

*(Gal 4:3 NKJV) Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.*

*(Gal 4:4 NKJV) But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,*

*(Gal 4:5 NKJV) to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*

*(Gal 4:6 NKJV) And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"*

*(Gal 4:7 NKJV) Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

A modern slavery is underway. People are being enslaved right before our very eyes. The American Civil Liberties Union won't acknowledge this kind of slavery, as it isn't limited to any particular race of people. It transcends the color of the skin, class and ethnicity and includes all and doesn't exclude any.

Paul speaks of this slavery in our text: *"Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements or the basic principles of the world (NIV)."*

When Paul writes *"...the basic principals of the world"* – he is referring to both the bondage of a legalistic practice of Judaism that was thrust upon the Jews and the bondage of heathenism that was openly embraced by the Gentiles (also v. 9).

The Jews were in bondage to legalistic Judaism. They were being taught that being right with God depended upon all the rituals they kept.

For example, the Law that God communicated through Moses taught that they were to rest on the Sabbath but the religious leaders took this to the extreme. The religious leaders got all bent out of shape when Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath. They got angry because He was "working on the Sabbath" (Luke 14:3).

Today we see this kind of legalism some religions where their followers aren't allowed to eat certain foods and must keep certain rituals and holy days in order to satisfy their God. Paul would tell the people, "You're in bondage."

There is this kind of legalism taught many of our churches today.

- Some churches have prescribed a dress code for worship when the only "dress code" the Scripture teaches is *modesty*.
- Some folk teach that God only allows certain styles of music in the church. But the Bible lets us know that the kind of music that God likes is that which exalts His Son, Jesus Christ.

There was legalism in Paul's day in the synagogue that was trying to find its way into the church.

Then, while the Jews were in bondage to legalism many of the Gentiles were in bondage to *heathenism*.

While the Jews and the Christians living during the first century were *monotheistic*, meaning they worshipped one God, the Gentiles were in many respects *polytheistic*, worshipping many Gods.

They knew of the God of the Bible, they didn't worship Him but formed and fashioned and bowed before the idols of their own making.

In the New Testament book of Romans the writer sheds some light on Gentile worship:

*(Rom 1:21 NKJV) because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

*(Rom 1:22 NKJV) Professing to be wise, they became fools,*

*(Rom 1:23 NKJV) and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man; and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.*

*(Rom 1:24 NKJV) Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,*

*(Rom 1:25 NKJV) who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

*(Rom 1:26 NKJV) For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.*

*(Rom 1:27 NKJV) Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*

The Jews were in bondage to legalism and the Gentiles were in bondage to heathenism and today, many are still in bondage to the elements or the principals of this world.

What men and women in our day call "freedom," God's Word calls *bondage*. They say, "Eat, drink and be merry" and thus we see the beer and liquor commercials on TV showing everyone having a good time but what they don't let us see is the aftermath of a night of debauchery.

- It was that first drink that captured many a soul into a life of alcoholism. Many have said, "I'll just have one..." and that "one" evolved into a lifetime of drunkenness.
- That first cigarette brought with it years of nicotine addiction.
- That first hit from a joint has plunged many a man or woman into a life of drug addiction.
- That first illicit sex act has been the induction of many into a lifetime of sexual promiscuity and homosexuality and for some even the bondage of AIDS and other STDs.

The "Eat, drink and be merry" philosophy along with the "if it feels good do it" way of life is not freedom at all; it is bondage.

Paul tells his readers in verse 3 of our text: "Even so we, when we were children, were in *bondage under the elements of the world.*" In other words, before a person enters into the

freedom that a relationship with Jesus Christ brings, he or she is in slavery under the basic principles of the world.

In verse four Paul continues, *“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law...”*

***“But when the fullness of time had come...”***

Paul is saying, *“At God’s appointed time He sent His Son Jesus the Messiah.”* We find the setting for this appointed time in Luke chapter two, verses 1-3.

