

**Galatians 4:1-7**  
Gospel Heir  
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## Introduction:

1. What's it like to have it all? To be a child of the rich, powerful, and famous?
2. An article about pampered celebrity kids and their gifts has 28 million views.
3. Beyonce and Jay Z's daughter, Blue Ivy Carter, received a crystal bath tub and an \$80K diamond-encrusted Barbie doll for her first birthday.
4. Jennifer Lopez's twins got diamond encrusted rattles and Shetland ponies when they were born.
5. But Mariah Carey's twins only got diamond-studded diaper pins when they were babies.
6. Sandra Bullock's adopted son, Louis, received an Andy Warhol painting when he was just one.
7. Suri Cruise, for her 7th birthday, received a two-story playhouse equipped with water and electricity.
8. Rapper Lil Wayne bought his daughter two cars for her 16th birthday, a red BMW and a white Ferrari.
9. The Bible says we are heirs and sons of God and that we have it all.
10. What does it mean to be an heir? To be a child, a son? (\*Read Galatians 4:1-7)

(Through Christ we are receiving and will receive our inheritance in full.)

(But what about life before Christ, life before we receive our inheritance?)

### I. Under law we are slaves. (v. 1-3)

#### A. We're never good enough under law (v. 1-2)

1. God gave his people Israel rules and requirements to follow called the law.
2. The law helped us understand good and evil, but it also condemned us—law defines sin.
3. God gave us the law because we didn't discern right and wrong—we were “children” or “infants”
4. “Child” signifies someone who is between 1-10, lacks understanding, and is easily led astray.
5. God gave us the law because we were easily fooled (aka. grizzly bear outside the window).
6. Like we wait for a trust-fund until we're 21, 25, or 30, so Israel was waiting for something good.

#### B. I tried reading the novel Catch-22 when I was a teenager.

1. There's no real plot line or story, but is simply about WWII army bombers who want to get out.
2. The only way to get out is to prove you're insane, but to do that you have to file paperwork, proving that you're rational and able to think logically (unsolvable puzzle).
3. The law shows us what it means to be perfect but also that we're not good enough.

(We're never good enough under the law... no matter how religious we are.)

#### C. Being good enough is the world's way. (v. 3)

1. The Galatians think they're obeying God, but they're doing it the world's way.
2. “Elementary principles of the world” is a Greek belief (earth, wind, water, fire).
3. To believe the law and good works can save you is to be enslaved to mysticism and nonsense.

#### D. There was a TV cartoon called “Captain Planet and the Planeteers” that ran from 1990-1996.

1. The spirit Gaia (mother earth) is fed up with how humanity is treating the earth.
2. So she gives five special youth five magic rings to save the planet (earth, wind, water, fire, heart).
3. When the powers combined, the five kids could summon captain planet to save the day.
4. The show's message was that to please god, we need to be better people and save the planet.
5. Galatians tells us that being good enough is the world's way, not God's way.

(Under law and good works we are slaves, so Christ has come to rescue us.)

II. Christ came to change us. (v. 4-5)

1. In v. 2 “The date set by the father” does not mean that Israel finally got it right.
2. It’s a promise of hope that God would send a solution in his own timing, which we get in v. 4.
3. God sent his son, born like us, but not a slave like us... he succeeded where we fail.

(The law gets us ready for Christ as we see our need.)

(How did Christ come to change us?)

A. Christ came to change our sentence (God forgives us).

1. Verse 5 says that Christ came “to redeem those who were under the law.”
2. You and I have been purchased by God through the blood of his Son.
3. We no longer have to feel guilt or shame for sin, because it’s gone.
4. We are declared not guilty—we have a verdict of innocence.
5. But if this is all God did for us, it wouldn’t be enough...

(If you were a condemned man, set free, you’d still be a homeless man unable to function in society.)

(But what if you were adopted by one of those celebrity couples and given everything?)

B. Christ came to change our relationship (God adopts us).

1. Verse 6 also says that Christ came “so that we might receive adoption as sons.”
2. Not only are we judicially forgiven, we’re relationally transformed.
3. In the ancient world, adoptions usually took place if the master of the house had no children.
4. He could adopt a slave, or anyone, and they became his legal heirs.
5. There’s something special about Biblical sonship because sons received the inheritance.
6. According to a Roman-Syrian law, “a man might be able to disown his biological son if he had good reason, but he could never disown his adopted son.”<sup>1</sup>
7. In Greece, adoption took place on the market-square before the citizens and a tribunal.

C. I began by talking about all the amazing things children of celebrities receive on their birthdays.

1. One young celebrity teenager asked for emancipation for his parents for his 14th birthday.
2. He wanted to live in his own apartment and do life his way, but still wanted wealth and status.
3. How often do we live as if we’re not adopted?
4. We try to live in a household full of rules and requirements and doing better.
5. Come, live in our Father’s house where we’re completely forgiven and completely loved.

(Under law we are slaves, but if we’ve been adopted by Christ, we become royalty.)

(The New Zealand artist Lorde had a hit called Royals, where she sang about wanting to be royalty.)

