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When the Fullness of Time Came, God Sent Out His Son

4: 1-11

When the fullness of time came, God sent out His Son DIG: How is taking on the yoke of the 613 Commandments of the Torah like being an heir who is still a minor in 4:1-3? How has Yeshua changed all of that? Prior to their conversion, the Galatians followed the custom of honoring the Greek gods. How are they now doing the same thing with Jewish festivals in verse 10? What is the difference between celebrating the Jewish festivals (Pesach, Hag ha-Matzah, Rasheet, Shavu'ot, Rosh ha-Shanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Hanukkah and Purim) and what the Galatians were doing?

REFLECT: What are some contemporary barriers between people in our culture? What does 3:28 mean to you in that context? What do the images of being a “child of God” and “clothed with Messiah” say to you about living the life of a believer in Yeshua? Has your relationship with ADONAI slipped from being that of a child with a father to a matter of keeping rules? How did that happen? What can you do about it? How can you help someone with that problem this week? How does knowing God reassure you today?

Having established that the true “heirs” of God’s promise are those - Gentiles as well as Jews - who emulate Abraham’s faithfulness and participate, through spiritual immersion at salvation, in Yeshua’s own obedience in His death and resurrection, Paul proceeds to elaborate this statement through the example of sons (heirs) and slaves.

One of the tragedies of legalism is that it gives the appearance of spiritual maturity when, in reality, it leads the believer back into a “second childhood” of wilderness wanderings. The **Galatian** believers, like most of us, wanted to grow and mature in **Messiah**, but they were going about it in the wrong way Their experience is not too different from that of believers today who get involved in various legalistic movements (**to see link click [Ak - The Hebrew Roots Movement - A Different Gospel](#)**), hoping to become more mature. Their

motives might be right, but their methods are all wrong.

This was the truth **Paul** was trying to get across to **his** beloved converts in **Galatia**. The Judaizers (see [Ag - Who Were the Judaizers?](#)) had cast a spell on them into thinking that obedience to the 613 commandments of Moshe would make them better believers. Their old sin nature felt an attraction to legalism because it enabled them to do things and measure external results. They measured themselves and their achievements, they felt a sense of accomplishment and no doubt, a lot of pride. They thought they were maturing, but in reality, they were regressing into childhood.¹⁰²

Life Under Legalism: Paul starts out with an analogy that everyone living in **his** day would understand. In the ancient **world** the division between childhood and adulthood was much more definitive than it is in most societies today. A **Jewish boy** was under the direct and absolute control of **his father** until **his** bar mitzvah. **Now I am saying, so long as the heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, even though** (one day after **his** father died) **he** would be **the owner of everything (4:1)**. So, at **his** bar mitzvah, **he** would become a “son of the commandment” and take on the obligation of obeying the 613 commandments of Moshe as an adult in **Jewish** society.

In ancient Greece a boy was under his father’s control until about the age of eighteen. At that time a festival called an *apatouria* would be held in which the boy was declared an *epebos*, a type of cadet, with special responsibilities to his clan or city state for a period of two years. During the coming-of-age ceremony, the boy’s long hair would be cut off and offered to the **god** Apollo.

Instead, he is under a foremen (Greek: *epitropous*, a general term for a person who cared for underage boys) **and managers** (Greek: *oikonomous*, or house stewards). Along with **his guardian** (see [Bm - The Torah Became our Guardian to Lead Us to Messiah](#)) **the child** could do nothing without **their** permission and go nowhere without **their** supervision. But at **the date set by the father, the child’s** status changed radically **(4:2)**.

Paul now applies the principles of inheritance to **his** present argument. **So also, when we were underage, we were subservient to the basic principles of the world (Galatians 4:3; Colossians 2:8 and 20)**. Before his bar mitzvah the boy is merely a potential **heir**. He has not received his father’s estate and is not even considered eligible to do so. In a general sense, his status is like that of a **slave**. Until his bar mitzvah, the child cannot exercise his rights of inheritance. He is not the **heir**. Likewise, **Jews and Gentiles were subservient to the basic principles of the world**, or human religion. Specifically, in the case of the **Galatian** believers, the perversion of **the Torah**, legalism, or obedience to the 613

commandments of Moshe.

