

Galatians 4 (4-7) – Christmas Presents from God

If you could ask God for a Christmas present this year, what would it be?

Vs.4 – Present of His Promise – *Fullness of time* – “When the time was right,” according to God’s predetermined plan and purpose (cf. Acts 2:23 / Romans 11:25 / Ephesians 1:3-12). The Jews waited for more than 400 years in bondage in Egypt, and for more than 400 years they were without a prophet till John the Baptist. God’s sovereignty, providence, timing, predestination, etc., is a unifying theme throughout the scriptures. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega (Revelation 1:8), and everything in between He has control of (Philippians 1:6 / 1 Thessalonians 5:24 / Hebrews 12:1-2). He planned a supper 6000 years in advance knowing who would be there.

God sent forth his Son – here we see several things.

- The deity of Christ (HIS Son, not adopted as we are)
- The preexistence of Jesus (God sent forth, someone who was already there)
- The distinction between Father and Son (Son was sent forth not the Father being sent forth also, born of a woman, etc., a distinct role at the same time the Father is in heaven)

Born of a woman – this is a perhaps reference to the Virgin Birth, because Paul never says that Jesus was born of a man. “The more general term ‘woman’ indicates that Christ was born a true man. Paul does not say that Christ was born of man and woman, but only of woman. That he has the virgin in mind is obvious (Luther).” The pre-existent divine Person, who was the Son of God, assumed a human nature through Mary, and He became one Person with two natures – a Person who is 100% God and 100% man – the divine nature and the human nature with its limitations, such as limited knowledge (Luke 2:52), weariness (John 4:6), hunger (Mark 11:12) and thirst (John 19:28). It was not a mere appearance of humanity, which died on the cross. It was a genuine and sinless human being who bore our sins and served as our perfect substitute (Hebrews 2:14-17 / Philippians 2:5-11).

Born under the Law – Jesus was born a Jew – The Gospel came to the Jew first (Romans 1:16) then also to those who didn’t have the Law but knew it in their hearts (Romans 2:12-16).

Vs.5 – Present of Forgiveness – The Jew knew he was under the Law but everyone actually is (Romans 11:32), and not every man will be saved (Galatians 3:22). The “law” – performance based religion (James 2:10), but the answer is not just words (James 2:19). What kind of savior do we really need? The bible defines that need. We are saved from God by God. The Law had to be fulfilled by humanity. Only God could save us; only a human being should save us. Jesus, as God, had the resources, and as a man, He had the right. This plan showed the rightness, the righteousness of God in His dealings with sin, with atonement and justification of sinners (Romans 3:23-31). Until that broken Law was fulfilled by humanity we were still dead in our sins. To redeem a people He had to be fully God, so as to give the atonement an infinite value, and He had to be fully man to perfectly satisfy the requirements of God’s Law, thus becoming an acceptable substitute for sinners. Your best is not enough, it took God’s best, and that is enough.

Present of Adoption – Ephesians 1:5 / Romans 8:23 (glorified bodies). We were more than taken out of the slavery of sin; we are also adopted in Him! We were bought with a price,

redeemed from the Law, but we were not just saved and then put back into right standing with God, we are more than saved from wrath, we are made part of God's family.

A child of God is predestined to live for Jesus, and to live with Him in heaven someday for eternity. You are now in time, but eventually all Christians will be with God in heaven forever, not subject to the ravages of time. That will be the truly full time of fullness, the full adoption, the redemption of our bodies. God made His Son a man so that He might make man His sons.

We need to remember to live up to our privilege. This doesn't mean we get motivated because we are sort of spiritual supermen who can do Godlike things, it is not about power to perform miracles but about power to live free, it is about Christian character, the fruit of the Spirit, regardless of where we are currently stationed in life. We are not slaves to man's system of values; we are free in the Kingdom of God.

Vs.6-7 – Present of His Presence – In Galatians 4:6 it says the Spirit cries Abba Father but in Romans 8:14-18 it says *we* cry Abba Father. God sends the Spirit to cry into our hearts and then we can cry back to God in the same way, the Spirit delivers the adoption and we say we are adopted. How does the Spirit bear witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God? The Spirit tells us God is our Father and then we cry out that God is our Father. This is how the Spirit bears witness with our spirit; the Spirit helps us identify with Christ even at our deepest points. Our worst point was when we weren't even saved, and when we got saved and were adopted the Spirit cried out Abba, Father into our hearts, and now we, as Christians, when we are at our lowest points we can recall that call and now cry out that same cry, "Abba, Father".

Present of Inheritance – We have eternal life and we are made kings and priests in the kingdom of God (1 Peter 2:9 / Revelation 1:6). We are justified, saved from God's wrath and made in right standing with Him, but we also are adopted into His family, and we also become a temple of the Spirit of God Himself! Being an heir we stand on equal ground with Abraham, but there is much more; we are heirs with Christ (1 Peter 1:3-9)! We are joint heir with stock in something whose value doesn't drop (Romans 8:17-18). The full enjoyment of our inheritance is not for children. Children are under authority; they are told what to do. The advent of Christ was our appointed time for adulthood. Christianity is advanced beyond Judaism, nor vice versa. We have a more exalted privilege, and adult privilege. The law was elementary, but faith in Christ brings adulthood. Paul was writing to Gentiles about the Hebrews and the Law, but he includes them in the discussion; he is telling the Gentiles that they are also adopted.

But we are not all children of God. Jesus told the Pharisees that they were of their father, the devil (John 8:44). You are not a child of God just by being born in America, or having godly parents, or going to church, or taking Communion, or being this or that religion. No, you must be adopted into the family of God. We are called children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2, 5:6 / Colossians 3:6) before we are called out of the darkness (1 Peter 2:9) to be children of light (Ephesians 5:8). We are born into the kingdom of men, but we must be born again into the Kingdom of God (Galatians 3:26). Has Jesus signed your adoption papers? The promise has come, forgiveness is available, adoption is waiting, His presence is abiding, and our inheritance is eternal. It is time to open your Christmas presents. God has given you the greatest Christmas gift: Himself. Will you give Him yourself this Christmas?