

Galatians 4:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

Analysis

But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

Paul specifies the child-heir's restriction. "Tutors" (epitropous, ἐπιτρόπους) are guardians managing the child's person and education. "Governors" (oikonomous, οἰκονόμους) are stewards managing the estate's property and finances. The child-heir, though legally owner, lives under complete supervision of appointed authorities.

"Until the time appointed of the father" (achri tēs prothesmias tou patros)—until the predetermined date set by the father. Roman law allowed fathers to set the date of majority in their wills. The child had no say; the father's appointment determined freedom. Applying this to redemptive history: God the Father predetermined when the era of law-guardianship would end and mature sonship through Christ would begin. The "fullness of time" (4:4) was the Father's appointed moment. Believers now live in the freedom of that predetermined maturity.

Historical Context

The prothesmia was a legal term for the predetermined date when a minor would receive full rights. This was established in the father's will and couldn't be changed by the heir, guardians, or courts. Paul's theology here is deeply rooted in God's sovereignty: the Father predetermined the times and seasons of redemptive history (Acts 1:7, Ephesians 1:9-10). The law's era ended precisely when God ordained, not before or after.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God's sovereign control over redemptive history's stages give you confidence in His control over your life's timing?
2. What does it mean that the Father has appointed your time of freedom and maturity in Christ, not leaving you under endless supervision?
3. How do you balance submission to godly authority with the freedom and maturity you have in Christ?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλὰ	ὕπο	ἐπιτρόπους	ἐστὶν	καὶ	οἰκονόμους	ἄχρι	τῆς
But	under	tutors	is	and	governors	until	G3588
G235	G5259	G2012	G2076	G2532	G3623	G891	
προθεσμίας	τοῦ	πατρός					
the time appointed	G3588	of the father					
G4287		G3962					

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