In **Colossians 2:8** Paul warns: **See that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men (Mark 7:8) and the basic principles of the world rather than Messiah.** Here Paul clearly associates **the basic principles of the world** with **deceptive** human tradition and **philosophy**. **Jewish** society was dominated by legalism (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei - The Oral Law**), and in **the** Gentile **world** of that day, human philosophy and pagan religions were closely interrelated. Both **Jewish** legalism and pagan religions centered in man-made systems of deeds. They were fulfilled by rules and regulations, the obeying of which were thought to make themselves acceptable to **God** by their own efforts.

For an unbeliever there is potential salvation and fulfillment of **the promise (3:29)** given to all **the world** through **Abraham (Genesis 12:3)**. But unless and until he spiritually “comes of age” through the saving trust in **Yeshua Messiah**, every unbeliever **is a slave to sin (John 8:34)**, and **is held captive through the basic principles of the world.**

The Realization of Being Adopted: **But . . . God** marks the fact that divine intervention brought hope and freedom to mankind. Just as a human father in ancient times set the time of his son’s coming of age, so did **God the Father** set the time to send **His** incarnate **Son** to earth as our **Redeemer**. It was in **the fullness of time** that **Yeshua Messiah came**, exactly when **the date** had been **set by the Father (4:4a)**.¹⁰³

Even **the righteous of the TaNaKh** died without receiving the fulfillment of **God’s** promise to **Abraham**. **These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised** (see the commentary on **Hebrews Cv - Faith Through Trials**). Like believers of every age, **they** will ultimately receive the fullness of **the promise** (see the commentary on **Revelation Fd - The Resurrection of the Righteous of the TaNaKh**). But during **their** lifetimes **they** also lived as merely potential **heirs**, not actual **heirs**.

But when **God sent His Son (Galatians 4:4b; Philippians 2:6-8)**, **He** provided the guarantee that **the righteous of the TaNaKh** and all other believers after the cross would become joint **heirs** with **the Son** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Bw - What God Does For Us at the Moment of Faith**). **The Ruach Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if children, also heirs with Messiah** who will receive full and complete **adoption (Romans 8:16-17a)**.



The fullness of time refers to the completion of the period of preparation in **God's** sovereign timetable of redemption. When **the Torah** had fully accomplished its purpose of showing man his utter sinfulness and inability to live up to **God's** perfect standard of righteousness, **ADONAI** ushered in a new era of redemption. When **He sent His Son, He** also provided the righteousness for us that they could not provide for ourselves. When **Yeshua** was born, there were three reasons why everything was right for the coming of **the Messiah**.

First of all, the soil of faith had been tilled. During the Babylonian captivity (see the commentary on [Jeremiah Gu - Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule](#)), **Isra'el** once-and-for-all abandoned idolatry into which she had so often fallen. Despite their many other sins and failures, including the rejection of their own **Messiah**, no significant number of **Jews** ever again returned to Idolatry. Also, during the Exile, **Jews** developed synagogues, which they used as places of worship, schools, and as courts. In addition to that, they at last had the completed TaNaKh, assembled by **Ezra** and others after the return from Babylon. All that facilitated the proclaiming of **Messiah's** gospel among the people of **Isra'el**.

Secondly, the time was right culturally. Believers who spread the Good News during the first several centuries had a common language with those to whom they witnessed and with whom they worshiped. Alexander the Great had thoroughly established the Greek culture and language throughout **the known world**, and these continued their dominating influence long after Rome succeeded Greece as the ruler of **the world**.

Thirdly, the time was right politically. Rome had instituted the *pax Romana*, or Roman peace, which provided economic and political stability. The apostles and other early preachers and teachers could travel freely and safely throughout the empire and could do so on the magnificent system of roads built by the Romans.¹⁰⁴

Born of a woman (4:4c), that is, **He** was fully human, yet fully **God**. Otherwise **He** could not have been the Savior of **the world**. **He** had to be fully **God** in order for **His** sacrifice to have the infinite worth necessary to atone for our sin. But, **He** also had to be fully human in order to represent us and take the penalty of our sin upon **Himself**. We were the ones who had sinned, we were under the curse, and we were condemned to eternity apart from **God**. **Yeshua** therefore could not have been our substitute on the cross had **He** not taken upon **Himself** our **likeness (Philippians 2:7)**. **He** had to be **God** to have the power to save us, and **He** had to be **born of a woman** to be able to be our substitute.

