Paul is doing everything he can to show the believers in Galatia that the "new" gospel that's been brought into the congregation is irrelevant. Why? Though it's a gospel that includes the return of Israel and the coming Kingdom of God, the way by which the perpetrators say it will come about is incorrect . . . a person does not have to convert to Judaism in order to be a part of the remnant – the people of God.

In the last chapter, Paul showed that the covenant has its role and the Torah has its role in bringing one to the understanding of grace through Messiah Yeshua. The covenant is the promise, and the Torah is the vehicle by which we realize our hopeless state. We need a deliverer, and unless we realize that Messiah is that deliverer – and then begin to emulate Him – we are never going to be able to obtain the promise. But if we immerse ourselves in Him, and become like Him, we become sons of God and share in the inheritance that is His to give. Paul nails this down even more in the first 7 verses of chapter 4.

> [NKJ] **Galatians 4:1-2** Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, [2]but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

Paul began this passage with the term "de" (Strong's 1161) which can be translated "but", "now" "moreover" or "and" (as it was in 3:29). "De" is a connecting term. Its purpose is to tie similar points together so as to build a case or substantiate a point that's just been made. The Hebrew people often wrote this way, oftentimes resulting in long run-on sentences. Being that Paul is a Hebrew, you'll often find this writing style is his letters. In this passage, Paul is obviously tying his last statement ". . . heirs according to the promise" with his next thought concerning heirs, so in this case "now" or "moreover" fits, but we'll see later where the translators did not render "de" correctly.

Just as it's important to have a good understanding of the first century Jewish culture in order to understand Paul and the New Testament, we should also define many of Paul's terminology by that of the Roman culture as well. Galatia was part of the region that had been occupied by the Romans for nearly 200 years, and thus Roman culture and Roman law was one of Paul's tools to help illustrate his points to the Galatian congregations.

In the final 4 verses of chapter 3, and in the first 7 verses of this chapter, Paul is talking about becoming an heir. In reality, up to this point the whole letter to the Galatians has been a discussion about two different views on how one becomes an heir to the covenant . . . is it by genealogy (i.e. - becoming Jewish), or is it by faith in the promise given to Abraham? Paul's position is that (physical) genealogy has nothing to do with it, but rather faith is the key – and he uses an analogy based on the Roman law to illustrate it . . . but we must first understand the Roman law.

In first century Rome, as well as in the provinces, the law stated that in every family, the father was the head, and he had ultimate power – even power of life or death over the entire household, including his wife, children, parents living in the home, servants, and slaves.[1] This power was called

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[1] http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/secondary/SMIGRA*/Emancipatio.html; http://www.pilgrimtours.com/church_history/italy/devotionals_history/Adoption.htm; http://thelawdictionary.org/emancipation/

the "patria potestas" – the "power of the father". This power extended throughout the lives of his household, even to the grown children . . . let's say, a son. While the "power of the father" was over him, the son never came "of age". He could never own anything nor make binding decisions, and for all practical purposes was on the same legal status as a slave.

In order to get out from underneath the "power of the father" Roman law stated that the son had to be "emancipated" (Greek – "emancipatio"). This normally took place at age 14, but in some cases the father delayed it until the son was much older.

The law defined how this took place. The father would symbolically sell his son to another man of equal or greater standing, and then immediately buy him back. He had to be sold at least three times, but would only have to be bought back twice. After being sold the third time, and after going through certain legalities, the son had been emancipated from the patri potestas of his father and what's more, had been legally adopted by the other man. He was now the other man's son. The entire process took place before witnesses in order to make it legal.

This process was often followed in order to give a son an advantage in society. If a family was poor, they might "sell" their son into a more affluent family. In some cases, a family that never had a son might "buy" another man's son in order to have an heir. This was often the case where a man had a business, but had no heir or if a person had political status, but had no biological successor. But most often, a biological father simply wanted to emancipate his son, but keep him in the family. In this case the father would buy him back the third time. That third purchase was considered to be an adoption as well, but the father would no longer have the patria potestas – the "power of the father" over his son. This elevated the sons status; he was no longer on the same status as a slave.

