

Galatians 4 – Slaves or Sons

Hook

	<p>Freedom Song – Holiday Inn</p>	<p>In the political sense, freedom might be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Freedom of Speech 2. Freedom of Worship 3. Freedom from Want 4. Freedom from Fear <p>In the absolute sense, which determines the political, freedom is very different.</p> <p>Earlier we considered that freedom is not doing whatever you want to do, but being all that God made you to be. Today we will discuss how and what people who are free in Christ actually believe, and what they actually do.</p>
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<p>Sons as Slaves Sons Unsure</p>	<h2>Choose slave or choose son</h2>	<p>Sons as Sons</p>
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Book – Galatians 4:1-10 (first Pauline epistle, late 40s AD, reign of Claudius)

Look

Sons as Slaves

VV 1-2 – When a prince is young, though he is the prince and is the owner and ruler of all of his domains, governors and tutors control him. He comes, goes, and does as others command.

V3 – The Law acted as a tutor for the people of God under the Old Testament. Abraham began thinking like all of those around him, much like the heathen nations in the table below. But God revealed Himself to Abraham and his family, and they began to see God as He really is.

Belief as a Slave (elemental things of the world)

	Heathen Nations	Israel
God	Many, limited power and scope (geography, element, god over one people), capricious, like super-powerful humans, involved	One, omnipotent, omnipresent, involved, transcendent, holy and good by nature, God over all peoples (preference to Israel)
Spiritual Beings	Angels, demons, and animating spirits in everything (animals, plants, rocks)	Angels, demons, “life force” provided by God
Creation	Universe eternal, or created by distant, uninvolved primal deity	Universe (space and time) part of creation, limited

Man	One of many beings, god's people are the best, and maybe the only ones fully human	Second only God in all of creation, in God's image, all created equal,
Sin	Somewhat differing understandings by culture, time, and place	Universal and eternal, violation against the character of God
Salvation	Earn the god's favor, and put the god in your debt, through works	Saved by faith, as manifested by keeping the Law
Missions	Unnecessary, impossible, and maybe wrong	Required, but rare
End Times	Perpetual existence, often in a "soul soup"	Individual eternal life in heaven or hell

Illustration – [Hammurabi's Code](#) – many offenses punishable by death, compare to Exodus 21:22-25.

Discussion Questions and Answers/Application

If you believe like the heathen nations, how do you live? What things do you do?

If you believe like Israel under the Law, how do you live? What things do you do?

Sons as Sons

VV 4-6 – The Law was given sometime between 1400 and 1200 BC. It took 1,000 years and many travails for the people of Israel (and the rest of the world) to be ready for the coming of the Messiah (Jesus Christ). When Christ came, God's people reached the "age of majority". We became adult sons, responsible for ourselves and no longer under the Law. We are now led by the Spirit.

The Fullness of Time

1. Greek influences (Alexander, Seleucid, Ptolemy) and even Hindu influences (1 Kings 10:11, 22, Esther 1:1, 8:9) had to mix with Hebrew ones.
2. Rome had to be a superpower and impose a Pax Romana to provide stability, trade, communication, transportation, and security.
3. Maritime technology had to improve enough, and costs decline enough to master the Mediterranean (Roman ships could take a load from Palestine to Spain at 1/60th of the cost of the overland route).
4. Religion had to be pluralistic enough and the Empire secular enough to provide intellectual space and institutional tolerance for a new faith (cf. mythologies Celtic, Germanic, Greek, Nordic, Phoenician).
5. The ancient powers of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Egypt had to decline enough to move the political center of gravity from Mesopotamia to Greece and then Rome.
6. Many, many more

Now we are fully heirs of God through Christ, with adult understanding of Him and adult responsibilities for His work.

Belief as a Son

	Christians	Israel
God	One, omnipotent, omnipresent, involved, transcendent, holy and good by nature, God over all peoples	One, omnipotent, omnipresent, involved, transcendent, holy and good by nature, God over all peoples (preference to Israel)

Spiritual Beings	Angels, demons, “life force” provided by God	Angels, demons, “life force” provided by God
Creation	Universe (space and time) part of creation, limited	Universe (space and time) part of creation, limited
Man	Second only God in all of creation, in God’s image, all created equal,	Second only God in all of creation, in God’s image, all created equal,
Sin	Universal and eternal, violation against the character of God	Universal and eternal, violation against the character of God
Salvation	Saved by faith, as manifested by following the Spirit and exhibiting His fruits (Gal 5:22-23)	Saved by faith, as manifested by keeping the Law
Missions	Required, should be common	Required, but rare
End Times	Individual eternal life in heaven or hell	Individual eternal life in heaven or hell

Illustration – [Hammurabi’s Code](#) – many offenses punishable by death, compare to Exodus 21 and Matthew 5:38-42.

Discussion Questions and Answers/Application

If you believe like Israel under the Law, how do you live? What things do you do?

If you believe like a son of God and brother of Christ, how do you live? What things do you do?

Sons Unsure

VV 8-10 – The saints in Galatia, and even the Judaizers, knew that the ancient Law had saved them from the “beggarly elements” of heathenism. But even the Law, good as it was, was incomplete. Paul was calling them to step forward to the new reality in Christ.

Belief as Unsure (wavering between two opinions – Elijah and the prophets of Baal, 1 Kings 18:21)

	Christians	The World
God	One, omnipotent, omnipresent, involved, transcendent, holy and good by nature, God over all peoples	Many “gods”, including Allah, Impersonal life force, Shiva, Krishna, etc. Or no god at all
Spiritual Beings	Angels, demons, “life force” provided by God	Angels, demons, animating spirits, or no spiritual life at all
Creation	Universe (space and time) part of creation, limited	Multiverse giving rise to our universe extending from infinity
Man	Second only God in all of creation, in God’s image, all created equal,	Final arbiter of all things in the universe, yet weak and failing
Sin	Universal and eternal, violation against the character of God	None, man is inherently good, or man is an automaton

Salvation	Saved by faith, as manifested by following the Spirit and exhibiting His fruits (Gal 5:22-23)	Unnecessary, or a balance of works, or conferred by ethnicity
Missions	Required, should be common	Racist, oppressive, destructive
End Times	Individual eternal life in heaven or hell	Annihilation, universalist heaven, or ignored

Illustration "PICTURES"

Discussion Questions and Answers/Application

Will we choose to live as slaves or as sons? Why might we choose to live as slaves? Why might we choose to live as sons? What are you going to do? What does Christ want us to do?

Took

Sons as Slaves	Choose slave or choose son	Sons as Sons
Sons Unsure		

Verdict – All any person has is Time, Energy, Skills, Focus, and access to Resources. How will you use them in light of the Truth you have just received?

General (For everyone at all times)

Past	Present	Future
Remember, repent, forgive, reconcile, renew	Act, evaluate, adjust, seek wise spiritual counsel, study today’s Scripture passage	Prepare, plan, pray, pursue peace

Specific (for you specifically as a result of this message)

CAME – Who?	You	We	He/She/They
Creation – what needs to be created?			
Action/Words – what needs to be said and done?			
Memory/Thoughts – what needs to be put in the heart?			
Emotion – what needs to be felt?			

Additional Information

1. Please visit the MD Harris Institute for more information on this topic.
2. Ask for the prayers and thoughts of your listeners

Closing prayer