

**Galatians 3:23 – 4:11**

English Standard Version (ESV)

1 <sup>23</sup> Now before faith came, **we** were held captive under the  
 2 law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.  
 3 <sup>24</sup> So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in  
 4 order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But now that  
 5 faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup> for in  
 6 Christ Jesus **you** are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup> For as  
 7 many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on  
 8 Christ. <sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are  
 11 Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

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

24 <sup>8</sup> Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved  
 25 to those that by nature are not gods. <sup>9</sup> 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? <sup>10</sup> You observe days and months and seasons and  
 30 years! <sup>11</sup> I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

**Observation (What does it say?):**

What do you notice in this passage?

- Circle references to 'we' or "our."
- Box references to 'you.'
- Underline words that explain or give reasons or describe contrasts
- What other observations do you make?

**Interpretation (What does it mean?):**

After observing the passage:

- What significance (if any) do you see in Paul's use of "we" and "you"?
- How (if at all) do the words you underlined help you see Paul's thought process, the logic of the argument he is building?
- What is the difference in v. 9, "knowing God" or "being known by God"?
- What questions come to mind as you read?

**Application (What does it mean for me?):**

- How could you relate this passage to your own life?
- Do you feel more like a slave, or do you feel like a son or daughter?
- What effect does v. 6 have on your relationship with God? Does that verse sound like your experience?
- What would be different (attitudes, behavior) if God used this passage to change you?

**Additional questions for thought and discussion:**

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**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)**