To free those under the curse of the Torah (see [Bi - All Who Rely of the Deeds of the Law are Under a Curse](#)). As **Paul** explains: **For what was impossible for the Torah - since it was weakened on account of the flesh- God has done. Sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sin offering, He condemned sin in the flesh - so that the requirement of the Torah might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Ruach (Romans 8:3-4)**. Like every other man, **Yeshua** was **born under the Torah**. Like every other **Jew**, **He** was under obligation to obey perfectly the 613 commandments of Moshe; but unlike every other **Jews**, **He** satisfied all the requirements of **the Torah** by living in perfect obedience to **it**. And because **He** lived in perfect obedience, **He** was able to free those under the curse of **the Torah**, provided they had saving faith in **Him**.¹⁰⁵

So, both Jews and Gentiles, might receive adoption as His children (4:5). **Adoption** means being brought into the personal family of **God**, which implies eternal security if you look at **God** as the perfect parent (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer](#)). We have all the privileges due to us as if we were natural sons and daughters, not **adopted** sons and daughters.

In love He predestined us to be adopted as His [children] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will (Ephesians 1:5; also see Second Timothy 1:8-9 and Psalm 139). We are **adopted** into **God's** family at the moment of faith. Notice the last phrase, which I will italicize for emphasis: ***In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Yeshua Messiah, in accordance with His pleasure and will.*** An even more literal rendering would be, "in accordance with the good pleasure of **His** will." The point is that **ADONAI** planned to adopt us as **His children** because this gave **Him** pleasure. It made **Him** happy, to use casual language. Think of that! **YHVH** chose to **adopt** you because the thought of this gave **Him** joy. So, here's something upon which to reflect today. **Ha'Shem** **adopted** you, not only because **He** loves you, but also because the thought of having you as **His** child gives **Him** great pleasure. He saved you from **sin**, for

adoption.

There are only two families in **the world**. There is the family of **YHVH** and the family of Satan. There is no middle ground. **Adoption** expresses the grace of **God** and excludes works. When parents **adopt** a child, they don't look at the good works of the child. They **adopt** out of love. **Adoption** is an act of the parents, not of the child. Additionally, we are given full status with **Yeshua Messiah**, the natural **Son of God**, even though we are **adopted**. **ADONAI** is our perfect heavenly **Father** who can care for **His** own **children**. Everything that is true of **Him** is true of us, minus **His** deity. We are going to inherit what **the Messiah** inherits.

God the Father not only **sent His Son**; **He** also **sent His Ruach**. **Now because you are His children, God sent the Ruach of His Son into our hearts, who cries out, "Abba (Papa)! Father" (Galatians 4:6; Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15)!** The moment you were spiritually born into **God's** family, you were given some remarkable birthday gifts: the family name, the family likeness, family privileges, family intimate access, and the family inheritance.¹⁰⁶ **The Ruach ha-Kodesh** brings us into a personal intimate relationship with our heavenly **Father**, whom we may approach at any time and under any circumstances, knowing that **He** always hears us and lovingly cares for us, because we are truly **His** own.¹⁰⁷

So, you are no longer a slave but a child - and if a child, also an heir through God (4:7). Paul, therefore, sums up his argument here by repeating the logical sequence. Once Yeshua has come in faithfulness, those obedient to Him have reached the age of maturity, when sin no longer has power of bondage over them. At this point the child was neither a slave nor a minor, but had entered into the status of an heir.

This brings the argument full circle, closing on the subject of **the Gentile Galatians** being **heirs** through **ADONAI**. **God's** calling of **the Gentiles** by name is **His** sovereign act, accomplished through **Yeshua's** faithfulness to death on the cross, whereby **God's promise** to **Abraham** to **bless all the nations of the earth (Genesis 12:3)** is fulfilled. It is through this means - and not by any other - that the rest of **the world** receives access to **God**, in that, being **separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Isra'el and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world, they had been brought near by the blood of Messiah (Ephesians 2:12-13).**

Paul's concern was that his **Gentile Galatian** believers were being persuaded to follow a **different gospel (4:6b)**. In doing so, they were, in effect, turning the clock back and seeking to live as though **Yeshua** had never come. **But at that time, when you**

[Galatians] did not know God, you served those who by nature are not gods at all, but idols (4:8).

