

Easy As 1-2-3



Galatians Chapter 4

It's as Easy As 1-2-3. Select where you would like to begin and enjoy!

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Overall Understanding

Galatians 4¹

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, ²but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. ³Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.

In the previous chapter Paul wrote, "The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, but after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor." He continues that line of thinking in this chapter. He is giving the human example of an heir who thought he is master of all is kept under guardians, tutors, until the time he is fully grown.

"The elements" refers to elementary or basic teachings. The Jews were under the teachings of the law, and the Gentiles had their own set of morality. This is prior to faith in Christ. We know this by the next word, "But..."

⁴**But** when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

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Just as the father in the above illustration will at a specific time redeem his son from his tutors, God sent His Son when the fullness of time came (see link below). Jesus walked this earth under the law and fulfilled it perfectly. He was born under the law, but not so that we could obey the law better, but to set us free from the law, so that instead of needing a tutor, we are now His very sons.

6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" **7** Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

We are sons. The Spirit of God has taken up permanent residence in our hearts which causes us to call out to Him as our Father. "Abb" is an affectionate term for "father" akin to "daddy" or "papa."

We are no longer slaves under the law. We are sons of God. We are heirs of God through Christ.

8 But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.

The Galatians were Gentiles. They were never under the law. But they did serve idols.

9 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? **10** You observe days and months and seasons and years. **11** I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

The weak and beggarly elements (elementary teachings) of the Gentile religions kept them under bondage. But Christ set them free.

Then, however, they were putting themselves under the bondage of the Mosaic law even though they were never under the law previously.

Paul had poured his heart and teachings into these Gentiles. Had he worked so hard for no reason?

¹² Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I *became* like you. You have not injured me at all. ¹³ You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. ¹⁴ And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.

Some have said that Paul's physical infirmity was his thorn in the flesh. This is incorrect. His thorn in the flesh was the constant persecutions he endured. For more teaching on this topic, click the teaching below.

When Paul came to them, he had just been stoned and raised from the dead. His body was bruised and that included his eyes.

¹⁵ What then was the blessing you *enjoyed*? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.

He reminds them of the great love they once had for him.

¹⁶ Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

He knew some were resisting his teaching and thus rejecting him.

¹⁷ They zealously court you, *but* for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them.

The Judaizers sought to put new believers in Jesus under the law of Moses, teaching them they needed to be circumcised and keep the law. They sought followers for themselves. Paul sought their benefit.

¹⁸ But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. ¹⁹ My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰ I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.

There is nothing wrong with being zealous if it is for a correct reasons. Paul was zealous for them because they had been taken captive by false teachings. He wants them to walk in his teachings even when he is not there and not be led astray by these false teachers.

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law?

He perceives they need more illustrations to persuade them not to come under the law.

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. **23** But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, **24** which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— **25** for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— **26** but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. **27** For it is written:

“Rejoice, O barren,
You who do not bear!
Break forth and shout,
You who are not in labor!
For the desolate has many more children
Than she who has a husband.”

Paul says there are two covenant, the Old Covenant which pertains to Mount Sinai where the Ten Commandments were given which “gives birth to bondage” (Paul’s words, not mine).

He refers to Hagar who gave birth to Ishamael at Mount Sinai and to Jerusalem (likely those who have reject Christ thus far) as the Old Covenant. The New Covenant is the corresponds to the New Covenant.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac *was*, are children of promise.

“We” refers to believers. We are like Isaac. We are of promise not the flesh as was Ishamael.

29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, even so *it is* now.

Hagar/Ishamael persecuted Sarah/Isaac. Even then, those of the law persecuted those under grace. It continues to this day. If you don't believe it, try saying to someone that we are not under the law. Usually, the person comes unglued.

30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” **31** So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

We are to cast out the law. It does not belong to us. We are children of promise, not the law.

Follow these links if you are curious about these topics.

[*The Fullness of Time: Events in History that Led to Christ's Birth*](#)

[*Paul's Thorn in the Flesh*](#)

Topics Coming Up in Galatians Chapter Five

Paul encourages the Galatians to stand fast in their liberty from the law.

He explains to them why Christ has become of no effect to them.

He shows how love has fulfilled the law.

He explains that those who are led by the Spirit are not under the law.

He contrasts the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.