

Galatians 3:23 – 4:11

English Standard Version (ESV)

1 ²³ **Now** before faith came, **we** were held captive under the
 2 law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.
 3 ²⁴ **So then**, the law was **our** guardian until Christ came, **in**
 4 **order that** **we** might be justified by faith. ²⁵ **But now that**
 5 faith has come, **we** are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ **for in**
 6 Christ Jesus **you** are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ **For** as
 7 many of **you** as were baptized into Christ have put on
 8 Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither
 9 slave nor free, there is no male and female, for **you** are all
 10 one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And **if** **you** are Christ's, **then** **you** are
 11 Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

12 ^{4:1} **I mean** that the heir, **as long** as he is a child, is no
 13 different from a slave, **though** he is the owner of everything,
 14 ² **but** he is under guardians and managers **until** the date set
 15 by his father. ³ **In the same way** **we** also, **when** **we** were
 16 children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the
 17 world. ⁴ **But when** the fullness of time had come, God sent
 18 forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ **to**
 19 **redeem** those who were under the law, **so that** **we** might
 20 receive adoption as sons. ⁶ **And because** **you** are sons, God
 21 has sent the Spirit of his Son into **our** hearts, crying, "Abba!
 22 Father!" ⁷ **So** **you** are no longer a slave, **but** a son, and **if** a
 23 son, **then** an heir through God.

24 ⁸ **Formerly**, **when** **you** did not know God, **you** were enslaved
 25 to those that by nature are not gods. ⁹ **But now that** **you** have
 26 come to know God, **or rather** to be known by God, how can
 27 **you** turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary
 28 principles of the world, whose slaves **you** want to be once
 29 more? ¹⁰ **You** observe days and months and seasons and
 30 years! ¹¹ I am afraid I may have labored over **you** in vain.

Observation (What does it say?):

What do you notice in this passage?

- Repeated words or ideas?
- Comparisons or contrasts?
- Purpose or explanation?
- Unusual or symbolic language?
- Commands or instructions?
- Conditional (if-then) statements?
- Other observations?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- What parts seem clear and straightforward?
- What parts seem unclear or confusing?
- What parts challenge your previous thinking?
- What questions come to mind as you read?
- How would you title this passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- What parts of this passage fit your current life situation?
- What parts seem unrelated to your circumstances?
- How might this passage affect your understanding of who God is and what He is doing?
- What part of this passage would be the most challenging for you to apply?
- What would be different (attitudes, behavior) if God used this passage to change you?

Additional questions for thought and discussion:

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation
(What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation
(What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application
(What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**