

I. Introduction.

II. We were in bondage. v. 1-3

- A. While the heir is still a minor, he lives under the authority of his guardians. v. 1-2
1. He is the lord (owner/heir) of everything. 3:29
 2. But he can't enjoy his inheritance until he reaches adulthood.
 3. Guardians and managers are in control of his person and property.
 4. During his minority the son's life differs little from that of a slave.
 5. This situation was designed to be temporary.
- B. Though we are heirs, we once lived in bondage. v. 3
1. God had always intended to give the inheritance to the sons of Abraham, but they had to go through years of minority (childhood) under the Law.
 2. What are the elemental things of the world which held us in bondage? 4:9
 3. God's people were in bondage under the Mosaic Law. 3:22-24 4:9 Rom. 10:3ff
 4. Paul could also be referring to the former religious practices of the Gentile believers. v. 8 Col. 2:8,20
 5. Either way, Paul's point is that we are done with the elemental religious practices which once enslaved us. John 1:17 Col. 2:20-23
 6. Sadly, some then and now remain in bondage and try to enslave others.
 7. They are behaving like the generation in Israel which wanted to return to Egypt. Num. 14:3-4

III. God sent His son to set us free. v. 4-5

- A. *But when the fullness of time came.* v. 4a
1. Another "but God". Eph. 2:4
 2. Jesus is the Redeemer for Whom God's people have been eagerly waiting. Gen. 3:15 4:1 Deut. 18:15 2 Sam. 7:14 Mt. 1:1ff Luke 2:25-38 Mark 1:15
 3. Jesus came at the perfect time fixed by the sovereign Father. v. 2b Eph. 1:11
 4. What made this a particularly good time? Acts 5:35-36 Mt. 24:23f Lu. 3:15
 5. All of human history is divided by the time of the coming of Christ.
 6. The Judaizers who want to go back to the Law's bondage are out of sync with the times.
 7. God's timing is always perfect. Eph. 1:11 Rom. 8:28
- B. *God sent forth His Son.* v. 4b Rom. 8:3 John 3:16 5:23
1. The Son is eternal. John 1:1-2 8:58 17:5 2 Co. 8:9 Phil. 2:6 1 CO. 8:6
 2. The Son is God. John 1:1-3 Col. 2:9 Heb. 1:3
 3. The Son came into the world to do the Father's will. Mt. 26:39 John 4:34 5:19
 4. The Father sent the Son into the world to make redemption through His death. Isa. 53:4-6,10 Acts 2:23 Mt. 21:37-39 Phil. 2:5-8
 5. Our salvation is the work of our Triune God.
- C. *Born of a woman.* v. 4c
1. Is this a reference to the virgin birth? 4:23 Gen. 3:15 Isa. 7:14 Mt. 1:18-25
 2. Why doesn't Paul mention the woman's name?
 3. Jesus is fully human. John 1:14 4:6 19:28 Luke 1:35 Mt. 4:2
 4. Jesus possesses two natures in one divine person. Col. 2:9
 5. Why did the Son of God have to become a man? v. 5 Heb. 2:14-15 Rom. 8:3

D. *Born under the Law.* v. 4d

1. He was born while the Law was still in force.
2. In order to redeem us from the law He had to meet its requirements. 3:13
Mt. 5:17-19 Rom. 8:3-4 2 Cor. 5:21 1 Pet. 3:18 2:22 1:19 Heb. 4:15

E. God had a great and gracious purpose in sending His Son. v. 5

1. *So that He might redeem those who were under the law.* v. 5a 1:4 3:13 Col. 1:13f
 - a. He purchased our release from slavery. 3:10,23 4:1-3
 - b. The price of our redemption was the cross. 3:13 1:4 1 Pet. 3:18 1:18-19
2 Co. 5:21 Heb. 7:26-27 2:14-17
 - c. Jesus Christ is uniquely qualified to be our redeemer. Ps. 49:7
2. *So that we might receive the adoption as sons.* v. 5b Rom. 8:14-15 Mt. 28:10
Eph. 1:5 2 Co. 8:9 John 1:12-13
3. The reality of your identity as a redeemed child of God is life transforming!

IV. Conclusion – Now you enjoy the full privileges of sonship. v. 6-7

**A. You enjoy the status of sonship. v. 7 2 Co. 3:17 Eph. 1:4 John 15:16 Dt. 7:7-8
1 Jo. 4:10,19**

1. You are no longer a slave but a son and an heir because of God's grace. v. 7
2. Becoming a Christian is more than intellectual acceptance of propositional truth. It is entrance into a personal relationship with God.
3. It is a great privilege to call God your Father. Mt. 6:9 Eph. 3:14 Ps. 103:8-14
4. You have a great inheritance from God. Ps. 16:5-6 73:5-6
5. What an incentive to prayer and worship! Eph. 2:18 Heb. 4:16

B. You enjoy the experience of sonship through the Indwelling Spirit. v. 6

1. With the coming of Christ, God's children experience the Spirit in a new and wonderful way. 3:2-5 Acts 1:5,8 2:17-21,33 Joel. 2:28-32 1 Co. 2:14 2 Co. 3:16
2. God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts. v. 6 3:2-3
Ro. 8:15-17,9 2 Co. 1:22 5:5 Eph. 1:13-14
3. The Spirit is *sent forth* just as the Son was *sent forth* by God the Father. v. 4
John 15:26 16:13-14 14:16
4. He is the pledge of your inheritance. Eph. 1:13-14 2 Co. 5:5
5. In what way does the indwelling Spirit cry Abba Father? Rom. 8:15,26-27
Mark 14:36
6. What does it mean that the Holy Spirit dwells in your heart? Eph. 3:16-17
Rom. 10:10 Pr. 4:23 Mt. 15:19 22:37
7. How do you experience the Holy Spirit? 5:22-24 Ro. 8:16,13-14,26 Jo. 16:8,13

**C. After God has done all of this for you, why would you want to go back to slavery?
Rom. 5:18 John 15:15 Deut. 15:15**

Discussion Questions

1. In what sense were we in bondage before Christ?
2. What important truths concerning Christ's person and work are taught in this text?
3. Why did the Father send His Son when He did?
4. What does this passage teach about the Trinity?
5. How does our status as adopted sons affect how we live?
6. Explain how the Holy Spirit works in our hearts.
7. In what ways do you see people returning to spiritual slavery in our day?