



First Baptist Church Selmer

THE QUESTIONS OF CHRISTMAS • WHY DID JESUS COME? •
LUKE 2:1-7; GALATIANS 4:1-7 • 12/21/2025

MAIN POINT

In the fullness of time, God sent His Son to become sin so that we could be sons and no longer slaves to sin.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

If you were only going to receive gifts you needed this year, what is something you would ask for?

Would you rather receive a gift you want or a gift you need? Why?

Would you characterize the gifts of God as things you want or things you need? Explain.

At Christmas, our thoughts about gift-giving are meant to remind us of the gift God gave us by sending Jesus to earth. Christ's advent was a desperately needed, perfectly timed gift to the world, even though people did not recognize how great their need was. The gift of Jesus' advent continues to fill our desperate need, even today. Galatians 4 helps us examine why we need the gift of Jesus and how He not only fulfills our needs, but also our deepest desires.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

There is no way we could start the Sunday preceding Christmas without first reading the Nativity story from Luke 2. Let's start there this morning:

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 2:1-7

1 "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." (ESV)

Why is it so important that we spend time yearly reminding ourselves of the birth of Jesus?

What does it mean to you to know that heaven came down to earth for you?

The nativity story can almost be recited by countless believers due to its familiarity and years of reading. But, to believers, the story never gets old. We have two kinds of people when it comes to Christmas time: those who put up their trees and sing Christmas songs on the first day of fall, and the others that are waiting with garbage bags as presents are being opened so they can start their burn pile. But for the believer, nothing about Jesus' birth gets old and outdated. It is the start of God's redemptive plan known as the Gospel. Jesus came down.

We will look today at a non-traditional Christmas passage as we answer the question, "Why did Jesus come?"

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 4:1-3.

1 "I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. 3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world." (ESV)

Compare and contrast Paul's idea of a son and a slave. How can a son, or "heir," be the same as a slave?

What were the Galatians (and all humanity, for that matter) enslaved to?

Why is it important that we recognize our position as slaves to sin before

Jesus came to redeem us?

If a person doesn't acknowledge his or her need for salvation, can he or she be saved? Explain.

Have you ever felt like you were an heir of God and also a slave (to sin)? How so? What principles of the world threaten to enslave you now?

Paul considered sons and slaves to be the same, while the son was young. It is only when we come of age that we begin to enjoy the privileges of an earthly inheritance. Once a son reached the time set by his father, he became the full heir and owner of everything. Both were under the supervision of the father, but the son would one day receive his rights. The Galatians, like all of us, began life enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. They, and we, needed to recognize their need for Jesus to bring them into inheritance.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ GALATIANS 4:4-7.

4 "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God." (ESV)

What are some gifts you've given or received that had "strings attached?"

How does this relate to God's gift of Jesus?

What do you think "fullness of time" means? What does it mean for the work of Christ?

Based on verses 5-6, what do we receive as a result of our redemption?

How did Paul describe our relationship with God after salvation?

What part of your inheritance excites you the most? Why?

The "fullness of time" refers to an appointed time. It is a time purposefully set to accomplish a prepared task. In this instance, the appointed time refers to the coming of Christ and His redeeming death. By Christ's death, believers have been adopted into God's family and have received the Holy Spirit as a down payment of their inheritance (Ephesians 1:14). The Holy Spirit's presence in our lives enables us to experience the benefits of God's gift of salvation while we're still on earth—adoption as sons and freedom from sin's slavery that once held us captive.

Paul treated “*slave to sin*” and “*child of God*” as two different, opposing things. Which best characterizes your life currently: slave to sin or child of God? Are there times you have felt as if both of these things were true? Explain.

Being heirs means believers are heirs of God’s blessings and of all He has promised them. The greatest blessing that the heirs of God receive is God Himself.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What would change in your life this week if you were to live fully in the gift of Jesus—an heir and child of God who is no longer a slave to sin?

When are you most tempted to neglect your relationship as a son and become a slave again to the world? How do you think our discussion today can help you combat that temptation?

How would you explain to a new believer how Jesus’ advent should impact his or her life on a daily basis?

PRAYER

Thank God for the gift of His son Jesus, making it possible for you to be adopted as a son and free from slavery to sin. Confess the areas where you still struggle to experience that sonship and freedom, and invite Him to make the fullness of His gift of Jesus real in your life today.

COMMENTARY

| GALATIANS 4:1-7

4:1. In verses 1-7, Paul shifted his emphasis from the inheritance to the “*heir*.” He based his analogy on the legal practice of guardianship. While still a minor, an heir did not have control over his future inheritance. In fact, he had little more control over his destiny than would a “*slave*.” Only when he came of age did the heir begin to enjoy the privileges of his inheritance.

4:2. “*Guardians and trustees*” controlled the property or estate on behalf of the heir until he came of age. Although such guardians could be trustworthy stewards, in Paul’s analogy,

they were sinister custodians as verse 3 indicates.

4:3. The phrase *“the basic principles”* refers to essential ingredients or basic components. For example, letters of the alphabet are the basic components or building blocks of words and sentences. Some have suggested that Paul used the phrase *“the basic principles of the world”* to refer to a basic set of philosophical or religious ideas. Others have interpreted the phrase as designating the four elemental substances that many ancients believed composed the physical world— earth, water, air, and fire. It was held that warring among these elements would eventually result in the world’s destruction. Most likely, Paul used the phrase in the context of verse 3 to designate evil spiritual powers and any expression of these powers in the world. In any case, the Galatian believers were behaving like slaves to these basic principles instead of enjoying the freedom given them in Christ.

4:4. *“The time”* appointed by God the Father for redemption represents a divine prerogative that can never be completely understood by the human mind. We might wonder why the Savior was not introduced earlier in history. Yet, with the perspective of perfect knowledge and wisdom, God chose the right moment in time to send His Son. The phrase *“God sent his Son”* emphasizes the eternal deity of Christ. However, this Son *“was born of a woman,”* a phrase stressing that Christ was fully human as well as fully divine. Further, He was *“born under law”* in order to redeem those enslaved by it. Although Christ was under the law, He was without sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

4:5. The benefits of Christ’s atoning work referred to in this verse are those of redemption and adoption. The term *“redemption”* may suggest a basically negative connotation—we are redeemed from slavery to sin, from the curse of the law, and from the control of evil spiritual powers. On the other hand, the phrase *“full rights of sons”* addresses the positive aspect of salvation. The expression refers to the giving of sonship status to one who is not a natural child. It reflects the marvelous transformation that occurs in our relationship with God as a result of our faith in Christ who made provision for our redemption.

4:6. The Holy Spirit is the sign and pledge of our adoption as God’s children. His presence in our hearts assures us of our salvation. The most basic indication of our adoption as God’s children is that of an intimate relationship with God. We can address God as *“Abba,”* an Aramaic expression meaning *“father.”* The term carries connotations of respect and affection.

4:7. In this verse, Paul changed from addressing his readers as a group to addressing them individually (see vv. 6-7 in KJV). In so doing, his application became direct and

personal. Christian reader, "You are no longer a slave, but rather a child of God and thereby a joint heir with Christ."