

Intro: Gal. 3:26-29 “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.”

Illus. Walking into a restaurant with a black mentor. He paused before entering and told me this place used to have a whites only sign. Which I couldn’t imagine.

Segway: Gal. 3:28 is **a peak into a very segregated highly stratified world.**

- Segregation over **ethnicity** and **religion**.
- Preferential treatment for **the socially well-connected** and shame for the poor and the slaves.
- And a strict hierarchy within the family where the men were socially advantaged and women and children were socially disadvantaged and disenfranchised. You simply cannot image a culture with more walls barriers than ancient Rome. *Ethnic barriers to keep the unworthy out of my pure religion. Social barriers to keep the riff raff out of my privileged space.* Gender-based walls to ***keep men in power and women oppressed and deprived.***

Summary: Paul teaches that Jesus’ cross—the Gospel of salvation in God’s Messiah—**Jesus takes a wrecking ball to those artificial distinctions.** Demolishing those ethnic, social, and gender walls.

Caveat: Now let’s mention briefly what this passage does not teach. It does justify the teaching that there are in fact no distinctions between Jew/Gentile, Rich/Poor, Male/Female. Paul’s context here is not in all respects. But with respect to inclusion in God’s family. Who can now be included in the family of God?

But Jesus has demolished the barriers that men have erected to keep other people out of God’s holy family.

And now by faith in Jesus—the sons and daughters of Abraham participate in the family of God.

Big Idea: God has graciously adopted believers from all walks of life. He has given us the position of sons and the privileges of sonship.

The very first thing Paul addresses in this passage is...

1. God's Original Heirs—Practically Enslaved (4:1-3).

Jews were functionally no different from gentiles even though they were originally God's people.

4:1 "Now I say, as long as the **heir is a child**, he **does not differ at all from a slave** although he is owner of everything, ² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. ³ So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage **under the elemental things of the world.**"

***Stoicheia*: Elements or "ABC's" of moral law.** The moral law of God is present in the world, articulated and codified in the Mosaic Law. This is a continuation of his irrevocable trust analogy. But now he has turned this example to Jew-Gentile status relationships. To drive his point home, Paul insists that even though the Jewish people were technically the original heirs of the promise of Abraham—**functionally they were no different than the gentile nations who were lost in sin.** **Both Jews and non-Jews needed adoption as sons.**

Now remember, Paul said that when it comes to inclusion in God's family—there is no Jew nor Gentile. Here he says that **"we" were in bondage** to the elemental principles of the world. Including himself as an observant Jew.

But this doesn't mean that God doesn't make a distinction between Jew and Gentile in every or any respect. JUST AS MEN AND WOMEN HAVE DIFFERENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, Just as the rich have a responsibility and differing social role than the poor (in the NT). So too Jews have had a different role in the people of God.

What privileges did the Jews have over Gentiles?

- **The Jews were chosen first:** Rom. 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile."

The Jews have a special place in God's family in that they are the ethnic people chosen by God to receive and deliver the promise given to Abraham.

The next way the Jews have a specific role in God's plan is that...

- **The Jews were entrusted with God's sacred word.** Rom. 3:1 "What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? ² Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God."

The words of God he refers to here are the Torah—the Prophets—the Poets—the Hebrew Bible in its entirety. God entrusted that sacred revelation of himself and his Messiah to the Jewish people.

Again, we see that in God's plan...

- **The Jewish people have priority in both judgment and reward.** Romans 2:9-10
Paul says "There will be tribulation and distress for every person who does evil, *for the Jew first and then the Greek*, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, *to the Jew first and also to the Greek*." From everyone who is given much, much will be required. And they have been given salvation, God's Word, God's Messiah—and this gives them priority in both judgment for rejecting so great a spiritual heritage—but also priority in reward over receiving and embracing their spiritual inheritance in Christ.

Look, I have no qualms, as a Gentile believer, if God wants to reward ethnic believing Jews with that 40 mile strip of sacred land in the middle east—Israel. No prob.

Jesus said the meek will inherit the earth. I'll be happy to take the Caribbean. If God has a specific reward for ethnic Jews that is somewhat different than that for Gentile believers—I have no issues with it. I am happy to be included in the people of God in any way God wants to include.

Full sonship yes.

Full inheritance with Abraham. Yes.

But I didn't receive it first, the Jews did. **My Irish ancestors were not entrusted with God's** sacred Word—the Hebrew Bible first—the Jews were. **My southern, Appalachian family aren't up for either judgment or reward first**—the Jews are.

But until God's Messiah came to fulfill the promise to Abraham, until the system of salvation by faith has come—the Jews, while heirs originally, were functionally slaves.

