born under the Law in order to redeem them from its custody that they might receive the sonship and become sons of God, according to God's economy. (**Heb.2:10, Rom.8:29, Eph.1:5, John1:12-13**). Sonship involves life, maturity, position and privilege

IV The Spirit of the Son

¹ Outline and materials based on the *Life-Study of Galatians by Witness Lee, Living Stream Ministry, Anaheim, California, May, 1984*. Any inaccuracies or errors, in the outline above, are the sole responsibility of the adopter of these materials. - D.M.

- A. As sons of God, we have the position with the full right to participate in the Spirit of God, who has the bountiful supply of life, which is the focus of the blessing of God's promise to Abraham (**Gal.3:14**)
- B. In verses 4 through 6, the Triune God is producing many sons for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose. Sonship, with all its position and rights, is basically a matter of life and can only be realized by the Spirit. The Law could keep us in ward, but it can not give life, maturity, position and privilege.
- C. The Spirit did not come before the Law, shortly after the promise was made to Abraham, because a period of time (2000 years) had to be fulfilled.
 - 1. The promise was not even given right away in the Bible; God waited until the cursed and fallen situation of man had been fully exposed at Babel, before He called Abraham and made a promise to him.
 - 2. Abraham could appreciate this promise more than Adam could with the promise to the woman. Similarly, Christ came when sufficient time had elapsed to demonstrate man's utter helplessness under the Law. Thus Christ came in the fullness of time (**Gal.4:4**). Earlier would have been too soon, later would have been too late
- D. The Spirit was the second of two sendings. First, God sent forth His Son (**v.4**), then He sent forth the Spirit of His Son (**v.6**). First, Christ came to redeem us and open the way, not for heaven, but to share in His Spirit to make us sons of God. The sent forth Spirit makes our sonship real and vital.

V The Spirit in Our Hearts

- A. In **Rom.8:15-16** says we received a spirit of sonship, that is His Spirit is in our spirit. But **Gal.4:6** says His Spirit is in our hearts.
- B. The Spirit of God came into our spirit at regeneration (**John 3:6; Rom.8:16**), but our spirit is hidden in our heart (**1Pet.3:4**). When He came into our spirit, He came into our hearts. Our spirit is the kernel and central part of our heart
- C. We realize the sonship of God by our subjective experience in the depths of our being. Because His spirit comes into the depths of our being, there is a cry of intimacy to our Father; so we cry "Abba, Father (pater). To be genuinely spiritual we need to be emotional in a proper way. (**John 1:18, Prov.8:30**)

VI No Longer Slaves, But Sons and Heirs Through God

- A. Since we are sons, we need not be under the custody of the Law, no longer slaves to works under the Law. (**Gal.4:7**)
- B. We are heirs, sons who are of full age according to Law and qualified to inherit the Father's estate, even God Himself. (**Eph.1:3**)