

LSB Galatians 4:1 - 7 The scandal of adoption.

1 Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and stewards until the date set by the father. 3 So also we, while we were children, were enslaved under the elemental things of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

I have good news and bad news. Good news for me. Bad news for you. This Sunday marks the completion of 9 years of biblical exposition and the beginning of year 10. That's good news. For me. The bad news is I seem to have emptied the place.

This is now our second go at this fantastic portion of revelation from God. This is an astonishing passage and we need to dig in our heels a bit and work hard to fully grasp what is being said here.

Last week we spent time trying to comprehend the idea of elemental things, which is simply put, world without God. Everything there is, without God.

This is the realm of science. What can we perceive and understand with our five senses. What can we learn about the world using the scientific method. Discover. Postulate. Test. Confirm. Write it down.

Basically what science can discover is all or most of the constants that God spoke into existence at creation. Mathematics is absolutely repeatable. And because of all the math upon math upon math we ultimately are able to design electron microscopes that show us the elemental building blocks. Like DNA. The science that proud fallen men thought was smarter than God discovers elements that only a massive beyond our thoughts

intelligence could design.

God will hold every created man accountable for rebellion, apart from the written revelation. Even without the Word of God, we hold in our hands, God will judge based on the revelation of the creation itself. And science has made rebellious man even more guilty.

Without written revealed truths from God there are the building blocks of the cosmos. The world system. And this passage tells us we are slaves of this world. Universal slavery. Oh Dear!

This is inflammatory language. Go about 3 doors down your street and knock on the door and inform whoever answers that they are slaves. Yikes. Slavery has become so horrific to our culture because our new god is absolute personal autonomy.

Absolute personal autonomy is our culture's god. So telling someone they are a slave is beyond scandalous. It's inflammatory. Fighting words. You'll get thrown off the porch physically, and if you say it again, a court sanctioned restraining order might be needed. The very idea of slavery triggers people. In a bad way.

But there it is, in black and white. All are slaves. Every person. Slaves. Vs. 3. Universal slavery. And the solution is for someone to purchase us out of slavery. Even more scandalous. How horrific for our culture to be told, not only are they slaves, the only hope is to be bought out of the slavery. By someone else! Who presumably then owns us. Right?

If someone buys you out of slavery, they then own you. And that logic is perfect and repeated just that way. In the Bible. 1 Cor. 6:

19 Or do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you were bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

You were purchased. Bought out of slavery. Now you are owned by your purchaser. Simply put, you are not your own.

Scandalous! Perhaps. But that theme runs throughout God's revelation from Genesis to Revelation. God made this world, and all others.

Anything that IS, was made by Him and is owned by Him. All of it! And He made it for His glory. He made everything that IS and He pronounced it as good. That means all of creation shined back glory upon it's Creator.

Until it didn't. Satan spoiled God's perfect creation. Satan introduced rebellion against God. And every child of Adam that has been born has been born into that rebellion.

But, now this is important, that didn't affect ownership. All that did was cause us to be rebellious sinful slaves who hate our rightful owner. We still belong to Him. Even in our rebellion, He owns us. Sorry, 2023, those are the simple facts. God owns every rebellious sinner. Every one. And His disposition over what is His, will be righteous altogether.

So slavery is a fact. Get used to it. Startling, perhaps, for some. For most. Shocking news to 2023 folk who are bowing to the god of absolute personal autonomy. Just the word *slave*, triggers proud rebellers and haters of God who absolutely owns them. That changes nothing.

The firm foundation stands. Every knee will bow to King Jesus. Phil. 2: *9 Therefore, God also highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

We are slaves either way. Some slaves are rebellious haters of their owner who refuse to serve Him and who deserve righteous punishment. But there are some slaves who realize their insurrection and beg their rightful owner for His forgiveness. These, He gladly receives.

And not just receives as slaves, but according to this astonishing passage, God then gives those slaves sonship, through adoption.

Think about this. To forgive and restore rebellious worthless slaves to good standing as slaves, debt forgiven, would be generous way beyond any expectation. Even that is almost beyond belief.

You've got some worthless slave that's been squandering your oxygen for year after year in open rebellion. Refusing to honor your ownership and rebelling against any service to his rightful owner.

To forgive a slave that debt is almost scandalous. Who does that. You robbed from me. You refused to render to me anything that is rightfully mine through my ownership of you. You rebelled against my will. You did as you pleased. You hated me because I am your rightful owner.

To forgive a debt like that is scandalous. It's bizarre. It's nonsensical. Just wipe the debt clean. Because he asked? What kind of grace is that! Who would do that?? That's bizarre behaviour way beyond any reasonable expectation.