*“Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census that was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria and all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city.”*

As a result of this decree, Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem to register for the census. This was no coincidence. While this census, much like the one that is currently underway in the USA is scheduled by the government, the decree for a census by Caesar Augustus was ordained by God.

In the Old Testament, there was written a prophecy that said that the town of Bethlehem, though small as it was, would come forth a Ruler *“Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”* (Micha 5:2)

God ordained this census so that Mary would be in Bethlehem at the precise time she would give birth to *Jesus* and thus the prophecy of prophet Micah would come to pass.

Caesar Augustus didn’t know that he was being used by the Spirit of God to do exactly what he did... on time...on schedule...to bring about the exact result that God wanted.

Many of our sisters who have had children know how difficult it is to pinpoint a birth date. Some have tried everything to induce labor—they are told to go for a walk, eat certain kinds of foods...especially the spicy ones. If you want to induce labor you should drink castor oil or eat lettuce or try to get yourself to dream of a lizard (no kidding!).

I read that if the woman eats Kraft Macaroni & Cheese from the blue box she will go into labor but the key is that the husband has to cook it and put some A1 Steak Sauce or Lea & Perrin Worcestershire sauce in it.

Another way to induce labor according to the old wives tales is to take a scrub brush and get down on your knees and scrub the entire kitchen floor.

Even with all of our modern-day medicine, scheduling a birth is difficult to do. You have the rich and the famous that want their child to be born at a certain time under a certain astrological sign. But even with drugs, doctors can only induce labor and bring the delivery to

within 24-48 hours but oftentimes with dangerous side effects (uterine rupture; increased probability of the need for a C-section).<sup>1</sup>

There was a short interval of time in which Mary had to be in Bethlehem. God orchestrated the very events of history in order that Jesus would be born in the right place, at the right time.

God took the power and the authority of a Caesar who cared nothing about a little village in Bethlehem and cared nothing about the purposes of God and was ignorant of the Word of God, and used him to fulfill prophecy when the exact time came for it to be fulfilled.

In Luke 2:1, Luke writes, *“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.”*

Who is this Caesar Augustus? Well let me tell you a little bit about him. This ruler of the Roman Empire was born September 23 of 63 B.C. His name when he was born was Gaius Octavius. Later on he became and is often referred to as Octavian.

Octavian brought in the amazing *Pax Romana*, this was the Roman Peace—a time during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries when there was a relatively long peace with little military expansion. Since Caesar Augustus ushered in this period of peace, it was often called the *Pax Augusta* in tribute to him.

Caesar Augustus literally not only conquered the world, as it were, but he brought peace to all that area by the skill that he had as a leader. This Roman Peace literally made soft borders everywhere.

During this time Augustus built massive Roman roads and transportation systems in all directions and as a result, the Gospel of Jesus Christ was easily and rapidly spread throughout the Roman Empire.

It was perfect timing. Galatians 4 says, *“In the fullness of time God sent His Son.”*

So you see, Jesus’ birth was a scheduled birth. The birth of Jesus in a Bethlehem stable was no coincidence. God ordained that the birth of His Son would take place at a time when the world was ripe for the proclamation and the spread of the Gospel. This is what Paul meant by *“the fullness of time.”*

God sent His Son as a baby who was born in the most humble of means. The Bible tells us there was no room in the inn, so Mary gave birth to Jesus, the Son of God in a lowly manger; a common feed box for animals—this occurred in the “fullness of time.”

***“God sent forth His Son”*** (Galatians 4:4)

- While the leaders of world nations of send envoys to represent them, God did not send an envoy.
- God did not send an ambassador to do His work.
- God did not send a *YouTube* video message to explain to us His plans and purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.fitpregnancy.com/yourpregnancy/labor\\_delivery/scheduled-delivery-40729557.html](http://www.fitpregnancy.com/yourpregnancy/labor_delivery/scheduled-delivery-40729557.html)

- While God certainly used angels to bring His messages, He didn't dispatch an angel to be nailed to a Cross and die for the sins of men, women, boys and girls.

