

GETTING THE GOSPEL RIGHT (GTGR) (GAL 4:1-7)

1. GTGR is mandatory to getting right w/God (1:3-6a).
2. GTGR means realizing there is only one true gospel (and many false gospels) (1:6b-7).
3. GTGR involves seeing all false gospels as damning (1:8-9).
4. GTGR is not dependent upon the approval of Christian rock-stars (1:10).
5. GTGR demands the support of all of God's Word (1:11-12).
6. GTGR expects death to self and a willingness to embrace it no matter the cost (1:13-24).
7. GTGR depends on the church (2:1-10).
8. GTGR includes public opposition against those preaching a false gospel (2:11-14).
9. GTGR requires not only gaining our just. by f-a (2:15-16 = 3:1-5:12), but maintaining it through f-o (2:17-21 = 5:13-6:18);
10. GTGR means understanding that justification gained by f-a is supported by historical proof, precedent and prophecy (3:1-14).
11. GTGR requires understanding the purpose and place of the "works of the law" (or the OC) within redemptive history (3:15-24).

12. GTGR means understanding the biblical doctrine of adoption (3:25-4:7).

Paul's teaching on adoption in the book of Galatians is the most comprehensive and concise study in the entire NT on this incredibly important soteriological truth.

What Paul teaches us about adoption that demonstrates its relevance/ importance to GTGR :

12.1. Adoption (Becoming covenant sons/daughters of God¹) is the product of our justification by faith – not our birth (3:25-26) (Joh 1:12-13).

12.2. Baptism is where we express our faith in Christ, realize our justification and receive our adoption (3:27) (Act 2:38; 1Pe 3:21).

12.3. Since the sacrament of baptism has been given to the church, a biblical understanding of adoption is the cure to a damning ecclesiology (Mat 16:19; Mat 18:17-18; Mar 16:14-16 w/Joh 20:23).

12.4. Our adoption into the family of God is only b/c of our marital union w/Christ (3:27 - "**put on Christ**" = ἐνεδύσασθε= lit. to clothe oneself in) (Rev 7:9, 14). It is therefore more accurate to say that we are the sons/daughters-in-law of God (our Father-in-law).

12.5. Our adoption into the family of God has removed all prohibitions that may have existed due to race, gender or social status. IOW: we have equal standing (and therefore) equal accessibility to God (3:28) (Eph 2:11-19) (Consider again the historical relevance of this truth – Gal 2:11-14).

12.6. Adoption makes us also the true offspring and heirs of Abe. IOW: it grants to us the help of God (3:29) (Heb 2:16).

© THE TAKEAWAY (last week) = A contradiction? How can Paul say the Jewish Christians are "now" becoming "the sons of God through faith"-- doesn't the Bible already refer to them as God's sons (Isa 43:6, 45:11; Jer 3:19)?

12.7. Before adoption, being a covenant son/daughter (i.e. OC "heir") was like being a baby (1) "**I mean that**" = Same construction as (3:17) indicating clarification of what was previously said (in 3:24-27)².

This time the clarification is in the form of an analogy related to babies; "**as long as he is a child**" (νήπιός) = infant/baby (Mat 11:25, 21:16; 1Co 13:11). Paul is referring to himself and his Jewish brethren when they were under the OC (see v3 – "**In the same way we also were children** (νήπιοι)" w/the context vv4-5, "**under the law**" = under the OC).

Paul's analogy is no doubt meant to poke fun at³ the Jewish sentimentality that was a major force behind the Jerusalem church's (i.e. Peter and the gang's) desire to see the WOTC remain in force (Act 21:17-24).

What this tell us about adoption in re: to God's overall redemptive plan through history = adoption is a NC phenomenon. IOW: when we define adoption as people becoming the covenant sons/daughters, it is the only in reference to the NC. Under the OC, they became covenant sons/daughters but it wasn't called adoption. And that b/c there is more to this term than just the familial understanding (as we shall see).

Why being a baby is the less than ideal place to be when talking about a person's spiritual status before God:

12.7.1. B/C being a baby means you cannot yet enjoy many of the family riches/privileges (1) = The "**slave**" in ancient society had no right to the riches/privileges of the family they served. Likewise however, neither did the family baby. Though one day such things would be available for use, for now they were out of their reach due to their young age. And this was the Jew under the OC. Though he was a covenant son (i.e. "**heir**") and therefore "**the owner of everything**" (i.e. all

¹ This is represents the first portion of what defines biblical adoption: becoming a covenant son/daughter of God.

² It is not beyond the scope of responsible exegesis/interpretation to assume that Paul's expansion in 4:1-7 was the result of anticipation. IOW: He too was aware of the seeming contradiction established by 3:24-27 and is now attempting to resolve it. Examples of anticipative writing are common in Paul's letters (e.g. Rom 9:18-19).

³ Poking fun at bad theology or false religion is a tactic used throughout Scripture as an effective method for strengthening/convincing God's people of the truth (e.g. 1Ki 18:27).

of God's covenant blessings and spiritual inheritance; Rom 9:4⁴) many of those privileges/ riches were kept locked away (Gal 3:22 = "imprisoned everything" = the spiritual blessings associated with NC justification: the New Birth, the HS, the empowered Word of God, the spirit of Christ and the church as powerful helps for obedience⁵ (Jer 31:31-34; Rom 7:18, 23 w/8:3-4; Eph 1:22-23, 4:11-13, 6:17; 2Co 1:20!).

Consider this = Even though the Christian has received the gift of adoption (and therefore do not have to live like babies), unless they make use of the spiritual riches afforded to them, this is exactly what they will be in both their behavior and discernment (1Co 3:1 w/ 1:10; Heb 5:13; Eph 4:14).