Being adopted had certain benefits. The adopted son became a full member of his new family. He no longer had ties to his biological family. In addition, all the son's former debts were forgiven. In effect, he became a new person. If the son had a "checkered past" or came from an abusive family, it was to his advantage to be adopted. But one of the greatest benefits of being adopted was that, unlike biological sons who could be disowned or taken out his father's will, the adopted son could never be taken out of a will. He was a guaranteed heir. The same held true if the biological father bought him back the third time. Once adopted by his biological father, he was then considered to be a man – he was now "of age", he was no longer under the patria potestas, and he could never be taken out of the will.

In Paul's analogy, he showed that a son's legal status was no better than a slave until he was emancipated according to the procedure defined by Roman law. Being a biological son did not give him legal status. Until emancipation, the father had the power to appoint tudors[2] to protect him, and later guardians and stewards to watch over him. What's more, the father had discretion in determining when that emancipation would take place.

When applied to Paul's Jewish audiance, being a biological Jew had no advantage in God's eyes. Yes, they were literal sons but sons were on equal legal status as slaves until the father emancipated them. No matter what they did, they could not "emancipate" themselves – they could only hope to be emancipated. The Jewish people were simply under the authority of the turdors, guardians, and stewards (the Torah) until God was ready to set them free.

On the other hand, the non-Jewish Galatians were like a son who was living in a family that had no wealth or status. They wanted to be able to advance in life, and were thus longing to be emancipated by their biological father and adopted into a more affluent family.

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[2] See the previous article for the meaning of a "tudor"

> NKJ **Galatians 4:3**   Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world

This verse causes problems for a number of people, not only those who believe the Yeshua did away with the Torah, but also for those who want to protect the Torah. Unfortunately, most people try to make it more complicated than it is, but all Paul is doing is continuing with the analogy.

Paul starts verse 3 with the word "even". The ESV states it "in the same we", thus making a parallel with the previous statement – the one that says that children are under (guarded and protected) by guardians, stewards, and possibly even tudors. These were all people whose job it was to protect the child and make sure he progresses on the way.

He then goes on to say "we" just as he did in chapter 3, verse 23. In that passage Paul showed that "we" (Jews) were protected by the Torah. In this passage, Paul is again switching his focus to his fellow Jews in the audience and says that "we" were kept in bondage, and that bondage is likened to the bondage of the patria postestas – the power of the father.   Keep in mind that that the patria postestas was simply the power the father had as prescribed by Roman law, and that by law, it "enslaved" the son. It in no way indicates that the father was either a good or a bad father, nor does it imply that the "enslavement" was automatically bad. In fact (as it is today), many sons were probably happy simply being under the authority and protection of the father.

To help us understand Paul's view of bondage as it applies to this verse, let's look back at what Paul has already said regarding bondage. In chapter 3, verse 22, Paul said –

> ESV **Galatians 3:22** But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Our study of this verse revealed that the Torah brought us to a point that we realized we were in a desperate situation that, without a deliver, we would all die. Then in verse 23 we saw that the Torah protected us until Messiah came to redeem us. This is Paul's view of bondage as it pertains to Torah, and it would stand to reason that Paul would continue with this view as he continues writing this letter.

The "bondage" spoken of in this passage comes from the Greek word "douloo" (doo-lo'-o) (Strong's 1402) and simply means "to make a slave of".   Paul uses this word in 5 other places[3]. In 3 of those places, he depicts bondage as a good thing . . . "servants of righteousness", "servants to God", and "servant unto all".   Obviously, Paul does not consider being a slave to something good as being a bad thing, and in the case of the patria postestas, the "bondage" of tutors, guardians, and stewards actually brought you closer to being emancipated.

With that in mind, what are the "elements of the world"? Many commentaries suggest that Paul is talking about earth, fire, water, and air, the four things that the ancient Greeks and Romans considered to be the foundational building blocks of the world. Both the Greek - and later the Roman cultures worshipped these "elements", even making "gods" of each. Since they had been a part of that culture – it's likely that those from the northern tribes had participated in such worship, but Paul was not addressing the northern tribe "gentiles". He had switched his focus to the Jews in Galatia, and the Jews were monotheistic, worshipping only one God – YHVH. So it's safe to say that the "elements of the world" were NOT those things.

The word "elements" is translated from the Greek word "stoicheion" (Strong's 4747) which comes from a verbal root that means "to proceed in a row as the march of a soldier".[4] In the noun form it means "any

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[3] Rom.6:18,22; 1 Cor. 7:15; 9:19; Titus 2:3
[4] "stoicheo" – Strong's 4748

first thing from which others belonging to some series or composite whole take their rise."[5] In other words, "stoicheion" are the building blocks from which something is derived. For example, our alphabet has letters that depict certain sounds, the first of which is "A", followed by "B", "C", "D", and so on in order. When we combine those letters, we make words that contain certain thoughts. When we want to speak those thoughts, we make sounds with our mouths that depict the sounds of those same letters.

