

**ADOPTION AS SONS: A SOCIO-RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE υἱοθεσία
METAPHOR IN GALATIANS 4:1–7 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any College or University for academic credit.

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This research thesis project is presented for examination with my approval as a university supervisor.

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Table of Contents

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
LIST OF KEYWORDS AND ACRONYMS	x
DEFINITION OF TERMS	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	4
Objectives of the Study	5
Research Questions	5
Justification of the Study	6
Significance of the Study	6
Research Methodology	7
Scope of the Study	9
Summary	9
CHAPTER TWO	11

LITERATURE REVIEW	11
Introduction.....	11
Differentiating Adoption from Regeneration, Sanctification, and Justification.....	11
Adoption in the Old Testament.....	13
Huiiothesia in Genesis 48:1–7	14
Huiiothesia in Exodus 2:1–10.....	15
Huiiothesia in Esther 2:5–7	15
Second Temple and Old Testament Literature on Adoption.....	16
The Israelite Nation as God’s Son in the Old Testament.....	16
Early Jewish Literature on Israel as God’s Son.....	17
Huiiothesia under Greco-Roman Familial Practices and Legal Rules	19
Further Survey of Relevant Literature on <i>Huiiothesia</i>	23
Summary.....	29
CHAPTER THREE	31
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	31
Introduction.....	31
Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation Approach.....	31
Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of “Textures of Texts”	33
Inner Texture	33
Intertexture.....	33

Sacred Texture.....	34
Ideological Texture.....	34
Social and Cultural Texture.....	34
Assumptions and Scope of the Methodological Approach.....	35
Justification for the Approach.....	35
The Methodological Aspects and Structure.....	36
Summary.....	36
CHAPTER FOUR.....	38
EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF GALATIANS 4:1–7	38
Introduction.....	38
Dominant Theological Themes of Galatians.....	38
Authorship and Date.....	39
The Audience.....	39
The Setting of Galatians.....	39
Background Issues in Galatians.....	40
Structure of Galatians.....	44
Rhetoric in Galatians.....	44
The Genre of Galatians 4:1–7.....	45
Adoption’s Socio-historical Context in Galatians 4:1–7.....	45
Greek Text of Galatians 4:1–7	47

My Translation of Galatians 4:1–7 from Greek to English.....	47
Verse-by-Verse Textual Analysis and Commentary	48
The Heir as a Child.....	48
Enslaved by Immaturity.....	53
Adoption as sons through the Son.....	57
Advantages of Becoming a Son.....	66
Summary.....	71
CHAPTER FIVE.....	74
Summary of Findings, Pastoral Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusion.....	74
Introduction.....	74
Pastoral Implications	74
Summary.....	81
Conclusion.....	82
Recommendations.....	84
References.....	86
Appendices	96
Appendix 1: Research Work Plan.....	96
Appendix 2: Research Authorization Letter.....	98

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all believers in Christ, as it delves deep into the subject of adoption. Adoption is a vital teaching in the body of Christ in understanding the fatherhood of God. Additionally, this research is dedicated to preachers of the Word of God to help them level up their knowledge concerning Christian sonship, especially in the New Covenant perspective after the salvific work of Christ.

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ABSTRACT

Adoption is a major theme in the Bible, especially in the writings of Apostle Paul. The Greek word υιοθεσία (*huiiothesia*) is translated as “adoption as sons,” in the Bible referring to divine adoption as sons (of God). The usage of *huiiothesia* is metaphorical. Illustrating Christian adoption from the lenses of Roman adoption practices. The meaning of the metaphor in the ancient Greco-Roman context is critical in understanding and applying Pauline theology. Through adoption, believers in Christ become sons, thus heirs of God, hence warranting what God owns. This study will examine the meaning and understanding of υιοθεσία within its Graeco-Roman context. It will help believers appreciate their legitimate right to what God the Father owns. Thus, because of their identity as sons, they do not have to subject themselves to practices meant to please God to bless or answer their prayers. Instead, they have been qualified through Christ. In order to trace the thoughts of the author of Galatians 4:1–7, the researcher will undertake an exegesis of the pericope to examine the original meaning to the first audience. In addition, the researcher uses a socio-rhetorical approach to look into the text. The author’s world, which was influenced by the Greco-Roman culture and laws, differs from that of a modern reader (Kim, 2014). Further, culture changes over time, hence the need for an in-depth study of the respective contexts of Bible texts. The researcher will use secondary historical writings concerning the Greco-Roman era. During the time of the law, the Jews regarded themselves as the only legitimate sons of God. However, this study seeks to find out whether both Jews and Gentile Christians are legitimate heirs of God through Jesus Christ.

LIST OF KEYWORDS AND ACRONYMS

NT: New Testament

OT: Old Testament

KJV: King James Version

YLT: Young's Literal Translation

NKJV: New King James Version

RSV: Revised Standard Version

NASB: New American Standard Version

NIV: New International Version

ESV: English Standard Version

HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible

WEB: World English Bible

NET: New English Translation

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Adoption (υιοθεσία): Creation of filial relation between non-kin. Thus, the adoptee has right to heir the adopter's property (Strong, 2010).

Heir (κληρονόμος): Someone who is designated to inherit the property of another (Strong, 2010).

Slave (δοῦλος): A person who is the property of another person and whose labor and also whose life is often subject to the owner's volition (Strong, 2010).

Guardian (ἐπιτρόπους): A person legally responsible for a minor (Strong, 2010).

Trustee (οἰκονόμος): A person to whom property is legally committed in trust, to be applied either for the benefit of specified individuals or for public uses (Strong, 2010).

Law (νόμον): A generic term used to refer to the Divine commandments (in the OT or the Torah) (Strong, 2010).

Redeem (ἐξαγοράση): To recover ownership of something by buying back (Strong, 2010).

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The metaphor, adoption as sons (υιοθεσία, *huiiothesia*) can be seen in several instances within the Pauline corpus; the apostle Paul is clear in Ephesians 1:5 and Romans 5:15, 23; 9:4 while informing the recipients of his letters that they have been adopted into the family of God through Christ (Scott, 1992). Also, apostle Paul uses the same metaphor in Galatians 4:1–7 to awaken the believers to the consciousness of a more mature era in Christ (Keener, 2018). In Galatians 3:21–25 Paul emphasizes that, before Christ and faith, believers were under sin and the law (pedagogue). The law was their master and tutor, making them minors who are not different from slaves (Keener, 2018). Paul likens being under the law (3:23) as being subjected to a pedagogue (3:24–25), which, in chapter 4:1–3, he compares to being equated to a slave. A pedagogue (guardian) was a slave with the same status as a minor (Boer, 2011).

