



ADOPTED AS SONS

(Galatians 4:1-7)

UNDER A GUARDIAN (1-3)

In ancient Greek and Roman culture, a “pedagogue” slave was appointed (by his master) as a guardian to the master’s children until they matured. Similarly, the Mosaic Law was appointed (by God) as a guardian to the Jew until faith in Christ came (*Gal 3:19,23-24*).

THE ADULT HEIR (4-7)

In ancient culture, when the master’s children were no longer considered “minors”, they were brought out from under the pedagogue’s authority and given the rights, privileges and responsibilities of an adult heir. Similarly, at the appointed time, Christ redeemed those under the Law, so that they might be empowered as heirs in God’s family.

Adoption (5)

- literally, “placing as a son” (*Eph 1:5; Rom 8:15*)
- “sons of God” speaks of position in family (heirs)
- complete revelation of sonship awaits the inheritance – our glorification at Christ’s coming (*Rom 8:17-30; 1 Jn 3:2*)

Abba-Father (6)

- name used by those born of the Father (*Mk 14:36; Rom 8:15*)
- an expression of love, trust and confidence in God

APPLICATION

How are you ruled? We are naturally accustomed to being under the rule of laws, regulations and procedures. These can be civil rules, rules of your household, school, workplace or social/recreational club. Laws act as guardians to those under them – they promote good behaviour and prescribe consequences for bad behaviour. Most religions subject their adherents to rules and regulations, including Judaism. Given this, it is natural to think that we must also follow rules and regulations in order to be a child of God. One of the most common errors of Christianity is to incorporate Old Testament Law into Christian belief and practice. This error has plagued Christianity for the past 2000 years (and continues to do so today).

Biblical Christianity is not about rules and regulations; it's about Christ! We become Christians by trusting in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, not by following rules and regulations (Eph 2:8-9). Similarly, believers are called to live by faith in Christ, not by following laws (whatever their source might be). When we make Christ the object of our desire, faith and fellowship, His Spirit empowers us to do far better than any set of rules can do. Thus, we serve our heavenly Father in the newness of the Spirit, not in the oldness of law (Rom 7:6). We are under the new commandment of Christ – to love others as He has loved us (Jn 13:34). The power to do so comes from the Holy Spirit, who produces Christ-likeness in us and through us. Where the Spirit rules, law is obsolete (Gal 5:22-23).

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.” (Romans 8:14)