

Galatians 4:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Analysis

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Christ's dual purpose. First, "to redeem them that were under the law" (hina tous hypo nomon exagorasē). "Redeem" is exagorazō (ἐξαγοράζω), meaning "buy out of the marketplace"—purchasing slaves to set free. "Them that were under the law" primarily means Jews but includes all under law's condemnation. Christ's law-keeping and curse-bearing (3:13) purchased our freedom.

Second purpose: "that we might receive the adoption of sons" (hina tēn huiiothesian apolabōmen). "Adoption" is huiiothesia (υἱοθεσία), literally "son-placement"—a legal term for formally adopting someone as a legal heir. "Might receive" (apolabōmen) emphasizes receiving what's given, not earned. Christ redeemed us from law-slavery and adopted us into God's family with full son-heir status. We're not merely forgiven criminals but beloved children with inheritance rights. This double benefit—redemption and adoption—constitutes the gospel's richness.

Historical Context

Roman adoption was serious legal procedure. The adopted person lost all rights in their biological family and gained all rights in their new family—becoming a full heir equal to biological children. Past debts were cancelled; new identity established. Paul uses this powerful social institution to explain believers' new

status. We're transferred from Adam's family into God's family, from law's domain into grace, from slavery to sonship. All this accomplished by Christ's redemptive work.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Do you see yourself primarily as a redeemed slave or as an adopted son with full inheritance rights?
2. How does adoption language (chosen, wanted, legally established as heir) transform your sense of belonging and security?
3. What would change in your daily life if you fully embraced your adopted status as God's beloved child and co-heir with Christ?

Interlinear Text

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|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------|-----------|-------|-------|
| ἵνα | τοὺς | ὑπὸ | νόμον | ἐξαγοράσῃ | ἵνα | τὴν |
| To | G3588 | them that were under | the law | redeem | To | G3588 |
| G2443 | | G5259 | G3551 | G1805 | G2443 | |
| υἰοθεσίαν | ἀπολάβωμεν | | | | | |
| the adoption of sons | we might receive | | | | | |
| G5206 | G618 | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 9:15 (Redemption): And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Ephesians 1:5 (Parallel theme): Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Ephesians 1:7 (Redemption): In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Revelation 5:9 (Redemption): And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Hebrews 9:12 (Redemption): Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Galatians 3:13 (Redemption): Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Romans 8:23 (Redemption): And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Galatians 4:7 (Parallel theme): Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Galatians 3:26 (Parallel theme): For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Romans 9:4 (Word): Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;