This research is focused on studying the usage of the *huiiothesia* (adoption as sons) metaphor in Galatians 4:1–7. It also researches how adoption within the Greco-Roman legal rules and practices was done in order to place the metaphor in the prevailing historical culture which was an influence to the literary structure of the pericope. Moreover, the researcher undertakes a social-rhetorical study of Galatians 4:1–7, which is key for proper interpretation of the text of focus. Finally, the research does a summary of the findings, gives recommendations and draws pastoral implications of the *huiiothesia* metaphor.

Background to the Study

Today, the prosperity gospel is taking traction at an alarming rate, not only in Kenya, but also globally. Listening to the preachings from some of the television stations, the emphasis on giving a certain amount of money to their congregation in order for God to bless them has taken the center stage. According to Nathan Walton, this has put some Christians into a state of confusion. They are in an endless pursuit of this never coming forth blessing and prosperity, regardless of their continued giving to the man or woman of God. In most cases, prosperity gospel lacks proper and sound biblical backing which may lead to financial strain for individuals and families (Walton, 2018).

People have given their life time savings and left their bank accounts dry. Others have sold their properties such as lands and houses in order to give and receive God's blessings. Gordon Fee notes that the prosperity gospel has reduced the divine-human relationship to a transactional exchange, that overshadows traditional Christian teachings on grace, suffering, and the transcendence of God (Fee, 2006). The sorry side of this practice is to realize that it has left some marriages broken. In other cases, people who gave and failed to see the promised blessings have since stopped going to church. I have personally met people who have stopped going to church. The reason being, churches have become business enterprises that benefit the "owner." As a result, the faith of many has been injured.

Succumbing to such practices might be an aspect of identity crisis on the victims' side. For a child to grow with the right knowledge, they need to be fed with the right information. For instance, they need to know who they are and who their parent or

guardian is. In addition, it is within their rights to know the properties that belong to the family such as lands, businesses, houses, herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep and goats, among other family owned properties. Such a child will grow knowing what is rightfully theirs, by the virtue of being born to their parents.

Similarly, faithful preaching should leverage on informing Christians about their identity. It is from this background the researcher feels compelled to examine the concept of adoption as encapsulated in Galatians 4:1–7, in order to draw life-transforming biblical principles. This will help Christians create a safeguard and avoid falling becoming victims of extra-biblical teachings. In addition, it may help those who had stopped going to church as a result of the extra-biblical teachings build their faith again and join a church that is doctrinally sound.

Statement of the Problem

Scholars, both evangelicals and Pentecostals have belaboured the subject of *huiiothesia*. Great scholars such as Kyu Kim in their research have focused on explaining the meaning and understanding of the metaphor (Kim, 2014). These are essential areas that have greatly impacted enlightening believers in Christ in the history of the church. In order to help Christians understand the subject, researchers like Pomeroy, Burke, Lindsay, and Heim have studied adoption against the backdrop of ancient Greco-Roman, early Judaism and Near East cultures. These cultures help us understand the metaphor usage by the author of the book of Galatians (Burke, 2006; Heim, 2017; Lindsay, 2009; Pomeroy, 1997). This is plausible as it helps current scholars step on the shoulders of past research in solving current challenges in the body of Christ. It is critical to understand the meaning

of the metaphor in order to have a solid foundation for Christian living. However, the knowledge of what *huiiothesia* avails in the life of a Christian are equally essential. Knowing that an adopted child has a legal right to inheritance and the blessings of God (according to the promise) can free believers from unbiblical teachings. And this is the motive of this study.

In the contemporary church, one of the prevalent teachings is that God's blessings can "only" be received through certain works. As pointed out in the background of the study section, heretical teachings such as believers must give a certain amount of money to be blessed have taken centre stage in Christendom. As a result, many believers remain in the infant stage, not knowing that they are heirs and have a right to what God owns through their adoption into the family of God (Gal 4:5; 3:26, 29). This study explores the theme of adoption by researching its usage in the Greco-Roman culture and the Near East and early Jewish cultures. Such cultures, especially the Greco-Roman culture, the prevailing culture in the time of Apostle Paul shaped his literary communication. Using the concept of Roman adoption, the writer of Galatians intends to draw a graphic image of how God adopted the churches in Galatia. In addition, the study shows that adoption gives believers express rights to what the adoptive Father has, to help believers appreciate that they have full sonship rights of inheritance (Gal 4:5). Thus, they do not need to fall into works, as was the challenge that faced the Galatians.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a proper understanding of biblical adoption as presented in Galatians 4:1–7, which automatically makes believers heirs of God (Gal

3:29) and joint heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17). In addition, this study will aim at drawing pastoral implications of biblical adoption. This will help believers in Christ develop steadfastness in their faith and denounce misleading teachings. Thus, they can pray to God to receive His blessings and answers to their prayers.

Objectives of the Study

It will be the priority of this study to:

- i. Examine the Greco-Roman adoption culture in order to understand the social world of Galatians 4:1–7.
- ii. Analyze Galatians 4:1–7 pericope to understand the message of the author.
- iii. Draw the pastoral implications of the Pauline metaphor for Christian life.

Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

- i. How does the Greco-Roman context influence the meaning of Galatians 4:1–7?
- ii. What is the meaning of Galatians 4:1–7 text?
- iii. What are the pastoral implications of the Pauline metaphor on Christian life?

Justification of the Study

The message of Galatians 4:1–7 has been cross-generational since the time of the Apostle Paul. To clearly understand *huiiothesia*, one requires the knowledge of Greco-Roman adoption practices, which essentially inform the metaphor's meaning in the NT. Thus, this study delves in the study of the Greco-Roman culture in order to place the metaphor into its ancient context for proper contemporary understanding of adoption (Wright, 2013). *Huiiothesia* defines a believer's identity as a child of God. This is an crucial aspect of a Christian's union with Christ, giving believers the rights and privileges found in God's kingdom (Letham, 2019). In addition, the study of *huiiothesia* will help clarify how Christian adoption relates to sanctification and justification. Adoption is not only a legal declaration, but also a process that transforms a Christian's life (Schreiner, 2018). Ferguson says that adoption is a doctrine that has been neglected in Christian theology, yet it carries profound implications for knowing and understanding God's grace, love, and the inheritance of believers' in Christ (Ferguson, 2007).