The Bible says that God sent forth *His Son*. God the Son invaded time and space and took on our humanity. God the Creator of the galaxies, came down through forty and two generations and as someone has said, "put on a robe of flesh" becoming just like us yet without sin.

God sent His best to die for the worst. God sent the just One to redeem the unjust. God sent His son.

*(Gal 4:4 NKJV) But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,*

***"...born of a woman..."***

Jesus was "born of a woman." He had no earthly, biological father. The Bible says, *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel"* (Isaiah 7:14).

Jesus was born of a woman. This was a direct fulfillment of prophecy given in Genesis 3:15:

*(Gen 3:15 NKJV) And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

There was no man involved with the birth of Jesus. He is what was promised, "Seed of a woman."

Biologically speaking, in conception, the man delivers the seed or sperm; but in the miraculous conception of the Messiah, the seed was the woman's. Mary conceived by power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 4:4). Jesus was "born of a woman.

***"...born under the law..."***

Christ was reared in conformity to the Mosaic Law. Luke 2, verses 27 and 39 tells us that the parents of Jesus brought the Child Jesus into the temple to do for Him according to the custom of the law.

Luke 2:41-42 tells us that Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover and when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.

Jesus was born and raised in accordance with the Jewish law.

This brings us to the verse five of our text. Here is where we find the mission of the Son of God.

*(Gal 4:5 NKJV) to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*

Many of us have watched sci-fi movies where an alien comes from beyond and invades the earth and its people. One of my favorite movies of this theme is *Mars Attacks*. Most of the time, the aliens kill and maim before the earthlings get their wits and come together to put the aliens out of commission.

The Bible tells the true story of another kind of "alien" who came to this earth; but He didn't come to kill and destroy. He came to save. Luke 19:10 tells us that "*Jesus came (to this earth) to seek and to save the lost.*"

The Bible teaches that Jesus the Christ, who according to Colossians chapter one, was also the Creator of all things in heaven and on the earth...Jesus Christ, God the Son, left heaven's glory and came to this earth, taking Himself a body (Hebrews 10:5).

He walked this earth and few people knew who He was. John 1:11 says, "*He came unto His own and His own received Him not.*"

- But, Jesus didn't invade space and time just so that we might learn to love one another.
- He didn't invade space and time to start a revolution and overthrow human government, though Isaiah 9:7 says, "*Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.*"
- Jesus didn't come to become our personal genie so we could "call Him up and tell Him what we want."
- Jesus invaded space and time to *redeem* us who were in bondage because of our sins.

The word, *redeem* used in verse 5 of our text means, "To pay the required price to secure the release of a convicted criminal." The purpose for Jesus' invasion was to make a deliberate sacrifice of Himself for our sins.

He did something sinful people could not do for themselves. Romans 5:6 says, "*... just the right time, when we were still powerless, while we were still helpless, when we were still without strength, Christ died for the ungodly.*"

Some of the music of our day tries to get you to look inside yourself and to believe in yourself or have faith in yourself, but the Bible says that there is nothing good in us—when it comes to saving ourselves, we are helpless.

If you were in the middle of some deep water and were to the point of drowning you just try to grab hold of yourself and see what happens. When you are in trouble, you don't want to grab hold of yourself, you want to find someone or something to grab hold of!

The Bible says, "*... just the right time, when we were still powerless, while we were still helpless, when we were still without strength, Christ died for the ungodly.*"

We needed someone to grab hold of. We needed someone to pull us up and out from the much and mire of sin. We needed Jesus so He invaded our space and time to rescue us!

But why did we need to be rescued?

Many of us are familiar with what are called “*The Ten Commandments.*”

1. You shall have no other gods before me
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol
3. You shall not make wrongful use of the Name of your God
4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy
5. Honor your father and mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor

The Ten Commandments are the moral laws of God. They are not the “Ten Suggestions;” they are the Ten Commandments.

The Bible tells us that when we transgress or step beyond the line concerning God’s commands, we sin. This makes us *sinner*s. When we do something that God has commanded us not to do, we have sinned.

