

ALL IN THE FAMILY (OF GOD)

#2: Children and Heirs

January 20-22, 2007

^{3:23}Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. ²⁴So the law was put in charge of us until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. ²⁶So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. ^{4:1}What I am saying is that as long as heirs are underage they are no different from slaves, although they own the whole estate. ²They are subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by their fathers. ³So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. ⁴But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. ⁶Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." ⁷So you are no longer slaves, but God's children; and since you are his children, he has made you also heirs. *Galatians 3:23-4:7 TNIV*

Introduction: It is truly amazing that human beings would often prefer to remain in bondage—perhaps in prison or under the supervision of a kidnapper—than to be free, but this is easily observable in human nature. Likewise, many choose to remain in bondage to secularism or even religious legalism than to receive adoption as children of God through Jesus. Christ does not merely set us free, but provides for our adoption into the family of God as heirs.

I. Spiritual Orphans

- A. Apart from God, we are all spiritual orphans in a futile journey toward death.
- B. God chose Abraham and his descendants in order to begin the redemptive process of adoption.
- C. In order to preserve His children, God placed them in

the custody of the law until He provided for justification by faith in Jesus Christ. (v.3:23-24)

- D. Legalistic religion became a prison for God's people by His plan, in order that humanity might learn that salvation could not be gained through works. (v.23)
- E. Prisons protect those who live within their walls, but they also prevent them from experiencing life in all of its fullness.
- F. The provision of justification by faith in the cross of Jesus did not destroy the law as a yardstick for right living, but it did end the necessity of the law as a supervisor of God's people. (v.25)

II. Sanctified Children

- A. Through faith in Christ, we become true children of the one true, living God who created us for relationship with him and each other. (v.26)
- B. The sign of our acceptance as God's children is the "rebirth" of baptism, by which we "clothe ourselves with Christ." (v.27)
- C. In Christ, we have become part of the family of God, in which there exists no caste or hierarchy. (vv.28-29)

III. Sacred Adoption

- A. Until we come to faith in Christ, we are enslaved to the world, even if we seek to follow the custodianship of the law (i.e., to be "good"). (v.4:1-3)
- B. But from the beginning of time, God planned to send His Son, Jesus, to set us free. (v.4)
- C. Through Christ, God adopts us as His own children and incorporates us into His family. (v.5)
- D. Because we have been adopted, we may call upon our Heavenly Daddy through the Spirit. (v.6)
- E. As adopted children of God and members of His own family, we have become true heirs to His Kingdom for eternity; nothing in the world compares. (v.7)

Conclusion: We are free to choose to live as slaves or as adopted children and heirs. Amazingly, many choose to remain imprisoned, not knowing what they are missing beyond the walls. To be a child and heir of God and a member of His family is the greatest joy in life.