Significance of the Study

The study of the *huiiothesia* metaphor of Galatians 4:1–7 is significant to all believers in Christ. It gives a clear understanding to scholars of what the metaphor meant to the recipients of the letter in light of the author's world. In addition, it helps current scholars relate contemporary challenges with the ancient ones faced by Bible authors in their scholarly pursuits. Furthermore, it helps interrogate previous studies and see the oversights of earlier scholars in the study of *huiiothesia* in order to address current challenges.

The study is a critical one to contemporary believers as well. As such, it reveals to them the social world of the Bible with regard to the book of Galatians. Such knowledge is critical for upcoming gospel preachers who endeavor to preach from the point of accuracy. Preaching is like a relay, whereby current ministers pass the button to the next generation. However, it is critical to accurately communicate the good news to avoid distortion of the original meaning.

Is there an emphasis on the subject of adoption in the contemporary church like we see with subjects such as salvation and righteousness? This teaching has been neglected, which might be why believers do not know they have the right to receive God's blessings. As a result, they end up falling prey to heretical extra-biblical teachings. In church history, especially during the Reformation and post-reformation, the emphasis was on the doctrine of Justification. In the first century, the church focused on the deity of Christ (Beeke, 2008). However, throughout the centuries, the teaching of adoption seems to be sidelined. Douglas Kelly notes, "As James I. Packer noted several years ago, in *Knowing God*, Reformed Christians have failed to work through the doctrine of Adoption" (Kelly, 1993, p. 87). Perhaps now is the time that "adoption" is emphasised more in the evangelical circles and church preaching.

Research Methodology

This study undertakes an in-depth exegesis of Galatians 4:1–7. The exegesis aims to identify the author's intended meaning to the original audience. This approach is critical in avoiding reading into the text by the reader.

The exegesis will involve a socio-rhetorical study of the pericope. A social-rhetorical method is important in the interpretation of biblical texts as it helps uncover the correlation between historical context, social settings, and rhetorical strategies used in the texts. This method is well suited for this study because it offers a multidimensional criticism approach for analyzing how biblical authors engage their audiences, address social and cultural issues, and shape communal identities.

All biblical texts were written in specific social and historical settings. A social-rhetorical approach will help readers understand the sociopolitical, religious and economic dynamics that shaped the text's meaning (Robbins, 1996a).

Moreover, this method helps in examining how biblical texts persuade, instruct, or challenge their original audiences, revealing rhetorical techniques used by biblical authors (Witherington, 2009). By considering the social and rhetorical dimensions, interpreters can apply biblical teachings more effectively to contemporary ethical and theological discussions (Porter & Stamps, 2002)

The purpose is to focus on the oral and literary skills of ancient cultures and how they incorporated the Greco-Roman rhetoric, which was the literary world of the author of Galatians. In a nut shell, this approach allows a richer understanding of biblical texts by integrating historical, literary, and cultural dimensions into the interpretive process. This means that secondary sources that help the researcher discover the text's original meaning will be used.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the exegesis of the Galatians 4:1–7 pericope alone, within the Greco-Roman context. It also studies the author’s ancient world, the Greco-Roman culture, which influenced the rhetorical constructs of the pericope. To achieve this, the researcher uses existing resources focusing on biblical adoption and the Greco-Roman practices on adoption.

Summary

As stated in this chapter, υιοθεσία (*huiiothesia*) means “adoption as sons.” Adoption is a major teaching in the Pauline letters. In light of this, any scholar and believer in the pursuit of understanding their relationship with God as their *Abba* Father should consider familiarizing themselves with this teaching. The adoption practice has its roots in the ancient Greco-Roman society, the Old Testament saints, and early Judaism. Therefore, to understand what the author of Galatians meant when he said to the first audience that they have “received adoption,” it is imperative to study these cultures concerning their adoption practice.

This study, in later chapters, will seek to do a socio-rhetorical study of the *huiiothesia* metaphor of Galatians 4:1–7. The aim is to place the practice of adoption within the prevailing culture of the world of the author. The author’s culture was highly influenced by the ancient Roman emperor’s rule. A study about adoption is critical in Christendom to ground believers in their relationship with God. If they can view God as their adoptive Father, they can also know they are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. This status is a preserve of all believers in Christ. Thus, they are legible to the blessings of God without

being subjected to the observance of extra-biblical practices that draw them away from their cordial father-son relationship with God.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Adoption can be defined as establishment of filial relationship between the adopter and a non-kin adoptee (Mbua, 2018). The word *huiiothesia* is translated as “adoption as a son.” And the adoption as a son is not gender sensitive. It can be used for both males and females in the Scriptures. However, in the Greco-Roman context, the adoption of a male carried a weightier meaning. It implied that the adoptee was privileged to enjoy exclusive family rights of inheritance and honour (Scott, 1993).

Differentiating Adoption from Regeneration, Sanctification, and Justification

The Puritans in the book *Heirs with Christ: The Puritans on Adoption* considered the subject of adoption in their scholarship. And they concluded that adoption is not regeneration, justification or sanctification (Beeke, 2008).

According to Burroughs (1988), adoption and regeneration handle two distinct problems, even though believers tend to use them synonymously. Burroughs continues to assert that adoption describes the status of believers. Initially, before someone believes in Christ, they are by nature children of wrath and alienated from the family of God. However, through the salvific work of Christ, they become children of God upon their faith in Jesus (John 1:12). Moreover, God gives the believer the Spirit of adoption who testifies to them concerning their adoption. Through regeneration, the Holy Spirit imparts a new nature into the believer, even though outwardly, they possess the physical nature of their biological parents (Burroughs, 1988). In regeneration, Burroughs argues that our inward

nature gets transformed. That inward desire to live and walk like the devil is changed by the desires that come from above. It is a transformation that an adoptive earthly father cannot do to change the personality of an adopted child to match theirs (Burroughs, 1988).