Jews were functionally no different from gentiles even though they were originally God's people. Kept in check by the law, but not able to live up to it in all its particulars for salvation.

So he first mentions God's original heir, sons—Israel.

2. God's Unique Son: Christ the Redeemer (4:4-5a).

4:4 "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law."

Jesus is by nature God's Son, while we are not.

- **"In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son" (4:4a).** at just the right time God sent his only Son to redeem all of humanity. **98% of all the people who have ever lived** have lived after the cross. Jesus appeared at the fulcrum of time. And the message of the cross has gone out into all the nations as a beacon of light.

Illus. Have you ever been rescued in just the nick of time? I fell out of a tree and almost died when I was a kid.

Romans 5:6 "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Christ is the unique Son of God. John 3:16 "God's one and only—unique Son".

- **"Born of a woman" (4:4b)** not a son of Adam—but the new, second Adam. He is the Son of Mary. Jesus restarts humanity—a proper son and perfect representative of humanity. God's obedient son who did what Adam could not do.
- **"Born under the law" (4:4c)** not only is Jesus the second Adam, he is also the second Israel. Jesus was God's unique obedient Son who did what neither Adam nor Israel could do—he lived up to the righteous demands of the Law. He lived spotless, sinless and perfectly obedient life. And his life as the spotless, sinless Son of God/Son of Man: these are his credentials for taking the sins of humanity.

Jesus is the second Adam—Rom. 5 Paul states that Adam was a type or a foreshadowing of Christ—and **1 Cor.15: 45-47** Refer to Jesus as the Second Man—the new adam as it were.

Jesus is both representational and incarnational. He is the perfect representation of humanity, born of a woman, born under the law. He is also the only incarnate Son, preexisting in eternity, conceived by the Holy Spirit. In Christ, God has a son of man and a spotless son of God.

So here's the headline...

"The Son of God became the Son of Man so that the sons of men might become the sons of God" Irenaeus of Lyons

So that he might redeem those under the curse of the law...

3. God's Adopted Sons: Heirs According to Faith (4:5b-7).

The evidence of our sonship is the generous outpouring of the Spirit.

⁶“that we might receive the **adoption as sons.** ⁶ Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.”

V.6 “God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts” This is what we mean by being born again. A new creation in Christ Jesus. The Spirit is the real badge of membership. The presence of the Holy Spirit is the authentication that we are sons and daughters, we belong to Christ and God is now our father.

“crying Abba Father”—The Spirit is the evidence of our sonship. The Spirit confirms the true Gospel. The Spirit enables us to enter an intimate relationship with God our Father.

- **We have a new identity with God “clothed with Christ” (3:27).** Changing clothing in the ancient world signified a change of status.
- **We have a new intimacy through the Spirit “crying Abba Father” (4:6).** My son and I watched videos of him as a little kid. We laughed and I cried a little. Teens are going through this breaking away—this natural God-given experience of tearing away from us and becoming their own men, and women. And it’s necessary. But it’s depressing. But you and I, as God’s children—will never tear away from God. We will always be his children—dependent on him, longing to cry out “abba—Father!”. This is what kids do when they’re little. They cry out to their parents.
- **We have a new inheritance as God’s people “if a son then an heir” (4:7).**

Takeaways: You and I enjoy the position as adopted sons. We enjoy the privileges of sonship, and we look forward to the inheritance—the possession of God’s brave new world.

So you are no longer a slave to sin. No longer imprisoned by a powerless law that could only ever reveal God’s righteous standard, the fact that we don’t live up to it and never could. No longer held captive to the power of sin through the instrumentality of the Mosaic and Moral law of God.

But now we have been positioned as sons—having been declared in right relationship to God.

Now we have received inner transformation—that person which was dead in religion, dead in sin, estranged from the Father—is alive and born anew.

As born again sons and daughters we have the privilege and the position to live in an intimate relationship with God our Father.

Takeaways: 1.) Be secure in the fact that you are sons and daughters of God—by your adoption into the family of God’s one and only Son—who is uniquely and by nature God’s everlasting Son.

V. 8-10 “How has it come to be that you are now turning back to the elemental principles of bondage. Bondage as a Gentile without God in the world—and now embracing the bondage of Torah compliance in addition to Christ.”

2.) Be free. As a son, live free of sin. Live free of those things which once enslaved you. Live free of fear and free of shame.

If you belong to Christ then you are descendants of the grace promise of Abaham. Live fully in the Holy Spirit. Live free of condemnation and the grip of sin.

TODD WILL READ A LETTER NOW...