

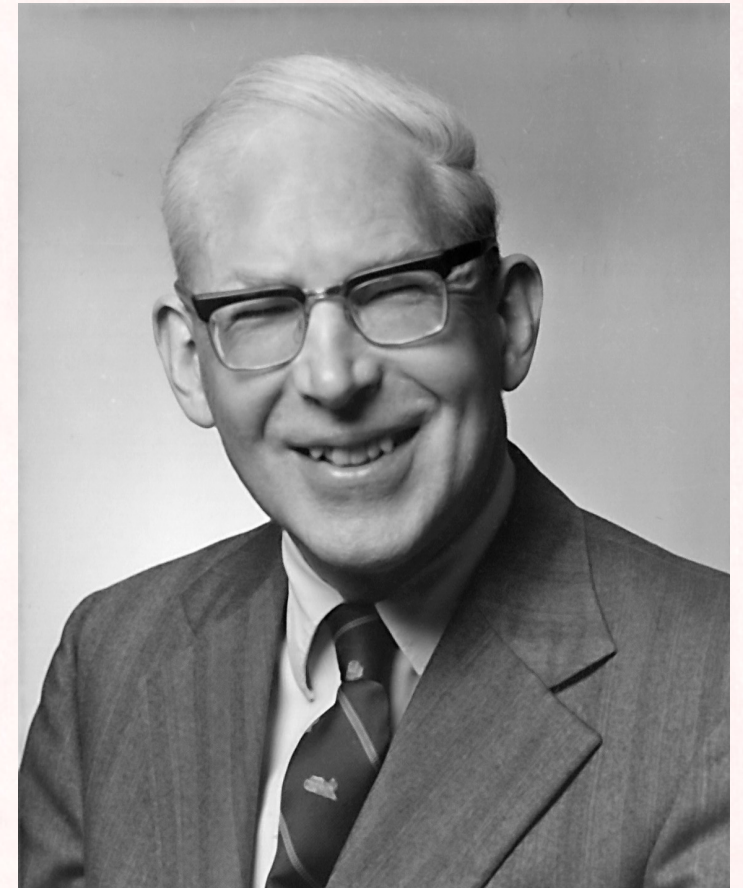


Children of God

Galatians 4:1-20

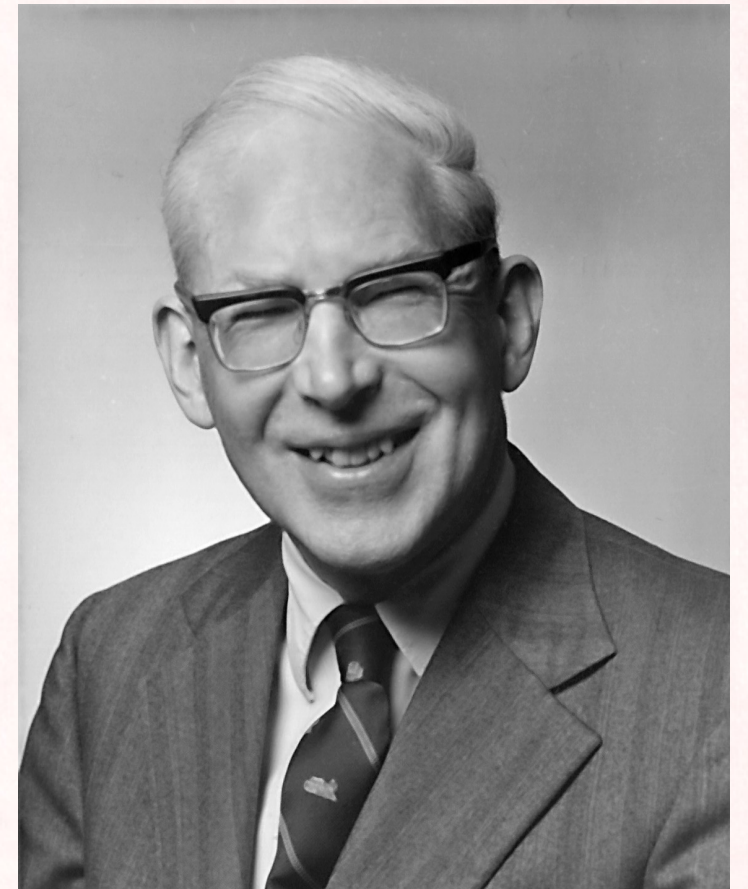
J.I. Packer

“Our first point about adoption is that it is *the highest privilege that the gospel offers*: higher even than justification. This may cause raising of eyebrows, for justification is the gift of God on which since Luther evangelicals have laid the greatest stress, and we are accustomed to say, almost without thinking, that free justification is God’s supreme blessing to us sinners. Nonetheless, careful thought will show the truth of the statement we have just made...”



