

## Session 2

January 28, 2018

### I AM A CHILD OF THE KING

Galatians 4:1-7

Anyone who has adopted a child has a unique perspective on what it means to be a Christian. Unlike children born into a family, adoptive children are chosen. This helps us understand the mystery of God's election. And because adoptive parents come into the relationship "without obligation," we understand more about how grace operates. And anyone who has had the experience of an adopted child striking out against them in bitterness, anger, or rebellion understands what God must feel when we do the same to Him! In reality, believers are God's adopted children. We were chosen by Him when there was no obligation to do so, purely by an act of His grace, and we are secure in Him even when we raise our fist to His face in rebellion.

In Galatians, Paul is arguing the benefits of grace versus the law. But nestled in his arguments are some important truths about our position as adopted children in God's family.

**Our natural position: on the outside looking in (vv. 1-3).** In this text, Paul uses legal terminology to explain the limitations placed on those under the Old Testament law. Back in chapter 3, he explained the purpose of the law was to act as a "guardian" or "school teacher" to demonstrate and protect God's standard of righteousness (while also demonstrating man's inability to keep it) until Christ came (3:24). Here, he suggests that believers who want to place themselves back under the law are no different than slaves! He illustrates this by comparing an heir to a slave. An heir is someone waiting to receive an inheritance. As long as the heir is a child, he has no access to the inheritance he has coming. Even if that inheritance is absolutely guaranteed ("though he is the owner of everything," [v. 1]) the child can't touch it until he reaches adulthood. So it is with those in their natural, unsaved state. Like children, the Jews followed a set of very good principles; even godly principles...but were no different than slaves trying to obey their masters. Like children, they were powerless. And like slaves, they were never really a part of the family.

**Our adoptive position; on the inside looking out (vv. 4-7).** This lack of authority under the law ("being under the guardians and stewards") and lack of freedom (being "under slavery") all changed in God's perfect timing, by God's perfect plan, with the sending of God's perfect Son. Three key elements are noted by Paul. First, Christ was *born of a woman*. John 1:14 tells us "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." Paul wrote, "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). By assuming human flesh, Christ was able to be our substitutionary sacrifice. Second, He was *born under the law to redeem those under the law*. Again, there is nothing wrong with the law! Psalm 119 makes it clear that the law is the written expression of a righteous God. The problem is us. Simply put, we can't keep the law. The result is that it becomes a burden that condemns us, rather than a solution that frees us. But Christ came to remove that burden. He paid the penalty for our sin and satisfied God's requirements on our behalf. Colossians 1:21-22 says, "He has reconciled [you] in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight." Third, *this was done so that we might receive adoption as sons*. Notice that the benefit here is all *ours*. Our adoption doesn't improve God's condition, but ours. Followers of Christ are now children of the King. And as His adopted children, we receive all that He has. No wonder our hearts cry out, "Abba Father!"