

# THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

## Part Nine Doctrinal Section

### V. Paul's Vindication of the Gospel Galatians 3:1 - 4:31

- A. The Argument from the Experience of the Galatian Christians (Part Five)  
Galatians 3:1-5
- B. The Argument from Scripture (Parts Six, Seven and Eight)  
Galatians 3:6-29
- C. The Argument from Analogy (Part Nine)  
Galatians 4:1-11

#### Introduction

The figure of the child contrasted with the mature son illustrates the difference between a system which brings spiritual bondage and the position we have in Jesus Christ.

1. The figure set forth (verses 1 and 2)  
(This figure is an expansion of the one introduced in Chapter 3, verses 24 and 25)
  - a. the status of a minor
    - (1) no different than a slave  
The male child who was still a minor had as few rights in the household as one of the household slaves.
    - (2) under tutors and governors
      - (a) This is not a reference to the "schoolmaster" mentioned in chapter 3, verse 24. The words used here translated "tutors and governors" are different words than those used in 3:24
        - the first is *ἐπιτροφεύς* which means a guardian or overseer. It is used to designate the guardians of a boy whose father is living as well as a guardian of a boy whose father is dead.
        - the second is *οἰκονόμος* which means a "steward" or a "trustee." This man took care of the property and financial affairs of the boy. The boy was subject to both these men. He had to obey them as a slave obeys his master. He was in bondage in a real sense.  
(Some commentators have tried to make one of these stand for Moses and the other Aaron. This is unwarranted and is an example of stretching the figure beyond the intended limit. We must always look for the central lesson in a figure and not carry the comparison too far.)
  - b. the appointed time when the status was changed
    - (1) A day came when the child came to be regarded as a mature son. The time when it took place was fixed and was not dependent on the child's progress but on the father's will. "The heir is no more of an heir after this date than he was before ... but after this date the heir is, indeed, no longer under anybody as he was before." (Lenski) After the appointed time the boy entered upon the control of his own affairs as a mature son.
    - (2) John Murray makes an important observation on this figure in Baker's Dictionary of Theology, page 25. Commenting on adoption he says: "In Galatians 4:5 it is used of the mature sonship secured for all believers by the redeeming work of Christ and is contrasted with the nonage of Israel under the Old Covenant (cf. 4:3). That this contrast does not mean the exclusion from an adoptive relation to God is shown by Romans 9:4, where "The adoption" is stated to be one of the privileges of Israel in accord with the witness of the O. T. (cf. Ex. 4:22; Deut. 14:1; Isa. 43:6, 63:16) The contrast of Galatians 4:3,5 is comparative, not absolute. The difference is in line with the difference in general between the OT and the NT. The Old is preparatory. The New is consummatory. The grace of adoption in the NT appears in this, that by redemption accomplished and by faith in Christ all without distinction are introduced into