And not only that, it's scandalous because . . . what about justice?? Oh we want to talk about justice these days, don't we. What about justice. If God just wipes a debt clean and declares it paid, that's a scandal because it's unjust. We are murderers and thieves. Liars all. Proud rebellers.

If God just expunges that debt, He's unjust. Where is justice.

We don't like blanket forgiveness, do we. Raise your hand if you think it is unfair that the government takes money from you and gives it to drunken partying college children, as a loan, and then writes off the debt. Pays it with your hard earned money.

Something created in us finds injustice troubling. We are rebellious slaves

who hate our rightful owner and refuse to serve Him or do any of His bidding while we breathe in air He owns and breathe out curses against Him.

But according to this book, He will forgive our debt. And we can be forgiven slaves of His. That's a scandal. But this passage makes it an even bigger scandal.

Not only will He forgive us the unpayable debt, but then He doesn't just restore us to slavery. That would be scandalous enough. He forgives the debt and then He adopts us into His family. He makes us His sons.

This doctrine of adoption is forgotten in our days. How many sermons have you listened to that were about adoption? It's like a lost jewel of scripture.

Even I, who have had much more than my share of sound doctrinal teaching for 50 plus years, can't recall much teaching on the subject of the believer's adoption.

I've been listening to talks given at a conference last year around the theme of the Puritans. Those theologians who struggled in England against the king who wanted the church of England to mirror the Roman catholic church, albeit not with a pope as head, but the king as head of the church.

Many many protestants were burned at the stake for not conforming to the popish church of England. A fanscinating history and one of the main causes for the establishment of our nation. The puritans fled to America and set up colonies here where they could practice a more pure christianity unmolested by kings and governments. They were bible men. Sola scriptura.

And they believed this doctrine of adoption was the apex. The ultimate purpose of everything in the book. The pinnacle. The main main thing. They spoke of something that may sound foreign to non theologian folks

called the ordo salutis. ordo salutis. The order of salvation.

Predestination Election Calling Regeneration Faith Repentance
Justification **Adoption** Sanctification Perseverance Glorification

Each of those words is a doctrine in itself, a reality in revelation that can be studied and pondered. Some of them, actually all of them are out of our control so that makes us uncomfortable. Some are incomprehensible to our finite minds.

But if we looked at all the elements of our salvation, given in scripture, revealed to us by God, and thought about the entire process in more finite terms of before - after, where do most people draw that line.

Justification. Right? Most people want to talk about justification. Once I was condemned in my sin. Justification removes that condemnation. It places the punishment due me, on Christ, at the cross, and the sins that condemned and separated me from God, are removed. I'm justified.

But the puritan theologians would tell you, justification is certainly necessary, but to them, it is a formality, a necessary legal formality in order to get us to the main thing. Adoption.

Justification is the marriage certificate. Adoption is the consumation of the marriage. *I now pronounce you man and wife.* Those words are important necessities. But the young couple wants to go on to the honeymoon.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the returning son only hopes for pardon, but doesn't have any expectation of sonship after squandering his inheritance with harlots in a foreign land. His hope is to be a hired servant in his fathers household. At least he'll be treated with the same dignity as his fathers other faithful slaves.

But his father embraces him as a full son. His father rejoices over him and throws a celebration. He won't just be a slave. He will be an heir. A son.

We stop at justification. And rightly so. We were in a mess. God paid the debt and purchased us out of the mess we were in. That's justification. It's a legal status. Justified. Just-as-IF-I'd never sinned.

But in a purely legal sense, that would restore us to be slaves in good standing. The legal offense has been eliminated. That would return us to slave status with a clean slate. Slave in good stead with the master.

But God doesn't stop there. God desires sons to lavish His love and His wealth on. Justification removes the decrees against us. Adoption elevates us to be sons. Heirs with Christ, our elder brother. Adoption says, you're no longer slaves, you are sons.

Adoption is the main thing God desired to accomplish in all of this. From the fall in Genesis to the new heavens and new earth in Revelation, God is working throughout all of history in order to **bring many sons to glory**. That is the entire purpose of redemption. Adoption is the main main thing!

Hebrews chapter 2: 10 - 13 *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in **bringing many sons to glory**, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brothers, 12 saying,*

*“I will recount Your name to My brothers,
In the midst of the assembly I will sing Your praise.”*

13 And again,

“I will put My trust in Him.”