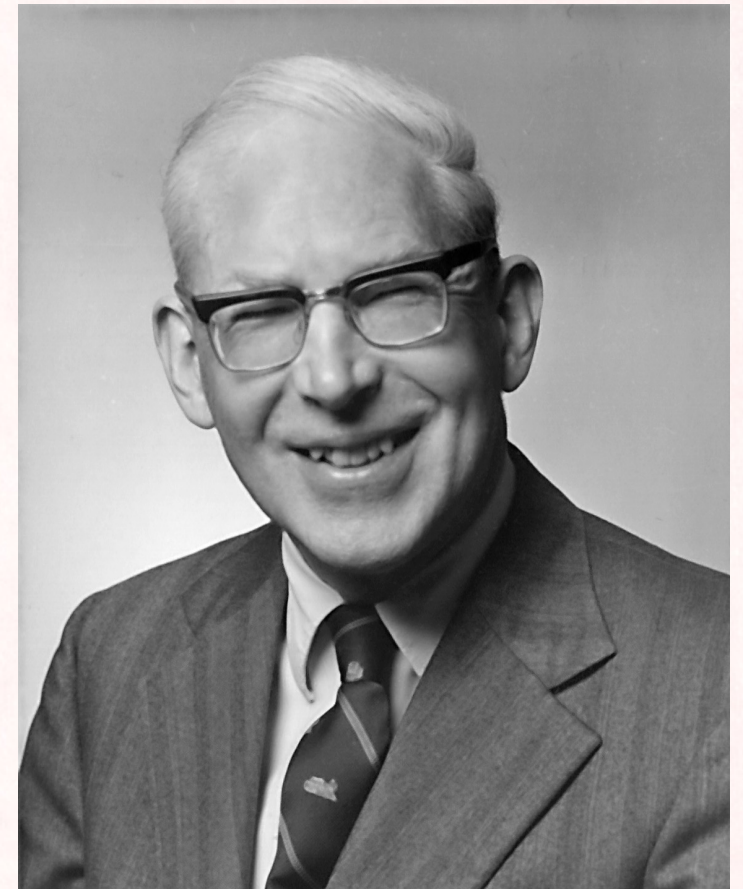
J.I. Packer

“Regularly Paul speaks of righteousness, remission of sins, and justification as the first and immediate consequence for us of Jesus’ death. And as justification is the *primary* blessing, so it is the *fundamental* blessing, in the sense that everything else in our salvation assumes it, and rests on it – adoption included. But this is not to say that justification is the *highest* blessing of the gospel. Adoption is higher, because of the richer relationship with God that it involves...”



J.I. Packer

“Adoption is a *family* idea, conceived in terms of *love*, and viewing God as *father*. In adoption, God takes us into his family and fellowship – he establishes us as his children and heirs. Closeness, affection and generosity are at the heart of the relationship. To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is a greater.”



Galatians 4:1-20 (page 974)



Galatians 4:1-2

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, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.



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What authorities are we initially under?



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1. The Law

Galatians 3:24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.



But not only the Law...

Galatians 4:3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

Galatians 4:8-9 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. ...how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?



What authorities are we initially under?

1. The Law
2. Elementary Principles



What are “elementary principles”?



What are “elementary principles”?

Stoicheia

- Anything placed in a row, like the letters in the alphabet
- The basic elements of knowledge
- The physical elements of the world (earth, water, air, fire)
- The gods associated with those physical elements



What are “elementary principles”?

- “Elemental spiritual forces” (NIV)
- “Elemental things of the world” (NASB)
- “Elements of the world” (CSB)
- “Basic principles of the world” (NKJV)



What are “elementary principles”?

Galatians 4:8-10 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles^[a] of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years!

[a] *or elemental spirits*



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What are “elementary principles”?

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits^[a] of the world, and not according to Christ.

Colossians 2:20-22 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits^[a] of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings?

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What are “elementary principles”?

Basic human inclinations, influenced by demonic forces, that emphasize rigid standards and formulaic practices, giving an appearance of wisdom and virtue, but not driven by genuine faith in God.



Enslaved to Elementary Principles

1. We are all, both Jews and Gentiles, controlled by these elementary principles.



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4. We see them at work even in secular religion today.



CHILDHOOD → CHANGE OF STATUS → FULL FREEDOM

SLAVERY →



A change on two levels...

1. The coming of Jesus splits history in two.

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.



A change on two levels...

1. The coming of Jesus splits history in two.
2. Individuals might receive adoption.

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CHILDHOOD → CHANGE OF STATUS → FULL FREEDOM

SLAVERY → ADOPTION →



Romans 10:9-10

...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.



CHILDHOOD → CHANGE OF STATUS → FULL FREEDOM

SLAVERY → ADOPTION → RELATIONSHIP



As children of God, we receive...