Concerning justification and adoption, Cooke posits that justification delivers believers in Christ from the courtroom and brings them into the family of God. It is the source of their forgiveness and reconciliation with the Father. Justification can clearly be understood from the viewpoint of law, while adoption is the basis of love. Justification considers God a judge while adoption as a father (Cooke, 1998). Brakel points out that justification is a complete acquittal from punishment and guilt with the addition of eternal life (Brakel, 1999). In the New Testament, there is a very thin line between justification and adoption, as one never appears without including the other in the salvific work of Christ. Ferguson observes, “Undoubtedly, the NT never separates justification from adoption, but neither does it confuse them. In human terms, it is quite possible to imagine a man being justified without the remotest thought of him being adopted. The fact that a judge pronounces the verdict of “not guilty” does not commit him to take the accused to his home and allow him all the privileges of his son!” (Ferguson, 1981).

Evangelical scholars also sought to distinguish adoption from sanctification. In light of that, Brooks (2001) defines sanctification as the lifestyle of a believer to cultivate family characteristics after being adopted into God’s family, after being born again. Packer also agrees with Brooks by asserting that sanctification is a consistent active relationship with God, to which the gospel has delivered the believer. It calls for the believer to be true to himself, his Father, and Savior (Brooks, 2001; Packer, 1973). Through sanctification,

believers get a full-blown understanding and experiential awareness of their adoption. Moreover, sanctification through the Holy Spirit helps Christians break free from the traits of their former life progressively and become fully committed to the authority that God their father exercises over them. Thus, the lifestyle of a believer is regulated by the Spirit and the Word. This does not allude to the fact that a believer will never experience shortcomings. However, through sanctification, they increasingly grow into the prototype (likeness) of the familial character of the household of God. Thus bearing the character image of God's beloved Son (Beeke, 2008).

Adoption in the Old Testament

Scott (1992) agrees with Kostenberger (2003) by arguing that adoption was a widespread tradition in the Old Testament. Old Testament (Jewish) practices might have had a great influence on the literary approach used by the author of Galatians. Such information is critical, bearing in mind that OT practices existed before the writings of the book of Galatians. Old Testament cultures show similarity in the approach to the adoption tradition, as seen in 2 Samuel 7:14, which Paul cites in 2 Cor. 6:18 (Kostenberger, 2003).

According to Scott, the term υιοθεσία is not expressly used in the Septuagint or existing Jewish sources of that time (Scott, 1992). However, the concept of adoption is painted using other formulae and terms. At least three Old Testament passages demonstrate the existence of adoption: Genesis 48:1–7, Esther 2:5–7, and Exodus 2:1–10 (Braaten, 2000; Scott, 1992).

Huiiothesia in Genesis 48:1–7

At a time when Jacob was ill (v. 1), he remembered the promise God made to him (vv. 3–4). He called his grandsons, elevated them to his own (adopted) sons, and made them rulers of the 12 tribes (Waltke, 2001). From the account of Genesis 48:1–7, we can see that Israel adopted his grandchildren as his sons, giving them equivalent rights to his eldest children, Simeon and Reuben (Matthews, 2005; Wenham, n.d.). God’s promise to Jacob gave him the power to adopt the sons of Joseph. God had promised to increase his descendants and give them Canaan as an everlasting possession, and Jacob included his grandsons who were born in Egypt. Joseph’s sons could not be legitimate sons as they were born to an Egyptian mother and in Egypt (Waltke, 2001; Westermann, 1987). Only Jacob could do that through a proclamation of faith that the two sons of Joseph, being outside his house through adoption, could receive the promised inheritance. And surprisingly, a share equal to the eldest sons of Jacob. Wenham posits that this nature of familial adoption was customary within the ancient Orient according to the accounts of Ugarit, where the grandfather adopts a grandson as a legitimate heir (Wenham, n.d.).

Joseph’s act of bringing his grandsons near to him and then kissing and embracing them might be an indication of adoption. He thus makes them join the ancestors of Israel. Another indication that Jacob adopted his grandsons is that ‘Joseph removed them (Manasseh and Ephraim) from his father’s knees’ (Gen 48:12). Jacob’s act of placing them on his knees could be an imagery of the legitimization of the adoption and intra-family adoption. In summary, Jacob declaring Ephraim and Manasseh as his, placing them onto his knees, and kissing and embracing them is symbolic of him adopting them (Waltke, 2001).

Huiiothesia in Exodus 2:1–10

When the persecution against the Hebrews broke out in Egypt during the reign of Pharaoh, Moses' mother hid him in the River Nile in a papyrus basket in the midst of reeds (Exod 2:2–3). However, Moses' sister hid at a distance to see what would happen to the baby (v. 4). Upon seeing that Pharaoh's daughter had noticed the baby, she suggested that she could arrange to get a nurse for the child from the Hebrew woman. A suggestion that Pharaoh's daughter accepted (Ex 2:7–8). The concept of adoption becomes vivid when the daughter of Pharaoh '... took him as her son. She named him Moses because she said, "I drew him out of the water"' (Exod 2:10). Thus, Moses is legally adopted by the Princess of Egypt (Stuart, 2006).

Huiiothesia in Esther 2:5–7

Esther 2:7 states, Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, which is Esther, his cousin, for she had neither father nor mother; the girl was fair and beautiful, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai adopted her as his own daughter. (Esther 2:7). As seen from the given verse, this is a clear account that illustrates the act of adoption (Braaten, 2000).

From the above three accounts, on his deathbed, Jacob adopted Joseph's sons to be his own and passed onto them the inheritance. An adoption is popularly known as intra-family adoption. In the case of Moses' adoption, it was informal rather than one ratified legally as Pharaoh's daughter raised him in Pharaoh's home but didn't become Pharaoh's heir. Finally, in Esther's case, even though Mordecai raised her as his daughter, she did not end up in Mordecai's household, nor did she become his heir. That said, the Old

Testament adoption does not fully meet the definition demonstrated in Galatians 4:1–7 (Chang, 2021).