And again,

*“Behold, **I and the children whom God has given Me.**”*

Bringing many sons to glory. It always brings Ephesians 4:8 to my mind. Jesus comes on a reconnaissance mission to recapture captives and bring them to freedom.

8 *Therefore it says,
“When He ascended on high,
He led captive a host of captives,
And He gave gifts to men.”*

It's like a rescue mission where someone comes into enemy territory and captures the captives and gets them safely to freedom. Jesus came here, to earth, in Satan's realms, and took captive many sons and brought them to their Father to be restored to glory.

Throughout the Bible, God is presented as Father. Sin separates us from our Father. It makes us enemies to our Father. Justification restores us in a legal sense. It removes sin from the equation. But adoption is relational. Justification is legal. Adoption is relational.

Listen to the language in our passage in Galatians.

3 So also we, while we were children, were enslaved under the elemental things of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

Vs 3. We were slaves in bondage to sin.

Vs 4. Jesus comes in the fulness of God's time

Vs 5. So that . . . so that.

In vs. 5, in logical order, what we spoke of earlier as the ordo - salutis, two things happen in order to reach the full conclusion.

Jesus comes in vs 4 and vs 5 tells us the reason *5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*

redemption is purchase. He purchases us out of the slavery to sin which had captured the entire human race. Redemption is purchase, but that isn't the logical finish. There are two "so that's" in the logical succession. Jesus came;

5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, (so) that we might receive the adoption as sons.

The reason for the purchase, for the redemption, for the justification and release from slavery of sin, is so that *we might receive the adoption as sons.*

Adoption as sons is the main thing. God is desirous of sons to lavish His love and His wealth on. The whole point of salvation is adoption. God doesn't stop at legal justification. That's only a means to an end. The end in view is many sons, through adoption into His family.

1 John 3:1 See how great a love the Father has given to us, that we would be called children of God;

Adoption makes us more than legally forgiven. It makes us children in the Father's family. Beloved, this is the main theme of the book. Children. Heirs. Sons. Adopted into God's family. Bear with me while I read you just a few verses from OT to NT that all share this same theme of God as Father and restoration of children to Him.

Isaiah 43:6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back!' Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth--

Hosea 1:10 Yet the number of the Israelites will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted. And it will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'

Romans 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Romans 8:16 *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*

Romans 8:19 *The creation waits in eager expectation for the revelation of the sons of God*

John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God,*

Justification doesn't make us children of God. It removes sin. It clears the pathway. It allows for the purchase. But it is adoption that makes God our Father and us His beloved children.

Listen to what Jesus says during the sermon on the mount; Matt. 7:
7 *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, when **his son** asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your **Father** who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!*

Adoption is relational. Adoption makes me God's child, God's son, and opens up a love relationship. The doctrine of adoption teaches me that I have been received into the number and share all of the privileges of the sons of God. I am in that number. I've been adopted. I am a son.

In the letter to the Ephesians which if it please our Father to allow it, we will study together after Galatians, listen to the ordo-salutis in chapter 1;

3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love, 5 by predestining us to adoption as*

sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will

Sometimes Paul nearly drowns us with words! It's like a professional singer who looks at the bars and measures and thinks, where in here do I get to come up for oxygen.

Paul just dumps a full super 10 wheeler dump truck of blessing out on us. As if he's saying, get used to it. When we see our Saviour, we'll be overwhelmed with wealth and blessing.

Vs. 4 He chose us. Before the foundations of this world were laid, He chose us. He chose us for the purpose of being holy and blameless before our Father. That's justification in Christ's sacrifice and purchase of us. Vs 5 we are predestined for what? adoption as sons.

Christianity is not about a get out of jail free card. Christianity is not about a fire insurance policy. Both of those ideas stop short, far short of the purpose of redemption. God's purpose is to adopt sons to lavish love and wealth upon. Adoption is the main thing. The whole point of christianity is a relationship with God as our loving Father and us as adopted sons and daughters.

In Romans 8, a famous often read and taught chapter, the ordo-salutis, the order of salvation, again. Beginning at vs. 28

28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are (the) called according to His purpose. 29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers; 30 and those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified.

In vs 28 God has a purpose. A plan. In vs 29 the plan is revealed. Jesus is the firstborn of many . . . brothers. That's adoption. We are in the big big

plan. All of the foreknowledge and predestinations two times in there, and calling, and justification and glorification refers back to Jesus who is the prōtotokon, the prototype of who? many brothers.

Children. Adopted by God, into His family and made brothers with Jesus, the prototype of innumerable sons, of whom I am one, and so are you, if;

vs 6 And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

Adoption comes with privilege, and it also comes with evidence. If you have been adopted as a son or daughter, a child into God's family, He sends the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of His Son, into our hearts.