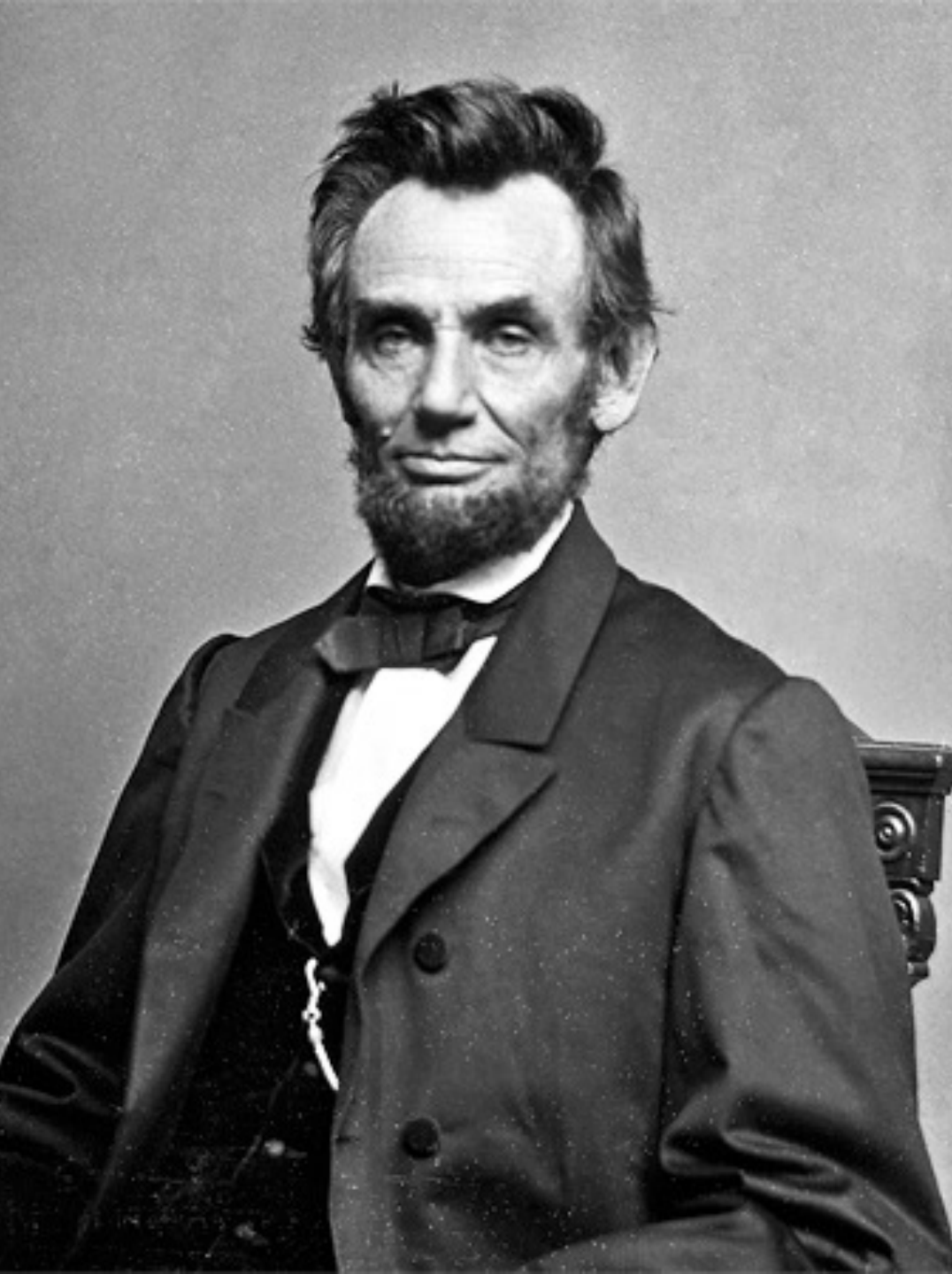
1. Acceptance
2. Affection
3. Inheritance



As children of God, we receive...

1. Acceptance
2. Affection
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Abraham Lincoln

August 22, 1864

“It is not merely for today, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children’s children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all our lives. ...It is for this the struggle should be maintained, that we may not lose our birthright...”





As children of God, we receive...

1. Acceptance
2. Affection
3. Inheritance



Galatians 4:9

But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God...



The Work of the Spirit

Galatians 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

Romans 8:15-16 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God...



As children of God, we receive...

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Romans 8:16-17 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.



CHILDHOOD → CHANGE OF STATUS → FULL FREEDOM

SLAVERY → ADOPTION → RELATIONSHIP



Paul's Concern for the Galatians



Paul's Concern for the Galatians

Galatians 4:13 You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first...



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Galatians 4:13 You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first...

1. Paul's ailment seemed to enable ministry to the Galatians.
2. This ailment endeared Paul to the Galatians.



Paul's Concern for the Galatians

Galatians 4:17 They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them.

2 Corinthians 11:2 For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.



Paul's Concern for the Galatians

Galatians 4:19-20 ...my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.



As children of God, we receive...

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