Second Temple and Old Testament Literature on Adoption

According to Burke (2006), there is no concrete evidence in the Old Testament of the Israelites' adoption into God's family, nor is there any adoption of a single person into a family that can be seen. Burke asserts that the imagery portrayed in the Old Testament refers to sonship more than adoption. From existing Jewish and Old Testament literature, the concept and term of adoption are lacking (Burke, 2006). However, the sonship metaphor in the Old Testament might have been the inspiration for Roman adoption. Paul in Galatians might have assumed that his audience was familiar with Jewish literature (Gal 3:6–9, 16–18; 4:21–31). In light of that, it's imperative first to understand the Jewish sonship metaphor to know Paul's choice of υιοθεσία and not sonship in the pericope of Galatians 4:1–7. Thus, it will give the believer a firm foundation and keep off from the dichotomy of the adoption and sonship metaphors (Chang, 2021).

The Israelite Nation as God's Son in the Old Testament

The allusion to the Israelite nation as a son of God is clearly evidenced in Exodus 4:22–23, where God says, "Israel is my firstborn son." I said to you, "Let my son go that he may worship me ...". Using the metaphor firstborn is an absolute indication that the nation of Israel belongs solely to God, where Israel enjoys the Lord's protection and care from the harm perpetuated by Pharaoh (Heim, 2017). And the reason why God made Israel his son is that they may worship him (Exod 3:7–8). In addition, the sonship metaphor is illustrated in Deuteronomy 8:5, which states, 'Know then in your heart that as

a parent disciplines a child so the LORD your God disciplines you.’ This imagery denotes an intimate, responsible, and filial relationship between God the father and Israel as a son. But many times, Israel, as a disobedient child, went against the Lord, their father. And God who has always been faithful hides himself from them as a way of disciplining them (Deu 32:20). Also, Isaiah, describing the faithfulness of God and the disobedience of Israel, uses the father-son analogy (Isa 30:1, 9; 43:6–7). Even though Israel acts unfaithfully to their father’s commandments, the Lord remains faithful and shows great love towards his son (Israel).

The prophet Jeremiah looks forward to the restoration of Israel after their exile as God proclaims, ‘I will lead them back ... for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn’ (Jer 31:9). Similarly, prophet Hosea attests to the father-son relationship of Israel and their father, ‘When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son (Hosea 11:1). Even though time and again Israel proved to be a rebellious son to his father, God as a faithful father restores them to himself as a beloved son with respect to his steadfast love and mercy. From the illustrations of the cited passages, the imagery of sonship bears an exclusivity in the Old Testament compared to adoption (Chang, 2021).

Early Jewish Literature on Israel as God’s Son

Chang (2021) posits that the sonship metaphor took centre stage in the early Jewish era due to a rapidly Hellenized Jewish culture that brought about social conflict between non-Jews and Jews. The use of this metaphor illustrated Israel’s nationalism, a nation set apart from other nations, as recorded in the Book of Wisdom 12:19–21:

Through such works you have taught your people that the righteous must be kind, and you have filled your children [sons] (τοὺς υἱοὺς σου) with good hope, because you give repentance for sins. For if you punished with such great care and indulgence the enemies of your servants (παίδων σου) and those deserving of death, granting them time and opportunity to give up their wickedness, with what strictness you have judged your children [sons] (υἱοὺς σου), to whose ancestors you gave oaths and covenants full of good promises ...

Heim (2017) notes that the quoted passage above is a vivid illustration of the ethnic division that existed between the Israelites and their enemies, the Egyptians. Just as the Old Testament notes in (Deut 8:5), God disciplines Israel his son, but to other nations, he brings tribulation. When God rescues his son from the oppression of his enemies, he gives him the law, an imperishable light, while other nations remain in utter darkness (Wis 18:1–4). As such, the law creates a demarcation between the rest of the nations and the son of God (Heim, 2017).

Another metaphorical illustration of the sonship concept in early Jewish literature is chronicled in 3 Maccabees by the author Philopater. He says:

^{27b}Send them back to their homes in peace, begging pardon for your former actions! ²⁸ Release the children ([sons] υἱοὺς) of the almighty and living God of heaven, who from the time of our ancestors until now has granted unimpeded and notable stability to our government. (3 Macc 6:28).

In Philopater's passage above, he uses the sonship analogy to underline the particularity of the Jewish nation as God's children (Heim, 2017). In effect, there was no possibility of

turning the Gentiles proselytes as God was a father to the Israelites only with whom he cared for and enacted an alliance (3 Macc 7:6–7).

The book of Sirach also records the distinguished nature of the Jewish nationality through the use of the sonship metaphor. “Gather all the tribes of Jacob, and give them their inheritance, as at the beginning. Have mercy, O Lord, on the people called by your name, on Israel, whom you have named your firstborn” (Sirach 36:16–17). Within its context, Sirach 36 is embedded in the judgment of Israel’s enemies against the chosen nature of Israel as God’s son, who is “named” and “called.” Sirach 36 also maintains that the God of Israel will keep his covenant, and the nation of Israel will cause other nations to know the father (Sir 36:22). And in the end, Israel will eventually destroy the rest of the nations as a manifestation of the glory of their father (Sir 36:3–4). Similarly, the distinguishing concept of Israel as a redeemed people and God's judgement of other nations is recorded in Judith 9:12–14 (Heim, 2017).

In summary, the illustration of Israel as God’s son in the early Jewish literature and the Old Testament elicits critical imagery. Firstly, God, as the father of Israel, chose the nation as his son. Secondly, it was during the early Jewish time the analogy of the father-son relationship gained strength, setting the nation apart from the rest of the nations (Chang, 2021).

Huiiothesia under Greco-Roman Familial Practices and Legal Rules

In order to clearly understand the metaphor used in Galatians 4:1–7, it is imperative for us to investigate the background surrounding the ancient Greco-Roman culture. Scholars believe that Greco-Roman social practices coupled with the legal rules must have

influenced the nature of literature employed by the author of the book of Galatians. Adoption in the ancient Roman world is different from what it is today. And that difference is sometimes missed by some contemporary readers, thus failing to understand the crux of the message in the Pauline adoption metaphors. Kim (2014) argues that adopting strangers in the Roman world was uncommon. Instead, most adoptees were children from relatives, or one's close friends' children. We might not assume that the original audience of the Book of Galatians had a clear understanding of the legal practices of Roman adoption practices. However, the knowledge of the same based on existing documentation will help interpret and apply the metaphor in the present Christian life correctly. The historical legal documents of the ancient Roman world reflect the society's customs (Kim, 2014).