In Romans chapter 7 Paul says, “*I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."*”

In other words, the law, even our traffic laws let us know what is right and wrong and when we do wrong. For example, you and I wouldn't know we were speeding if the law had not said, “*Do not drive faster than 55 MPH.*” There is a law that says drivers cannot text while driving.

The Law of God or the Ten Commandments is the moral law of God telling us what is right and what is wrong.

And just in case you don't know the Ten Commandments, God lets us know in the Bible that He has already written His law on your heart (Romans 2:15). Nobody had to tell you that stealing was wrong—you just “feel” that it is wrong, especially when someone steals from you. No one will be able to stand before God at His judgement throne and tell Him they didn't know.

The Law is a constant reminder to us that we are sinners. Idolizing people and possessions is sin. Dissing our parents is sin. Having sex outside of marriage is sin. Stealing is sin. Wanting what belongs to another is sin. Murdering someone in our thoughts or in real life is sin. Lying is a sin.

Because we have disobeyed God’s laws we place ourselves under His wrath and His judgment.

But Jesus comes to the rescue and invades our time and out space in order to redeem from the law.

How did He do this? Just like a murderer has to go the execution chamber for committing the crime, we are guilty and under the judgment of God because of our sin.

Jesus comes into the courtroom as it were and gives His life in exchange for our sentence and is executed in our place. This is what His death on the Cross was all about. The Bible says that *“God made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be made a sin offering for us, that we might be made righteous in Him.”*

Jesus died for our sins, according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-3) but he didn't stay dead for the proof that God accepted His sacrifice for our sins was that He raised Jesus from the dead.

This is why we are celebrating today the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Because He lives; we live!

Galatians 4:4-5 says, *“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...”*

But it doesn't stop there. It goes on to say, *“that we might receive the adoption as sons.”*

God doesn't just set us free from the prison of sin and releases us out to the street to fend for ourselves.

Many of us have heard of how prisoners do their time and are then released into society. The judge grants their freedom, the warden gives them a suit of clothes and a few dollars to get them started and what starts out as celebration turns into dread and fear and eventually (for many) re-incarceration.

In the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*, there is a scene where a prisoner who's been in jail since he was a teenager is released after spending 50 or 60 years in prison. He tries desperately to make it on his own on the outside by working odd jobs. Though he succeeds in providing for his own needs, life outside the "big house" is not the same. One night he carves his name on the wooden beam in the ceiling of the pre-release apartment where he lived and then hangs himself.

God wants us to know from this passage of Scripture that He doesn't deliver us from the bondage of sin just to set us out on the streets. Paul tells us in verse five of our text that God redeems us from the bondage of sin and then adopts us as His sons.

Just imagine what it would be like for a judge to set a prisoner free and then take off his robe and wait on the outside of the prison gates with his own car telling the ex-con, *“Get in, your coming home to live with me as my son.”*

God, the "Judge of all the earth,"  
"The Lord, the righteous Judge" as Paul tells Timothy;  
"God, the Judge of all" as the writer of Hebrews pens,  
"Judge of the living and the dead," Peter preached-- adopts us as sons!

Isaiah 33:22 says, *“For the LORD is our Judge, The LORD is our Lawgiver, The LORD is our King; He will save us.”*

We who are in Christ are adopted! We are made His sons! We have, by the grace of God, been allowed to become a member of His family and a recipient of His inheritance.

Some time ago I arrived at the church one morning and found a young man sleeping in the stair well leading to our lower level. I don't know who was startled the most—me or him! But I kept my cool and invited him into the church and talked, finding out a little about him.

He told me that he would “work for food” so I took him home and put him to work. I was about to re-tile my floor and so I had him help to strip the old tile.

We had a good time talking while working and then we had lunch together. Afterwards, I fed him I took him back to the church gave him some fresh clothes and a soap, washcloth and towel and let him take a shower.

After he departed, I felt good. My family and I had done a good deed. We even talked to the young man about Jesus Christ. What a day!

But you know, if God had done the same kind of thing for us we would still be in trouble. The Scripture says, “*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.*”

You see, God doesn't send us back out into the street but makes His own children! This is adoption.