But now you have come to know God - or rather you have come to be known by God. Paul asked in bewilderment: So how can you turn back again to those weak and worthless principles? Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again (4:9)? He speaks in similar terms in Romans 8:15, declaring to his Gentile readers they had not received the spirit of slavery to fall again into the basic principles of the world (Galatians 4:3)

You observe (Greek: from *paratereo*, meaning *a careful, scrupulous observance, an intent watching lest any of the prescribed holidays be overlooked*) **days and months and seasons and years (4:10)**. The **days** refer to **Sabbath days** and to **the feasts** which were observed just for a **day**. The **months** refer to the **monthly** recurring events (**Isaiah 66:23**), or to **the seventh month** and **the sounding of the shofar (Numbers 29)**. The reference also could have to do with the celebration of the appearance of **the new moon (Numbers 10:10 and 28:11)**. **Times** refers to the celebrations not limited to a single day, such as **Pesach, Sukkot**, and to **the feasts of the fourth, fifth, and seventh months (Second Chronicles 8:13)**. **Years** was a reference to **the Year of Jubilee** or **the Sabbatical year**. But **the Gentile Galatians** observed those **Jewish** holidays neither out of joy in sharing what **God** has given **the Jewish people**, nor out of spiritual identification with **them**, but out of fear induced by **Judaizers** who had convinced **them** that unless **they** did so, **Ha'Shem** would not accept **them**.

John Newton, the author of the hymn "Amazing Grace," was an only child and lost his mother when he was seven. At the age of eleven he went to sea as a sailor and became involved in the inhuman African **slave** trade. Soon hardened by his evil surroundings, he outdid his companions in immorality, vulgarity, and blasphemy. But when he was twenty-three his ship was caught in a severe storm, and when he began to fear for his life he cried out to **God** for mercy and was marvelously saved. Not wanting to ever forget the depths of sin from which he had been rescued by **God's** grace, Newton later inscribed the words of **Deuteronomy 15:15a** above his mantel: **You will remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and ADONAI your God redeemed you.**

Unlike John Newton, the **Galatian** believers did not remember what they were once like, and **Paul** was disappointed beyond words with their immaturity and lack of discernment. He was not able to understand how they could so quickly forget their former **slavery** in unbelief and so easily surrender their new freedom and blessings in **Messiah**. **I fear for you, that**

perhaps I have labored (Greek: *kapiáo*, meaning *to labor to the point of exhaustion*) **over you in vain (4:11)!** The construction of the Greek does not give the impression that **the apostle** had fears about the future of **the Galatians** which may not be realized. It is clear that **he** suspected that what **he feared** had already happened. **Paul** was not apprehensive with respect to **his** own interests or **his** fruitless **labors**, but with respect to the spiritual welfare of **his Galatian** converts. **They** were the object of **his** anxiety.¹⁰⁸

We can all relate. There have been times in our lives when we have **labored** very hard at a job, a relationship, or a project, just to have it turn up as dust in our hands. But how sad for such a faithful servant of **the Lord** to believe that all the life-threatening, sacrificial service **he** had given on behalf of the people of **Galatia** was for nothing. All the travel, illness, loneliness, struggles, even the stoning **he** received in Lystra that left **him** for dead, was worthless if they reverted back in the **slavery** of a different gospel. No wonder it is such an impassioned letter, and compelled **him** to write as **he** did.¹⁰⁹

*Dear **Father God**, How Awesome **You** are! We love **You**! When we love someone and want the best for them and then see them turning from **You** to other gods - to gods of popularity, or pleasure, or business - how it breaks our heart and **Your** heart also. Yet, we are so glad that **You** have given us the remedy which can turn it around and make all things right - the remedy of prayer.*

*Right now, each of us who are reading this are thinking of a family member or friend who is now on the right path. They may be far from you or just straying a little, but we earnestly praise your great power, love and wisdom. We place them (name of person) into your mighty, powerful and caring hands. We ask you to guide all that touches their lives. Please bring others who love you to them - friends, neighbors, business associates who speak to them of your love and guide them to want to love and follow **You** whole heartedly.*

*May **You** lovingly implant thoughts of **You** in their minds while they sleep, helping them to visualize how great you are and the great solution you are for them. May you cause them to seek you in **Your** Word and to desire to read it daily. Please give them understanding of **Your** Word and water these seeds that are planted by bringing to them a strong support system of loving friends and websites. May they always go to sleep and wake up with the "Joy of **Jesus** and the Hope of Heaven" on their minds.*

As **Paul** did to those in **Ephesus** as he was leaving, so we now commit these family/friends into your care. We ask that even if they are still here during the tribulation - that you would move mightily their hearts so they have great courage to follow you. **Now I commit you to God and the word of His grace, which is strong to build you up and to give you the**



inheritance among all who have been made holy (Acts 20:32).

In **Yeshua's** Holy name and power of resurrection. Amen