One would opt to adopt an heir as a result of infertility or the death of all biological children. Thus, the adoptee would continue the family lineage and inherit the family estates (Pomeroy, 1997). According to Greco-Roman law, there were two ways that one could do an adoption. The first one was through an application to a magistrate. And the second one was through written permission from the emperor. Adoption through the magistrate was done for people still under parental protection. This adoption is known as *adoptio*. And if one needed to adopt an independent individual, they could only use the imperial procedure. This kind of adoption is known as *adrogatio*. In most adoption cases, adoptees were from the kinship of the adopter. Additionally, one was permitted to adopt a grandson, but with the consent of the son (father to the adoptee). One could not adopt several adoptees based on well-outlined reasons in Roman law. Every adoptive child was a legal heir (Pomeroy, 1997).

The purpose of adoption in ancient Roman society could be different from modern practices. In the Roman era, adoption was mainly done to designate an heir, especially by infertile couples or individuals without the ability to bring forth offspring, such as eunuchs (Lindsay, 2009). Lindsay continues to state that the common form of adoption practised in Roman society was of close relatives or friends' children. In rare cases, was the adoption of strangers seen. And such adoptions were meant for other reasons other than inheritance or succession. This is because strangers were treated with a level of suspicion. Lindsay gives an example of a man who disowned his biological children to adopt a poor man's family without the intention of having an heir. However, his actions were castigated and termed as a mental disorder.

Burke posits that the rights of an adoptive child are weaker compared to that of a biological one according to Roman law (Burke, 2006). However, this stance has been greatly refuted by many scholars of the NT, whose position is that adopted children have the same legal status as biological sons. As such, their inheritance rights were similar to those born in the adoptive family as much as the adoptees subjected themselves to the adopter's rule (Gardner, 1998).

Lindsay posits that it was also possible for adopters to offer adoption status to their slaves or ex-slaves. However, their status was much lower than that of an adoptee from one's kin. Like any other adoptee, the purpose could be to have an heir for family properties. When an adoptive father to a slave died, the slave automatically became free and inherited the master's estate. In most cases, the adoption of enslaved people was done by the lower class in Roman society. In the Roman legal law concerning adoption, a slave

adopted into a family immediately gained freedom. However, the freedom was not at the level that a freeborn son had (Lindsay, 2009).

The discrimination on the status of a free person resulted from a law enacted by Augustus. In ancient Roman society, the emperor noted that high-class people tended to fail to marry and opt for adoption. As a way of countering this rising practice, Augustus enacted a marriage law that stated, “Senators and their descendants are forbidden to marry freedwomen or women who have themselves followed the profession of the stage, or whose father or mother has done so” (Kim, 2014). On that note, Lindsay suggests that “The Augustan prohibition on marriages between freedwomen and senators perhaps only hardened the rules in an area already subject to social or customary sanction” (Lindsay, 2009).

In the event that the adoption of a free person invaded the rights of a freeborn child, Roman law was highly against such a move. This is because, according to the law, an ex-slave could not match a biological child. As a result, some sanctions were imposed on freed people, such as ex-slaves, who could only do so much concerning marriage relationships. In some cases, they were restricted, or it was impossible to enter into marriage with high-class women. Citing the Augustan law, freedmen were prohibited from marrying daughters of senators. Additionally, freedmen were restricted from contesting for any political office. Also, their access to political offices was also hampered, unlike freeborn children (Kim, 2014).

In addition, the duties of ex-slaves were not removed in some cases. They were permitted to have and enjoy what they possessed from their ex-master. However, when they died,

their patrons were allowed to repossess the property of their ex-slave. Automatic heirs of freedmen were permitted by law to inherit their father's property. If the freedman died without the will of an automatic heir, his patron could possess the inheritance. Moreover, if the automatic heirs of a freedman were not biological children but adoptees, the patron could as well get ownership of the property (Kim, 2014).

Another restriction imposed upon ex-slaves by the Roman government was that they had no freedom of residence. As such, they could not live in the city of Rome. This law was passed during Augustus' reign. Because of the obstacles that one would face after adopting a slave, it was preferred by many to adopt freeborn children instead. In Roman society, hardly many men adopted slaves (Gardner, 1989). As a result, high-ranking individuals in Roman society who were conscious of protecting their societal reputation shunned the adoption of slaves for close family relationships or friends. Additionally, Roman civil law encouraged the citizens not to adopt slaves when there was a legitimate heir in line. Where there was a legitimate heir, adoption, which automatically created a legal heir, was likely to create a conflict in the adopter's family (Gardner, 1998; Lindsay, 2009).

Further Survey of Relevant Literature on *Huiothesia*

The subject of adoption has fairly been explored in evangelical circles compared to subjects such as justification and redemption which have been given extensive focus, meaning there is still much to be done. Donald Winters' article, *Theology of Adoption: The Father Heart of God*, 2010, gives a biblical understanding of what adoption is with regard to God the Father (Winters, 2010). Michael Peppard also contributes to the subject

in his article, *Adopted and Begotten Sons of God: Paul and John on Divine Sonship*. Peppard (2011) explores how true believers have received divine sonship by faith. His findings are based on Paul's and John's letters. Peppard (2011) distinguishes between the adopted and begotten sons of God. He is categorical by saying that Jesus Christ is the begotten son of God (divine sonship), while Christians are adopted sons of God (Brown, 1977; Peppard, 2011).

James Scott (1992) is another scholar who devoted himself to the study of *huiiothesia* in his *Adoption as Sons of God*. First, he examines the use of the term adoption in the Greco-Roman background. He discovers that it meant "adoption as sons" rather than "sonship." Additionally, he researches adoption in the Old Testament and ancient Judaism. He comes to a resounding conclusion that both cultures have significant similarities and complementarity. In this book also, Scott seeks to challenge Byrnes understanding that υιοθεσία meant "sonship" rather than "adoption as son" in the Jewish culture. Instead, Scott finds out that occurrences of the Pauline metaphor of υιοθεσία are embedded in a certain Old Testament (Jewish adoption formula) notable in Jewish profane examples of adoption such as in Genesis 48:5–6, Exodus 2:10, and Esther 2:7, 15. After studying divine adoption in 2 Samuel 7:14, Scott concludes, "The subsequent Jewish tradition based on 2 Samuel 7:14 oriented the renewal of the covenant relationship, including Israel's divine sonship (cf. Hos 2:1), to the messianically-interpreted Davidic promise.... Hence, the national expectation of divine adoption, converging as it does with the messianic expectation, leads to an appropriation of 2 Samuel 7:14a to the eschatological people of God as a whole" (Scott, 1992).

