

**Free: The Message of Galatians Then & Now**  
**Lesson Six – Break Free!**  
**Galatians 4:1-17**

**I. Under the Law (Galatians 4:1-5)**

“While the legal background of these opening verses may be difficult to reconstruct, Paul’s general meaning is clear enough. Before a minor comes of age, he has no legal rights at all. He is a *nēpios*, literally an “infant” (*Galatians*, Timothy George, Logos).

“As Jews, we have matured from restricted childhood under the law to privileged adult sonship under grace. It makes no sense to regress to childhood after becoming adults” (*Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians*, Max Anders, Logos).

“God intended the law to reveal sin and to drive men to Christ; Satan uses it to reveal sin and to drive men to despair. God meant the law as an interim step to man’s justification; Satan uses it as the final step to his condemnation” (*The Message of Galatians*, John Stott, Logos).

“In the fullness of time” – when the world was using a common language and the Romans had brought about “Pax Romana,” a time of relative peace and stability. God had prepared the world for the coming of Christ and for the spread of the gospel.

“God sent forth His son”

“Born of a woman”

“Born under the law”

“That He might redeem those who were under the Law”

Christ died to pay the penalty for our sin – “the wages of sin is death”  
(Romans 6:23).

By faith, we are “in Christ” and His righteousness has been credited to us.  
The Holy Spirit is conforming us to Christ, producing His holiness in us.

## II. Sons of God (Galatians 4:5-7)

"Son" – adoption as a son. "This is a legal term. In the Greco-Roman World, a childless, wealthy man could take one of his servants and adopt him. At the moment of adoption, he ceased to be a slave and received all the financial and legal privileges within the estate and outside the world as the son and heir. Though by birth, he was a slave without a relationship with the father, he now receives the legal status of son. It is a new life of privilege. It is a remarkable metaphor for what Jesus has given us" (Tim Keller, quoted in *Free*, p. 123 or p.169 in large print edition).

Abba – Daddy

Heir – Joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17)

We are sons of God under grace. Adults receiving full rights and privileges. We are no longer children, slaves under the law. Adults in inheritance but children in our dependence.

"Elemental things" (Galatians 4:9) – "Compared to the one true God, these demonic beings were, to say the least, "weak and beggarly." Like a poisonous snake that has just been decapitated, these malignant forces were now writhing in their final death throes, lashing out at anyone who is "foolish" (3:1) enough to come within their reach. Why on earth, Paul asked, would someone who had been delivered from the grasping power of such evil entities choose to come once again within their malevolent control?" (Timothy George, *The American Commentary: Galatians*, Logos).

"Here it is again: the devil's primary stratagem to drive the soul and society into ruin is deceptive ideas that play to disordered desires, which are normalized in a sinful society" (Comer, John Mark. *Live No Lies* (p. 57). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition).

"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross... Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules" (Colossians 2:15 & 20, NIV).

The Galatians had lived under pagan idolatry, but had been set free by Christ Why would they turn back to bondage as though the efforts of the flesh could accomplish anything?

All the sacrifices and feasts pointed to and had been fulfilled by Christ.

Jesus taught His disciples in His last discourse in John 15 that they “could do nothing apart from Him” (John 15:5).

### III. Paul’s Concern (Galatians 4:8-17)

Legalism – “Christian legalism is seeking to gain, or maintain acceptance with God, or achieve spiritual growth, through keeping a written or unwritten code or standard of performance. It always results in life lived in the energy of the flesh rather than in the Power of the Spirit, because the burden of responsibility is on our behavior rather than on God’s enabling grace. It is the difference between ‘trying harder’...and trusting Him. It is also the difference between being *led* (by the Spirit) and being *driven* (by the flesh)...The law can restrain our hands but it cannot transform our hearts” (*Breaking the Bondage of Legalism*, Anderson, Miller and Travis, p. 37 & 181).

Legalism – Pride empowers legalism and leads to judgmentalism, traditionalism, control, self-righteousness, and a critical spirit.

Legalism fosters separation. Paul had been warmly received by them when he had come preaching the gospel. Paul is pleading with them based on their previous warm reception and affection to return to grace.

We are called to love!

#### **The Seven Feasts**

<b>FEASTS</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANCE</b>
<b>Passover</b>	Nisan 14 Spring	Passover speaks of redemption, Messiah, the Passover Lamb, would be sacrificed for us (the first Passover was commemorated every year afterwards – just as Jesus died once, but the Lord’s Supper is our way of commemorating it.
<b>Unleavened Bread</b>	Nisan 15-21 Spring	Unleavened Bread speaks of sanctification. Messiah’s body would not decay in the grave.

<b>First Fruits</b>	Nisan 16 Spring	Firstfruits speaks of resurrection. Messiah would rise triumphantly from the grave on the third day. (But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" 1 Corinthians 15:20.)
<b>Weeks Pentecost</b>	50 Days After First- Fruits	Weeks/Shavuot speaks of origination. Messiah would send the Holy Spirit to inaugurate the New Covenant and Church Age.
<b>Trumpets</b>	Tishri 1 Fall	Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah points to the future day when the Messiah returns to rescue the righteous (Rapture) and judge the wicked.
<b>Yom Kippur</b>	Tishri 10 Fall	Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement points to the future day when Israel repents of her sins and turns to the Messiah for Salvation.
<b>Tabernacles</b>	Tishri 15- 21 Fall	Tabernacles/Sukkot points to the future day when the Messiah sets up the Messianic Kingdom and tabernacles among men.

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." Revelation 21:3-4

*(The Feasts of the Lord, p. 44 by Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal)*