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June 16, 2014

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### Personal Study of the Bible-84

#### Galatians 4:5 – Adult sons in Christ or Enslaved Baby Believers?

Galatians 4:5, *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

As noted in the last lesson, this verse notes two reasons that Christ came at the perfect time in history (Gal. 4:4): 1) to redeem those under the Law, and 2) to grant the status of “adoption” as adult sons. Today we look at the concept of “adoption of sons.”

Through redemption (cf., previous lesson), God adopts all believers, meaning that He grants to all believers the status of adult sonship. The Greek term “adoption” is made up of two words: *υιο+ θεσια* (*huio + thesia*): “son” and “placing.” God *places* believers in the positional realm of adult sons in *His* family. This adoption is not like adoption as practiced in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where a child, who is not one’s own, becomes *legally* adopted. The language in our text along with the culture of adoption as practice by the Romans point to the custom of taking a teenage son and giving him a toga of manhood, known as the “toga virilis.”

Similarly, Biblical adoption is the taking of a believer, someone already in the family, and placing them into the status of adult privilege. In other words, the Christian is already in the family, but receives privileges as a family heir in his adult “son-placing.” Because of the work of Christ on the Cross coupled with the unique Church Age of greater ministry of the Holy Spirit, God places all believers into the privilege of adult sons.

Every believer is to grow *experientially* according to what he is *positionally*: an adult! There is no excuse for any believer to remain childlike in their understanding of God, the Word of God, and reality as such. In our context Paul is making the point that Church Age believers are not to live by the Law. Why? Because the way of the Law is a system of dos and don’ts for spiritual children who lack the capacity to *understand*. The one thing that all religions and legalistic forms of Christianity have in common is *ignorance*. Religionists and cults do not teach their people how to think about God, the Bible, or reality as such. They may all have different manifestations, but the core of all religions and false views in Christendom is lack of understanding. The rank and file Christians are not taught to think for themselves—not even the basics of logic for orientation to reality as such. As a result, believers are *totally* dependent upon their denomination or teacher for what to think and do. Even after decades of study, they cannot read and study the Bible for themselves or engage in any serious thinking about God or give a philosophical account of reality. As babies, for the most part, all they are interested in is some magic formula or verse to apply to their *daily* angsts. When they receive some psychological high or experience some mental peace, they automatically believe that what this means what they were taught must be true. This mindset of “philosophical pragmatism” runs through all of the cults and has even infected many Bible believers. This is not authentic Christianity. God never intended for

Christians to be babies for the rest of their lives. All are to grow up in wisdom, which is not the same as knowledge, doctrinal or otherwise.

Because of adoption, all Christians in the Church Age have legal title of adult sons of God. What a privilege! We do not merit this standing. It was provided by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! God gives us these legal rights without any strings attached. This is in contrast to the legalists who attempt to live by the Law by their own efforts under guardians and stewards, who tell them how to think and what to do to merit God's favor.

The spiritual adult son goes beyond legal regulations in his relation to God. He no longer thinks like a child or acts like a child, read 1 Cor. 13:11. He grows up experientially in what He is positionally. He no longer lives in fear of death (read Heb. 2:13-15) or anything else (read Philip 4:11-13). He becomes an overcomer in that his love for Christ grows even in the midst of the pressures of life (Rom. 8:35-37). The pressures only cause him to focus more on Christ than himself. The focus is always on the second-person relationship with God rather than *merely* propositional truths *about* God.

For more on the dangers of continuing to be a spiritual baby read the following passages and note the various characteristics and dangers of associated with not growing up: Gal. 4:1-4; Eph. 4:14; 1 Cor. 3:1; 16:20; Hebrews 5:11-6:12.

In this last passage, Hebrews 6:12, note the exhortation not to become *lazy* about your spiritual life; rather become imitators of those who inherent promises *through faith* and perseverance. Biblical faith is the issue from Genesis-Revelation. In our last Bible class, I touched on the difference between faith and knowledge. Do you know the difference? If not for our recent studies in epistemology, even I would not have come to know the metaphysical difference between faith and knowledge. One thing is certain: biblical faith is nothing like what contemporary Christianity or culture thinks it is. Without philosophical realism, even the greatest biblical exegete cannot tell you the difference between faith and knowledge. Furthermore, what is cognition? I am not talking about the physical processes of cognition. What I want to know is what is cognition as such? In sum, cognition and knowledge are not things, they are acts. To discover the metaphysical reality of these acts is to enter the amazing world of total truth upon which the entire Bible and reality is grounded. I will develop these in more detail in our next Bible class. I am thinking about doing an entire series (50 classes) on the metaphysics of cognition alone.

Associated with the *lack* of desire to grow up spiritually is the problem of spiritual lukewarmness. Read Revelation 3:14-22 and note two key solutions provided by Christ: "repent" and "be zealous" (Rev. 3:19). The bottom line on repentance is changing our minds regarding our daily and eternal values: we are to find our wealth/gold in God (not self-esteem and the world); we are to open our eyes (eye-salve) to our spiritual lives (stop making excuses in putting God off); and we are to live out the spiritual life by being clothed with the filling of the Holy Spirit instead of living in the nakedness of carnality. One final word: note Christ's harsh words for these carnal believers (who were all, like contemporary Christianity, into their personal feelings and self-esteem instead of Truth and God): 'you make Me want to vomit.' That kind of rough language would force these believers to repent and return to Him or get offended and find another place that will be more than happy to stroke their self-esteem, promise them goodies, and unfortunately

encourage their infantile ways. All such catering to man always leads to a distortion of the Word of God and ultimately to cults and all kinds of “Christian” aberrations; read 2 Timothy 4:3-4. Note how, in the foregoing passage, it is all about these baby believers’ *desires*. What they want! Their ears! Just like babies! For a believer to remain a spiritual baby after decades is about as ugly as an adult human being desiring to be a toddler once again, with diapers and rattlers.

One is either growing up spiritually *daily* or retrogressing *daily* back into spiritual immaturity and carnality. No one remains the same. For characteristics of believers who continue to advance in the spiritual life, read and reflect on the truths found in Psalm 23; 42:1-2; 63:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Philip. 3:8; 4:8; Matt. 5:6-16; 2 Tim. 4:5-8.

*Quo Vadis?*

In 'Ehyeh,

Pastor Don