Trevor J. Burke likewise contributes to the scholarship of adoption through his well-researched *The Characteristics of Paul's Adoptive Sonship (Huiiothesia) Motif*. The purpose of this study, according to Burke, is to understand the salvific purposes of God: whether adoption is for the present era, the time to come after Christ's return, or both. In this thesis, Burke is inspired to know whether adoption has an eschatological blessing. In his other thesis, Burke seeks to know how *huiiothesia* relates to the work and the person of Christ. Is Christ the focus of adoption, that is, is it Christological? Thus, Burke examines both motifs, which leads him to conclude that the dominant perspective of Paul's υιοθεσία is both Christological and eschatological with regard to the salvation of believers (Beeke, 2008).

By Christological, Burke means that *huiiothesia* is the work of Christ. As such, you cannot separate *huiiothesia* from the person of Christ. This is because Christ is the person who legally established *huiiothesia* for both Jews and Gentiles so that they might be adopted into the family of God through faith. The Jews were delivered from the supervision and slavery of the Mosaic Law into the mature era of grace and faith, while the Gentiles were redeemed from the elementary things of the world that kept them in bondage and slavery. Regarding eschatology, Burke asserts that *huiiothesia* has an eternal significance. It is the adopted sons of God who will be heirs of the age to come after the return of Christ.

Moreover, Burke (2006) published a monograph, *Adopted into God's family*, centered on the Pauline adoption passages. In this exegetical work, Burke finds out that υιοθεσία is an organizing metaphor. He uses the term "organizing" in the sense that the metaphor brings together the work and person of Christ, the soteriological nuances found in other Paul's

discourses, and the end times. From his study of select passages such as Romans 5:15–23, 9:4, Ephesians 1:5, and Galatians 4:5, Burke concludes, “Huiiothesia is not only a theological but also a soteriological metaphor that underscores the subjective side of the believer’s salvation” (Burke, 2006).

Additionally, Burke researches the metaphor based on the ancient cultures of the Greco-Romans and the Jews. Then, he relates his findings to the current Christian culture. He concludes that the ancient cultures of adoptive-adoptee relationships are the source domain, while the Christians’ relationship with God is the recipient/target domain (Burke, 2006).

Besides the mentioned works, Brendan Byrne is another evangelical scholar whose work, *Sons of God—Seed of Abraham*, is notable. In this study, Byrnes seeks to show that the Pauline υιοθεσία metaphors are filled with the Jewish sonship. As such, Paul extensively makes use of Jewish terminology. With that in mind, Byrne advises that the adoption metaphors of Paul should be read in the backdrop of the Old Testament and intertestamental literature (Byrne, 1979).

In his excellent monograph, *The Son of God in the Roman World*, Michael Peppard delves into studying the ideology and practice within Roman adoption in the first-century context. In his thesis, which is the motive of his study, Peppard argues that the divine sonship metaphor has not been thoroughly looked into through the lens of the Roman sociopolitical environment. On the contrary, exegesis on divine sonship has been unfairly motivated by “elite theological debates of later centuries.” To identify an appropriate background of the biblical divine sonship metaphor, Peppard critically undertakes a study

of the practices and laws of Roman adoption. Peppard aims to identify the Imperial ideology behind the practices in the study (Peppard, 2012).

In his conclusion, Peppard notes that the ruling Imperial household of the Romans had a pervasive cultural ideology during the lifetime of the Christian authors. It comprised an upward trajectory of adoption. As such, Peppard finds that adoption is more relevant depending on the power of the adoptive father. And it influenced the relationship of the adoptive father and the adoptee. Based on the power of the adoptive father, Peppard highlights Julius Caesar's adoption of Octavian. Some evangelical scholars regard the adoption of Octavian as the most outstanding adoption in the entire human history. The imperial adoption ensured the succession of power in the ancient Roman world (Peppard, 2012).

Additionally, Peppard notes that after adoption, it is not only the family relationship of the adoptee that changes but also worship. Thus, the adoptee was required to embrace the worship practices of the adoptive father and preserve the cultic practices too. Peppard agrees with Lewis that one must draw a connection between Roman religious ideologies of adoption when it comes to *υιοθεσία* metaphors based on Roman background (Peppard, 2012).

In his commentary, Origen takes the discourse further by mentioning that there is a final adoption for believers, which will come in the eschatological era. He says, "We receive adoption, then, but that which is through a mirror and in a riddle. But when the things that are perfect come, then we shall attain adoption face to face" (Scheck, 2002). Through Christ's mission, God made Jesus his divine son with soteriological (to make more sons

of God) and eschatological intentions. Moreover, in his letters, Paul also illustrates that believers have divine sonship, like Christ, through the new birth, which the Holy Spirit effects. This stance is also held by the apostle John in John 1:12–13 (Peppard, 2011).

Matthew Henry's Commentary offers a wholesome discussion on adoption by contrasting the church in the Old Testament and New Testament (the dispensation of grace). When the Jews were subject to the law, they were like children who were not better than servants. As such, they could not enjoy the privileges of a son. Thus, they are placed under a tutor or a governor, in this case, the Mosaic Law (Matthew, 1961).

However, after the coming of the Messiah (Christ), they were redeemed from the rudiments of the world and the supervision of the law. Thus, they attained the full rights of sonship through the Spirit of adoption. Hence, God sent the Spirit of adoption and sonship to dwell in their hearts. And if sons, then heirs of God. And joint heirs with Christ (Matthew, 1961).

Scholars who have delved into the *huiiothesia* discourse have done exemplary work. They have given a proper meaning and understanding of adoption by relating it to its ancient social and cultural usage. In addition, they have shown how *huiiothesia* informs the believers' salvation and how it relates to end times. Even though the scholars who have weighed in on this subject have done excellent work, I believe one thing is still lacking. They have not critically looked at the pastoral implications of adoption as sons, whereby a proper knowledge of the implications can free believers in Christ from legalism and extra-biblical teachings about blessings. This is because they are legal heirs in Christ.