- It is when God takes a street bum and makes him a son.
- It is when God takes a rapist or a murderer and redeems him and makes him His child.
- It is when God takes a drunkard or an addict or a liar or a schemer or a prostitute and not only delivers the person from their life of sin but takes the person into His home and makes the person a member of His family.

Paul explains it this way:

*(1 Cor 6:9 NKJV) Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,*

*(1 Cor 6:10 NKJV) nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*

*(1 Cor 6:11 NKJV) And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

But it doesn't stop here. When God redeems us, He adopts us. When God adopts us, He lavishes us with everything we need. Paul says in Ephesians chapter one that God has, “*blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...*” and He has “*given us an inheritance.*”

However, God doesn't stop with sonship, He offers us sweet *fellowship*. This is what comes next in our text:

*(Gal 4:6 NKJV) And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"*

Over forty percent of America's children go to sleep in homes without a father. If you were one of those statistics let me tell you some good news.

If you are a Christian, God's Word says, "...because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'"

The word, *Abba* can be translated as "Daddy" to convey the close, personal meaning of the word.

Have you ever thought of God being your "Daddy"? The religious leaders of Jesus' day wouldn't even utter the name of *God*, much less call Him "*Abba Father*."

Jesus called His Father, *Abba*, "Daddy." This display of intimate relationship with God offended many of His opponents because they considered *Abba* to be overly familiar in addressing God.

But when Jesus addressed the God of all creation by the name of "*Abba Father*" He was letting us know the kind and the level of intimacy the Father wants us to have with Him. (Mark 14:36)

Just imagine, God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth sends forth His Son, to invade space and time and be born of a woman.

Just imagine, God, the "Judge of all the earth" sending His only Son to redeem us from the bondage of sin.

He doesn't quit there but makes us a member of His family, calling us "sons" and gives us the privilege of calling Him "Daddy!"

Paul concludes with these words:

*(Gal 4:7 NKJV) Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

Year ago as a child I used to watch reruns of the Lone Ranger. The Lone Ranger was the hero of the West, riding his white steed Silver along with his trusted sidekick, the Native American, Tonto.

The script was always the same. The outlaws and villains would be up to no good. The townsfolk would mistakenly associate the Lone Ranger as one of the villains. The Lone Ranger would vanquish evil and then would come that patented ending—one of the characters lamenting the fact that they never found out the hero's name.

*"Who was that masked man? I never got a chance to thank him!"* someone would say. *"Why, that was the Lone Ranger!"* The show would end with the Lone Ranger and his faithful sidekick Tonto riding away into the sunset.

The Son of God left His throne in heaven to come to this earth. He invaded our space and time to become our Savior. He vanquished sin and death! *"Who was that man? What is His name? I never got a chance to thank him!"*

Let me close with the words to a song that summarizes what we've looked at today:

### **Oh Tell Me His Name Again<sup>2</sup>**

They tell me of love's sweet old story. They tell me of a wonderful name.  
It thrills my soul with its glory. It burns in my heart like a flame.  
They say He's the one that so loved me; That in Heaven He could not remain;  
He came down to seek and to save me. Oh, tell me His name again.

CHORUS: Oh, tell me His name again. And sing me the sweet refrain  
Of Him who in love, came down from above; To die on the cross in shame.  
This story my heart has been stirred; The sweetest I've ever heard,  
It banishes fear; it brings hope and cheer; Oh tell me His name again

They say He was born in a manger; That there was no room in the inn;  
And in His own world was a stranger; But loved us in spite of our sins;  
They said that His path led to Calvary; And one day He died there in shame.  
He gave His great life a ransom; Oh, tell me His name again.

They call Him the sweet Rose of Sharon; They call Him the lily so fair.  
They call Him the great rock of ages. They call Him the bright morning star.  
He's a prophet, a priest, and redeemer; The king of all kings He now reigns.  
He's coming in power and glory. Oh, tell me His name again.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3srhWZJogYs>