Sonship is relational. Adoption is relational. Jesus comes inside my heart. God's Holy Spirit, lives in me. My spirit is quickened to life, in Christ, and I am in Him, and He is in me.

What more intimate relationship is there than a little child crying out "Daddy". Abba! That's the level of intimacy in this adopted state. I am a full child. He is my father. My father is in control of destiny. What have I to fear.

There's an old 19th century story, often retold, of a ship being battered nearly to pieces in a ferocious storm with people in near panic. Except for one small boy who isn't moved at all by the crashing waves. And a man asks him, why he is so unmoved by what is happening. "Aren't you frightened?", says the man, and the little boy says, "no, my father is the captain of this ship."

This world has much to be fearful about. On April 11th I watched a little Youtube snippet with Tucker Carlson and Donald Trump. And Mr. Trump says in our current status we shouldn't be so worried about global warming. What we should be worried about is nuclear warming.

Madmen have nuclear bombs, ready, at their disposal. Mr. Trumps claim, whether you agree with him or not, is that when he was in office that threat was in better control through strength of deterrent than it is now.

This world should be terrified. If global warming doesn't get us, the nukes will. This world can completely unravel, overnight. Be very afraid.

Or not. You can be like me. I'm like that little boy that is unconcerned in terrifying circumstances, because his Father is captain of this ship. I've not a worry in the world. I've been adopted into God's family. God is my Father, I am His son. It gives a whole new meaning to those idiotic NO FEAR commercials.

The only intelligent and sensible possibility of no fear, in this world, is to be an adopted son of God.

Earlier this year, archeologists found evidence that they had found the old city of Sodom. They found remnants all over the entire area of silica fusion that the only comparison we have is something from the Trinity nuclear site that scientists named trinitite. Fused silica that needs 5000 degree heat.

We never knew of such a thing until after our first nuclear explosion at Trinity New Mexico in 1945. Trinitite. Guess what, archeologists are finding lots and lots of trinitite at a location in Jordan that matches perfectly with where Abraham and Lot gazed out over the Jordan Valley and Lot chose a well watered roundish loaf shaped place where the Jordan river floods and creates lush green.

Lot said, I'll go over there, and Abraham said, fine, I'll stay here. They were about 12 miles north of where Jerusalem is now when they had that discussion recorded for us in Genesis 13. And God rained down fire and brimstone on the city of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their wickedness. They've found the evidence of 5000 degree heat where Sodom once was a vibrant and sinful city.

This world should be very afraid. Not of global warming. Not even of nuclear warming. God already said He's going to make a lot more trinitite here when He comes in judgement. That is what the world should fear.

I'm not afraid. God has adopted me into His family. I'm an adopted son of God. My sin has already been paid for. My Father has sent His Spirit, the Spirit of His Son, the Lord, Jesus, into my heart. He is in me, and I am in Him.

7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

What does it mean to be an heir through God? Romans chapter 8 is a direct parallel passage. Listen to Paul restating the same truths to the Romans.

15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, also heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

We are heirs of God. We are fellow heirs with Christ. What He inherits we will also inherit. Oh boy oh boy. What do we get to inherit.

John says, we don't yet know. 1 Jn. 3:2 *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not been manifested as yet what we will be. We know that when He is manifested, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.*

Here's what we do know. When we see Jesus, when He calls us up in the rapture, or He closes our eyes in death, we will see Him, just as He is. We'll have new bodies. Spiritual bodies. Changed in the blinking of an eye. Bodies like His resurrected body.

Paul tells us; 1 Cor. 2:9

*But just as it is written,
“Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard,
And which have not entered the heart of man,
All that God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

The wealth that we are already heirs to inherit is beyond our comprehension. John says so. Paul says so.

Here's what I do know. While this world is getting turned into trinitite, I'll be at a wedding banquet in heaven inheriting wealth beyond my comprehension.

I am an adopted son, a child, beloved by my Father. He has filled me with joy, and with His Holy Spirit. His Spirit is my engagement ring. I'm just waiting for the wedding day. We think it may be very soon.

Paul is comparing law and grace. The galatians had bought into a heresy that returned them to Moses law. Law never made anyone a son. All the law could do is show me I'm in deep trouble. That's it. Grace made sonship and heirship possible.

The law made me a slave with an unpayable debt. Justification purchased with Christ's blood made me a slave freed from his debt. Adoption made me a son and an heir, a fellow heir with Jesus Christ.