12.7.2. B/C being a baby means you need a mommy and daddy to take care of you (1-2) **"guardians⁶ and managers"** (ἐπιτρόπους καὶ οἰκονόμους) = lit. foremans (i.e. middle mgt under the boss/owner; Mat 20:8) and house-holders. (i.e. boss/head of the house/husband;). The roles of mother and father fit these descriptions (mother = foreman; father = householder). A Jewish baby was **"under"** (i.e. dependent upon the care of/in submission to) both parents **"until the date set by his father**. Most likely what Paul is speaking about is the point at which a child goes from being considered a minor to an adult (13th cent. Bar-Mitzvah: usually celebrated around the age of 12 or 13). This was the time when the child (male) was deemed able to think (i.e. no longer controlled by emotions/intuition – the modus operandi of young children; see 1Co 13:11) and therefore responsible enough to receive his share of the family riches/inheritance (consider Luk 15:12). This period of time also presented certain expectations in re: to Torah/OT (the word Bar-mitzvah literally means "son of the command" and usually was the time of testing in re: to his knowledge of Torah/OT. In this light consider Luk 2:41-47⁷). Connecting this analogy back to the relationship between the Jews and God under the OC reveals Paul to be saying the following: the Jewish people were covenant babies under the care of the angels and Moses (i.e. mommy and daddy; 3:20 = **"an intermediary implies more than one"**) until the date (the NC) set by God (i.e. **"the father"**) when they would/could be considered adult sons/daughters (i.e. be able to partake of the spiritual inheritance/blessings – v1).

Consider this = Practically applying the principle established (here) points to yet another reason the Galatian churches were so easily acquiescing to Peter and co. Their problem was not Jewish sentimentality (as again was being suffered by the Jerusalem church) but mental laziness - i.e. not wanting to think through things but rather be led (astray) by their emotions (think man-crush) in re: to the Christian rock-stars (i.e. Peter and James). IOW: to have a spiritual mommy and daddy do all their thinking for them. The same problem is suffered by Christians today. Like babies, they live through their emotions/intuition. This is how most people pick a church/pastor – or choose who will they will believe is telling them the truth. They refuse to think (too much pain in that? – see 2014 study on why people believe medical conspiracies⁸). This is why Paul says what he does in Rom 12:2 – notice no mention of intuition ("intuition begets manipulation").

12.7.3. B/C being a baby means no freedom! (3) **"elementary principles of the world"** (στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου) = rudimentary or basic principles/skills necessary for living or functioning (w/in particular society – Col 2:8, 20-21 = food, clothing, etc; w/in Christianity – Heb 5:12 = basic doctrine re: salvation ["milk"] – see 6:1-2). The essential conclusion to the prior two points (in Paul's mind) therefore is that as Jews under the OC, this is what they were **"enslaved to"**. Like **"children"** (i.e. babies), the basics were the burden. IOW: No freedom to operate beyond those things which represent the rudimentary things of life (i.e. a baby's time is completely consumed with mastering the basics of life). In this case, the focus is in relation to the issue of justification, the WOTL being considered the elementary things which create slavery and mitigate freedom (3:23, 4:8-10)⁹.

Consider this = God wants us to grow up (i.e. go deep into His Word) and not remain babies (i.e. enslaved to a shallow faith; 1Pe 2:2) since this is what leads to: bondage in sin and ultimately spiritual death (2Pe 2:1-2 w/18-22, 3:14-18). IOW: Go deep or die (going deep = freedom and abundant life - Psa 119:45 ; remaining shallow = deceit and death – Rom 16:17-18).

⁴ Rom 9:4 – "...adoption" (υἰοθεσία) = full enjoyment of the privileges. This (btw) is the same word used by Paul in Gal 4:5 and therefore the second half of its definition. To be adopted (in the spiritual sense) therefore also communicates this aspect of transference: we now have access to the spiritual riches/inheritance of God. Based on where the emphasis lies in its NT usage, this is arguably the most important portion of the doctrine/definition.

⁵ The Reformers referred to these as "the means of grace".

⁶ Poor translation (ESV) given the fact that: 1) "guardian" is used in 3:24 though it is a different Greek word (παιδαγωγός); 2) The ESV claims a commitment to using the same English word only when translating the same word in the original language (see Preface).

⁷ Jewish sources from this time also make it clear that the expectations of a Jewish boy would intensify around the age of 12 or 13 – most especially in the area of worship. This is why Jesus is included in the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (Luk 2:42 - "according to custom", also Exo 23:15-17).

⁸ J. Eric Oliver, "Medical Conspiracy Theories and Health Behaviors in the United States", JAMA Internal Medicine, online issue, Mar 17, 2014: "Science in general is complicated and cognitively challenging...it is not an intuitive way to view the world". The report finds that people (especially the less educated) oftentimes choose what is intuitive since this is more emotionally pleasing and the least intellectually demanding. The same could be said as to why people embrace damning gospels, jenny Christianity, flaky preachers, false teachers and end up in cults.

⁹ The themes of slavery and freedom are very popular in Galatians (4:7-8, 22-26, 30-31, 5:1). As discussed before, Paul saw the WOTL (i.e. OC clean laws) as slavery b/c of the almost impossible burden they created for the Jews (Act 15:10). The freedom brought by the singular clean law of faith alone in Christ alone however did not mean freedom from obedience to rest of God's commands (i.e. the OC moral commands). Paul was concerned about Christians seeing the freedom they had in relation to their justification as freedom in this realm as well (5:13 w/19-21).