Our English word "elements" can refer to the fundamental particles that make up all matter - the things we see, breath, and touch. For instance, water is made from the two elements hydrogen and oxygen. Thus, the elements are the "stoicheion" – the building blocks of all matter.

To the Jews, the Torah is the fundamental law of the universe – the building blocks of society - the glue that keeps all things together. According to the sages[6], the world was created by the Torah – more specifically the Ten Commandments, the summary of all the commandments. . .

> **Pirkey Avot 5:1** - The world was created with ten utterances. What does this come to teach us? Certainly, it could have been created with a single utterance. However, this is in order to make the wicked accountable for destroying a world that was created with ten utterances, and to reward the righteous for sustaining a world that was created with ten utterances.

and is held together by the Torah –

> **Pirkey Avot** 1:2 - Shimon the Righteous was among the last surviving members of the Great assembly. He would say: The world stands on three things: Torah, the service of G-d, and deeds of kindness.

For 1500 years, the Torah had been the binding force that kept the Jewish people together. Though at times they had turned their back on YHVH and were sent into captivity, it didn't take them long to recognize their error and begin to move back toward a path of Torah observance. Unlike the northern tribes of Israel, who lost their identity by forsaking God's Law, Judah maintained their identity by maintaining the Torah, the building blocks of a moral society.

Thus Paul – like he did in chapter 3, verses 23-25 - is again reiterating that just as a son is kept under control by guardians and stewards that were appointed by his father and whose purpose was to protect and guide the son on his path to maturity, the Jewish people had the Torah as their guardian and steward. Thus, the Torah is the "stoicheion" – the elements, foundations, building blocks - that Paul is referring to. It is what brings us to Messiah. This all fits into the analogy that Paul is presenting. The ESV conveys this thought better than most translations –

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

> [NKJ] **Galatians 4:4-5** [4] But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, [5] to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Paul continues the analogy with the connecting term "de" (Strong's 1161), a term that we discussed earlier. In verse 1, the translators rendered "de" as "now", but in this case they used the word "but", which of course, causes one to think that Paul is contrasting what was before with what has become. I submit that they did this to slant the text to support a view that the Torah is behind us once Messiah came –

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[5] Strong's definition as per Bible Works CD, ver. 6
[6] Pirkey Avot (the Wisdom of the Fathers) is part of the Talmud and was presumably compiled between 200BCE and 200CE, but could contain statements from earlier sages.

something that Paul never supports. If we instead render "de" as "now" or "moreover", we have a continuing statement that supports the analogy Paul is building.

In the analogy, Roman law dictates that a son is under his father's strict control until he is "emancipated", and the time of that emancipation is determined solely by the father. In these verses, Paul is saying the same thing in regards to God's people, specifically the Jewish people of his day.

Whereas a Roman father would emancipate his son at a predetermined age, or when the son had become mature, God "set free" His people at "the fullness of time". Paul used a similar term in the book of Romans where he indicated that blindness was lifted off Israel at a specified time in history.

> NKJ **Romans 11:25** For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

In this passage as well as the Galatians passage above, the word "fullness" is from the Greek word "pleroma" (Strong's 4138) which means "that which has been filled". In the Romans 11 case, the time is when the nations have been filled. Though we're not absolutely sure what Paul was meaning, I submit that he was referring back to a prophecy in Genesis given by Jacob to the younger of Joseph's two sons, Ephraim.

> ESV **Genesis 48:19** But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations."

In this prophecy, the phrase "multitude of nations" comes from the Hebrew phrase מְלֹא־הַגּוֹיִם (melo ha-goyim) or literally – "fullness of the gentiles". The Septuagint (LXX) translates this passage into Greek using the word "plethos" (Strong's 4128). Both "pleroma" and "plethos" come from the same Greek root word "pletho" (Strong's 4130) which simply means "to fill"

History shows that the descendants of Ephraim, led by King Jeroboam and accompanied by the ten northern Israelite tribes, began to practice idolatry soon after King Solomon died. As a result, God sent them into Assyrian captivity and they soon became scattered throughout the nations just as the prophecies foretold -

> ESV **Deuteronomy 30:1-3** "And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, 2 and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.

