

Introduction:

The apostle has made some significant arguments defending the truth that Justification before God can only be achieved by faith in Jesus Christ— apart from observance of the law. Our security in Christ is based upon the work of Christ and His spirit, not our good deeds. To continue the defense of this doctrine Paul turns to a legal illustration, a personal plea and a biblical illustration. Tonight we will see the legal illustration.

1. A Roman Legal Illustration. Galatians 4:1-7

The apostle takes an illustration from Roman law concerning children and their inheritance. (vs. 1,2) He contrasts a minor son with one who “comes of age”. In that culture, a minor son, although an heir, is put under law— guardians and trustees. He does not have freedom to do whatever he may choose to do as an adult heir of His father. That is until he reaches a level of maturity to take control of the estate. It was the father who determined when the son was of mature age and received the *toga virilis*—the robe of manhood. (Galatians 3:26-29) When a person is immature, they need commands and rules, and guardians to tell them what is right and wrong. Once a person is mature and trained, they should be self-governing. Those who self-governed (or based upon relationship, not rules, are able to then enjoy the freedom that maturity brings. Do you know of any practical day to day illustrations on this principle?

The same is true spiritually. (vs 3,4) Speaking of jews and gentiles, before the advent of Jesus the Christ, Those who are heirs were guided by the “elemental spiritual forces” By this Paul means the fundamental principles or rules of life the God-given conscience— reinforced by the laws of God. (Hence Sunday School or parents that have children learn the 10 commandments the teachings of Jesus and the Golden Rule. and the teachings of Jesus) If a child comes to faith early in life they are to grow and develop just as Jesus did in his humanity. (Luke 2:51-52)

Galatians 4:4-5 Because we were unable to follow God’s laws and were alienated from Him, He sent his Son born under the law to redeem us. He purchased us out of sin—so that we could be heirs of God (Col 1:21-23)

Galatians 4:6-7 Through faith, we become sons of God. And the Spirit of God is sent into our hearts. (John 14:15-21; Ephesians 1:13,14, 4:30-32). It is the Holy Spirit that keeps us sealed in our saved state— not our adherence to the law or our good works. Salvation is of the LORD from first to last. It is through the Holy Spirit we are now in relationship with God the Father and we can cry out Daddy or Father. We are no longer under slavery to sin, rather we serve the Lord as a son and also as an heir. (This should impact our relationships to one another— 1 Peter 3:7)
