

**Text: Gal. 4:3** “Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.”

**Intro:** We were children that needed the careful harsh instruction of the Law. In **v. 2** Paul writes that we were “under guardians and stewards”. Using two different Greek words ἐπίτροπος epitropos and οἰκονόμος οικονόμος meaning a household manager who controls everything. We were not able to be left on our own, needing to be watched in our every move. These two words are added to the word “tutor” παιδαγωγός paidagōgos of **3:24**; we were in complete bondage.

Even worse, the controlling element of our lives was the natural world, there was nothing spiritual leading us to God, “were in bondage under the elements of the world.” (**Gal. 4:3**). The Greek word translated “elements” is στοιχεῖον stoicheion refers to the things that are reserved for destruction (**2 Pet. 3:10, 12**). More precisely the word means to recite the ABC’s, the very basic elements of learning.

**Five principles of chapter four**

- Grace is the spiritual parent of the Christian believer.
- External rules and restrictions are an indication of childhood immaturity.
- Reverting to the law is regressing to spiritual childhood.
- Grace gives you a deeply personal relationship with God (Abba, Father).
- Grace brings believers together, while law separates God’s family.

—“**The fullness of time**”

—**Gal. 4:4–5** “But when the fullness of the time had come, **God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law**, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

—“***But ... God***” marks the divine answer to our slavery under the law.

—When the law had accomplished its purpose and we were ready for release from the bondage of the law, **God sent his Son**.

—Christ came for two reasons: **First**, He came to redeem those under law. Christ died to free us from the slavery of the law.

—**Second**, Christ came that we might **receive the full rights of sons**.

—These rights are given as a gift, or they're not given at all.

—Human effort can never obtain them.

—God not only sent His Son, but He also “*sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts*” (*Gal. 4:6*).

—This explains why we no longer need the παιδαγωγός *paidagōgos* (*tutor*) or the ἐπίτροπος *epitropos* (*guardians*) and οἰκονόμος *oikonomos* (*stewards*), the external elements of control.

—God said in *Ezek. 36:26–27* “*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you*; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. *I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*”

—More references in the Old Testament to the Spirit—*11:19-20; 18:31; 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28-29*.

—The Holy Spirit’s indwelling is “*how*” we “*...receive the adoption as sons.*” (*Gal 4:5*)

—Paul writes in *Romans 8*, the Spirit is key—*Rom. 8:9–10* “*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit*, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. *Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.* And if Christ is in you, *the body is dead because of sin*, but *the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*”

—So our condition is this: We have within us the Holy Spirit, which is life; but we have this body clinging to us still, which is death-stricken because of sin.

—Because of the Spirit, death is not the end of the story—*Rom. 8:11* “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead *will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*”

—“*Abba Father*” (v. 6) *Travis Kelly’s notes*

--The word *Abba* is an Aramaic word often translated in English to words like “dad” or “father” because it was often used by young children. Using this word shows a personal and intimate relationship between a child and father.

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**We Were Children**  
**Gal 4:1-2**  
**Pastor C.E. Bowden**

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--The word Abba is used three different times in the New Testament--  
**Mark 14:36** “Abba, Father,” he cried out, “everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

-- **Romans 8:15** “So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.”

--**Galatians 4:6** “And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, “Abba, Father.”

-- All three times in scripture the Aramaic word Abba is tied with the Greek word pater which also means father, thus doubling the emphasis on the Fatherhood of God.

-- But the term Abba goes much further than just an intimate relationship between us as children and God the Father. Each use of this word comes with intimacy, but also obedience--Jesus was suffering but was still obedient to the father in **Mark 14:36**.

-- Paul is writing to those who are suffering about no longer living according to the flesh in **Romans 8**, now we must live according to God and be obedient.

--In **Galatians 4**, Paul again speaks about spiritual immaturity and living under the law. Before Christ, people were enslaved by the principles of the world.

--So, Abba not only shows us our close, intimate relationship with the Father, but also shows our needed obedience to Him. When we say, “Abba, Father” we are saying “Father, I love and obey you.”

—**With all of this powerful truth, why would you go back? Gal. 4:9** “how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?”

—Paul uses the observation of days as the main example of the return to the Law in *v. 10*.

—The word “observe” means to maintain the custom or tradition, with Sabbath keeping the main day of observation.

—By such careful observation they were being taught they gained righteousness; Paul writes **Rom. 14:5–6** “One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.”

—The two sons

—**Gal. 4:22** “For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.”

—**Gal. 4:23** “But he (*Ishmael Gen. 16:2*) who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he (*Isaac Gen. 17:16*) of the free-woman through promise.”

—Paul uses the two sons as an analogy, for two covenants—**Gal. 4:24** “which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—“

—Hagar a bondwoman, her son Ishmael born of the flesh; She represents Mt. Sinai where the Law was given (**v. 25**)

—Paul sees Hagar and Ishmael representatives of Sinai and earthly Jerusalem in bondage, those who live under the Law in bondage.

—Sarah the free-woman, her son Isaac born of promise—“Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.” So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.” (**Gal. 4:30–31**)

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