> ESV **Psalm 44:11** You have made us like sheep for slaughter and have scattered us among the nations.

> ESV **Ezekiel 36:18-19** So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. 19 I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them.

As a scattered people, the northern tribes soon lost their Israelite identity and became, for all practical purposes, Gentiles. In effect, the gentile nations were quickly being filled with Israelites

who did not know they were Israelites. This was all dictated by the Torah, and was according to God's plan.[7]

Apparently, this "filling" of the nations with Israelites reached a point early in the first century to where YHVH was ready to move on with His plan to send a redeemer to Israel. So, just like a Roman father emancipating his son at the most opportune time, YHVH sent His Son <u>as was dictated</u> by the Torah and the prophets – at the fullness of time.

What does it mean "born of a woman" and "born under the law"? To answer that, we must again define terms.

The word "born" ("made" in some translations) is from the Greek word "ginomai" (*ghin-om-ahee* – Strong's 1096) which means "to become" or "to come into existence". Since it's speaking of a human being, some translations render it "born". In the analogy, other humans took part in the Roman emancipation process, specifically the man who participated in the swap of monies in order to facilitate the purchasing of the son. I submit that Paul states that God's Son was "born (or made) of a woman" so as to bring what YHVH was doing down to the physical level in order illustrate His role in the analogy.

Born" as in "Born under the law" is also the Greek word "ginomai" and could just as easily be translated "came" or "made". When He came, He came "under the law". The Greek word translated "under" is "hupo" (*hoop-o* – Strong's 5259) which means "by" or "under". It is most commonly translated "of" or "by" in the KJV.   Using one of these more common uses of "hupo", the passage would read – "made by the law" or "made by the law". In other words, Yeshua came to this earth because of the law. Just as other humans took part in the emancipation of a Roman son, Yeshua was "made" by the requirements set forth in the law[8] for the redemption of God's people. That requirement for redemption was that someone pay the penalty of Israel's sins so that the "curse of the law" could be removed. The Jewish people understood that as illustrated by what the high priest Caiphus said at Yeshua's trial –

> [NKJ] **John 11:50** " . . . do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."

In Paul's analogy, that redemption price is likened to the moneys that were paid back and forth by the Roman men so that the son could be emancipated and become a man. Once that "redemption" price was paid and certain legal requirements were met, the son – as prescribed by Roman law - was officially adopted. Yeshua – as prescribed by the Torah and prophets - paid the redemption price with His own life, and once the formalities were completed, Israel was out from under the curse of the law.

> [NKJ] **Galatians 4:6-7** And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" [7]Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Paul has now finished making the analogy, but now uses it to nail down the point he made in the latter part of chapter 3, and that point is simply this: You Jews (and "gentiles"[9]) are not a part of God's people because of your genealogy, but because God's spirit moved in you to rely on your redeemer. I imagine that Paul – being a Roman citizen himself - had probably served as a witness to one of these Roman emancipations and adoptions . . . maybe his own! He probably saw how a young man's spirit moved in him in his early teens to want to become emancipated – to become free. Most likely that young teen-age

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[7] See the series of articles "Who Is Israel" on the Ami Yisrael web site.
[8] Is. 53:12; Ezek. 27:23
[9] Only in the sense that they are not Jews. The Galatian congregations were made up of believing Jews as well as those non-Jewish Israelites who had come to known as Gentiles.

son would come to his father quite often with the plea "Father – it's time! Please begin the process of my freedom, my becoming a man!" And on that day when the father agrees, the son is no longer just as a slave. He is now a man, and along with his older brothers, he is a fully vested heir of his father's estate.

These first verses make up an analogy. To pull any of these scriptures outside of the analogy and the overall context of Paul's letter simply cause confusion and would misapply the scripture. This analogy has one purpose and one purpose only – to illustrate to the Galatian congregations why being a biological descendant – though it has its advantages – does not give you standing with YHVH. Instead, those who have standing are those who are growing to maturity and have recognized their need for a redeemer. They are the ones who have a sure inheritance, just as does their older brother – Messiah Yeshua. Thus Paul has solidified the argument he made in the latter part of chapter three –

> ESV **Galatians 3:25-29** But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, [26] for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. [27] For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. [28] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [29] And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Shalom Alecheim