

Galatians 4:1–11 — Leader / Learner Guide

When I Became a Man · TheGospelVault.com, @iJohn.316 (Instagram)

Big Idea and Context

Big idea: In the fullness of time God sent His Son to redeem those under the law and make them sons and heirs. Anyone who has received that adoption has no reason to go back to bondage under any system of rules.

Paul continues the doctrinal section. The law was a tutor for a child (3:24–25); now he shows what it means to come of age as a son.

- **3:26–29:** sons of God and heirs of the promise.
- **4:1–11:** from child under guardians to son and heir — so why go back?
- **4:12–20:** Paul pleads with them as a parent.

Sons, Not Slaves — Three Anchor Verses

Verse	What it says	Teaching point
4:4–5	When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son ... that we might receive the adoption as sons	The right time and the right Savior. Adoption means placement as an adult heir, not entry into the family.
4:6	God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"	The law said "Say, I'm a sinner." The Spirit says "Say, Abba, Father."
4:9	How is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements?	Going back to rules is trading one slavery for another — powerless and poor.

The buried husband: the law is dead — so bury it, don't keep it propped by the front door.

Born vs. adopted: we enter God's family by new birth (John 3:5). Adoption is about receiving the inheritance.

Teaching Flow

1. **Our Situation (1–3).** An heir under age differs little from a slave. Jew and Gentile alike were in bondage to "the elements of the world" (Col 2:20–23).
2. **Our Salvation (4–7).** The right season (Greek, Roman roads, Roman peace, bankrupt paganism, failed Israel) and the right Savior, born of a woman, born under law. Adoption as sons, the Spirit of His Son, and "no longer a slave but a son ... an heir."
3. **Our Selection (8–11).** Once ignorant of God, then known by Him, now slipping into days, months, seasons, and years. Paul fears his labor will be in vain.

Clarify While Teaching

- **The chapel lecturer:** the teacher who "being dead, yet speaks on the radio" does not seem to be David Jeremiah, who is living. Check who Sellers meant before naming him.
- **Ages of majority:** the bar mitzvah is at 13; the claim of majority at 25 is not well established. It is safer to say the father set the time (4:2).
- **Ephesus and Diana:** this is Acts 19, not Acts 20.
- **"Under law" (4:4–5):** the Greek has no article, so it can point to law in general, not only the Mosaic code.
- **"Abba":** it is warm and personal, but not baby talk. Jesus used it in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36). "Dear Father" captures it better than "Daddy."
- **4:11:** Paul is not saying they lost salvation. He fears they gain nothing in daily life and lose reward.

Discussion and Close

1. What "filthy five" style rules have you been tempted to treat as proof of being a real Christian?
2. How does knowing God as "Abba, Father" change how you pray?
3. "According to His riches," not "out of" them (Phil 4:19). What need do you need to trust Him with this week?

Close: Point ahead to 4:12–20: Paul stops arguing and starts pleading — correcting like a father, laboring like a mother, until Christ is formed in them. The law is dead; bury it.

Full study: [When I Became a Man — Galatians 4:1–11](#) · Source: Dr. C. Norman Sellers, [SellersBibleInstitute.com](#)