*And we'll never be royals (royals).  
It don't run in our blood  
That kind of luxe just ain't for us.  
We crave a different kind of buzz.*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://christianadoptions.org/domestic-adoption/general-adoption-information/adoption-a-biblical-perspective/>

*Let me be your ruler (ruler),  
You can call me queen Bee  
And baby I'll rule, I'll rule, I'll rule, I'll rule.  
Let me live that fantasy.*

(In our hearts we desire the wrong type of royalty, but in Christ we already reign.)

### III. Under Christ we are kings. (v. 6-7)

(If we're adopted heirs like Christ, we're kings like Christ as well.)

(The Bible says we will judge angels, 1 Corinthians 6:3.)

(Notice that v. 6 says, "you are sons"—this is in the present tense.)

(This means that we experience our royal sonship today, not just in heaven...)

(Verses 6-7 tell us four benefits of being a son of God today.)

- 1) First, we have the Spirit of the King (v. 6)
  - a. Verse 6 says, "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts..."
  - b. We have the same Holy Spirit who loved and comforted Christ living in us.
  - c. This Spirit helps us turn from sin, make wise decisions, and follow God's leading.
  - d. This also means we begin to take on the character of the king—we look like him.
  - e. As I've gotten older, I realize I think and act like my dad, I even have his beard.
  - f. As you get older, you're going to look more and more like Christ.
- 2) Second, we have a relationship with the King (v. 6)
  - a. Verse 6 says that we can cry "Abba! Father!"
  - b. Despite popular opinion, "Abba" does not translate to "Daddy" but to "Father."
  - c. We can pray to God directly (aka. "Our Father, who is in heaven...")
  - d. Paul is referencing Mark 14:36 where Jesus calls on God as his "Abba, Father".
  - e. Timothy Keller points out that we can approach God like Jesus:

[Abba] was a daringly familiar term to use to address the Lord Almighty. So when Paul says that we should use it, he is vividly asserting that we have legally inherited the rights of Jesus Himself. We can approach God as if we were as beautiful, heroic, and faithful as Jesus Himself.<sup>2</sup>

- d. This is radically different than how the Jews spoke with God.
  - e. One of my seminary professors, Carol Kaminski, took a Hebrew reading class at Harvard.
  - f. She told us that several Jewish people also took the class, and they'd never refer to God by name.
  - g. We going beyond calling God by his name, Yahweh, to an intimate and loving term.
- 3) Third, we have the record of the King. (v. 7)
  - a. Verse 7 says "So you are no longer a slave, but a son..."—notice the exchange.
  - b. We lose our sinful status as slaves and receive the righteous status of sons.
  - c. Do you ever wonder if Prince Harry and William care about what others think of them?
  - d. Too often we beat ourselves up about what others have said or think about us (devil accuses us).

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<sup>2 2</sup> Galatians For You by Timothy Keller, page 101.

- e. You don't need to care about that because you have the perfect record of the king.
- 4) Fourth, we have the grace of the King. (v. 7)
    - a. Verse 7 tells us we are "an heir through God."
    - b. Who is responsible for adoption? The child or the parents?
    - c. God has adopted you without any effort on your part and it's completely irrevocable.
  - 5) Under Christ we are kings.
    1. When we remember Christ's sacrifice in v. 4-5, we recall what God has done *objectively* for us.
    2. When we remember the Spirit's filling us in v. 6-7, we recall what God does *subjectively* to us.

The work of the Son brings us an **objective** legal condition, that is ours whether we feel it or not. But this work of the Spirit is not like that at all. The Spirit brings us a radically **subjective** experience... The work of the *Son* is done externally to us, and is something we can have without feeling. But the work of the *Spirit* is done internally to us, and consists in us being completely moved—emotionally as well as intellectually—by the love of the Father.<sup>3</sup>

3. Both the objective work of Christ and the subjective work of the Spirit help us worship God fully.
4. Myers-Briggs created a test that divided people up into thinkers or feelers (logical vs. emotions).
5. For you thinkers out there, be challenged by the Spirit as he softens you emotionally.
6. For you feelers out there, remember that when you think about Christ's work, you worship God.
7. We experience the benefits of adoption both objectively in Christ and subjectively in the Spirit.

(Under law we are slaves. Under Christ we are kings.)

#### Conclusion:

1. I want to close by remembering what it was like to be a child.
2. I've never liked the dark and used to get scared at night.
3. I would lie in my bed in the dark and yell "Dad! Dad!"
4. My brothers would tell me to be quiet but I'd still yell, "Dad! Dad!"
5. Maybe you're afraid in the dark because you don't know Christ.
6. All you need to do is to cry out for your heavenly father, "Dad! Dad!"
7. Maybe you're anxious because you think God is displeased with you.
8. My friend, cry out in the darkness, "Dad! Dad!"
9. Maybe you've been hurt by life and have lost control of everything... Cry out, "Dad! Dad!"
10. My father always came and would turn on the light and say "What's the matter Jonathan?"
11. He'd sit with me, put his hand on my side, and he'd pray for me, and he'd say he loves me.
12. That's the type of relationship we have with the Father.
13. God's hand is on you, he's praying for you, and he loves you.
14. Under law we are slaves. Under Christ we are kings.

Benediction: 2 Peter 1:2–3 (NIV) *Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*

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<sup>3</sup> *Galatians For You* by Timothy Keller, pages 99-100