

GALATIANS

4:1-20 | STUDY GUIDE

Wasted Time

GALATIANS 4:1, "I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father." (ESV)

- Remember: the original manuscript had no chapter breaks or even punctuation
 - This is a continuation of the defense that Paul mounts in chapter 3
- The Law served as a guardian until the arrival of the Promise
 - Adoption used legally to ensure the inheritance remained in family line
 - Julius Caesar famously adopted Augustus, making him the first Roman Emperor
 - Paul's audience would be well aware of this history and have understood adoption as a legal covenant

GALATIANS 4:3, "In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world." (ESV)

- There is a recognition of time that Paul is crafting—a growth and development
 - God's timing is perfect
 - "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law..." (Galatians 4:4, ESV)
 - Fullness = πλήρωμα
 - "That which has been filled"

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GALATIANS 4:6, "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

- "Abba" = deeply personal
 - In Aramaic, typical of a small child to refer to their father as "Abba"
- "So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God." (Galatians 4:7 ESV)
 - Paul points out that by attempting to put themselves under The Law, the Gentiles are submitting to an earthly influence
 - Not because The Law represents the earth, but because their motives are derived of earthly pressure and performance
 - "But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?" (Galatians 4:9, ESV)

GALATIANS 4:14, "...and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus." (ESV)

- Paul was apparently quite ill when previously with the church of Galatia
 - He mourns their tremendous devotion—how earnestly they cared for him and demonstrated their faith
- "Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16, ESV)
 - Paul urges them to examine the motives of those who are pressuring them

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- Paul may be telling them things they don't want to hear, but he does so with pure intent
- Contrasted with those opposed to Paul's message: "They make much of you, but for no good purpose..." (Galatians 4:17, ESV)

GALATIANS 4:19, "...my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!" (ESV)

- Paul scolds like a parent
 - This is intentional: leads into analogy of Sarai and Hagar

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: N.T. Wright, *The New Testament In its World*, Craig S. Keener, *Galatians: A Commentary*, *Archaeological Study Bible*