Thus, they are capable of receiving the blessings of God freely. And this gap is what this study seeks to address.

Summary

Adoption differs from other major themes such as regeneration, sanctification, and justification. Adoption is the state of a believer being adopted as a son (of God). Regeneration is actualized by the Holy Spirit, who imparts a brand new nature in a Christian, despite possessing the nature of their biological parents outwardly. Justification delivers believers from the court room and ushers them into God's family. Hence actualizing their reconciliation and forgiveness with the Father. Sanctification is the lifestyle a believer achieves through developing family characteristics upon their adoption into the family of God.

In available Jewish writings, the term adoption is not directly used. However, its concept is illustrated using different terms and formulae. This can be seen in passages such as Exodus 2:1–10, Genesis 48:1–7, and Esther 2:5–7. And the apostle Paul, penning down the letter to Galatians, might have assumed that his audience was familiar with the literature. The nation of Israel in the Old Testament is illustrated as God's son. God chose this nation, and He became their Father.

It was not a common practice for the Romans to adopt strangers. Instead, adoptees were picked from relatives' children or the children of one's close friends. In other situations, an adopted child could be a slave. Adoption could have been necessitated by infertility or the death of all biological children. Adopted children were supposed to continue the family lineage and inherit family estates.

Scholarship on the subject of adoption continues to take traction in evangelical circles. The bottom line of all scholars is that an adopted child has legal rights of inheritance of the adoptive father's property. In addition, evangelical scholars posit that the adoption of believers into the family of God is Christological in nature. What this means is that it is the work of Christ, the Messiah. God could not have adopted the Jews and Gentiles as his sons without the substance of faith and grace (Christ), according to the promise of God. In addition, adoption is essential in the soteriology of believers. In the act of adoption in Christ, God also made it possible to save both the Jews and Gentiles from the law, sin, and elements of the world in order to serve the living God.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the theoretical approach that the researcher uses to exegete the pericope. The chapter considers the forms, definitions, parts, and theories of the approach.

This study uses the socio-rhetorical approach to interpret the text of Galatians 4:1–7. This approach is used because a text always exhibits a dialogical relationship with its context. The relationship can be learned from the words preceding the text and other texts and active voices responding to the text. As a result, the meaning of a text cannot be drawn solely from the author's expertise but with a critical study of the relationship between a text and the contexts in which the text originated. In addition, the context of a text considers the specific correlation evoked by the contemplators and the creator. Correspondingly, each text is intertextual (Gowler, 2000, 2003).

Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation Approach

Vernon Robbins first coined the socio-rhetorical interpretation of texts as a critical approach in New Testament studies (Robbins, 1984). Afterward, scholars stood on the shoulders of his work and developed their studies using this approach in various texts (Gowler, 2010). Kloppenborg (2003) notes that Robbins spent years of research in the 1970s and 1980s in various studies. He critically focused on narrative criticism, semiotics, the social world of Bible texts, rhetorical features of Bible texts, intertextuality, and the purpose of ideology in the use and production of literary texts.

According to Kloppenborg, Robbin belaboured to understand how a text affects the intellect, sensibilities, and emotions of the readers and hearers.

Additionally, Robbins focused on knowing how the worlds of the hearers and readers of a text affect its appropriation (Kloppenborg, 2003). Robbin (1996) posits that socio-rhetorical analysis combines disciplines for interpreting and analyzing texts to properly understand them and their reception. He argues that scholars are constantly in dialogue with past and present voices, such as the Greco-Roman and ancient Jewish literature, and there should always be a good continuity with past works (Robbins, 1996b).

The socio-rhetorical approach that Robbins (2009) suggests uses rhetorical interpretation and analysis founded on literary and oral dynamics in social, religious, cultural, and ideological contexts of the first century to interpret New Testament literature. Additionally, Robbins spices his work with insights from 100 CE to the start of the Qur'an and Islam in the 7th century CE, cutting across to the 21st-century literary, rhetorical, historical, ideological, social, theological, and cultural approaches of today (Robbins, 2009).

The rhetorical approach is concerned with the interrelationship between human actions and language, reality's social nature, and how a language causes effects to its audience. It also evaluates the audience's responses, the speaker's motivations, discourse structures and advancements in a communication environment (Goodwin, 1993).

The focus of the socio-rhetoric approach is the text as a social, historical, cultural, ideological, and theological discourse of interpretation. And the information from the different areas bears an intertextual relation. From the compound term socio-rhetorical,

the term “rhetorical” is used to regard the text as a literary object. The term “socio” is used to refer to the text of focus as a cultural artifact (Tate, 2011).

Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of “Textures of Texts”

Robbins asserts that when a text is explored from various angles, one is likely to identify different textures of meanings, emotions, convictions, actions, and values (Robbins, 1992, 1996a, 1996b). Robbins suggests the following textures:

Inner Texture

Inner texture comprises a text’s linguistic patterns, the way the text manages to persuade the reader and a text’s structural elements. It considers word structures such as word repetition (occurrence of a word or phrase several times in a text) and term sequencing (alternation of words). In addition, inner texture considers narrational aspects such as narratorial voice, written texts, reported speech, and characters’ voices (Robbins, 1996a; Tate, 2011).

Intertexture

This refers to a text’s reference to, representation of and use of phenomena that are outside the world of the text, which may include the text’s reconfigurations, recitations, and allusions to particular texts, institutions, events, objects, language, and other specified extra-textual contexts that the text of interest interacts with. Recitations analyses whether a text is expanded, summarized or what an event is referenced. With respect to reconfigurations, an author might opt to reconfigure stories of well-known texts or traditions. For instance, the narrative of Elizabeth conceiving at an old age in

Luke chapter one might have been taken from stories of virgins in the Greco-Roman and the LXX who got impregnated by gods (Robbins, 1992; Tate, 2011)

Moreover, intertexture focuses on recontextualization, which is the art of placing speeches and narratives into new contexts without saying it.

Sacred Texture

It refers to a text's skill when communicating the relationship between the divine and human. Notable aspects of sacred texture include deities, religious communities, holy persons, ethics, spirit beings, human redemption, and divine history. Such elements pop out from a critical multi-textured analysis of a text (Robbins, 1996a).

Ideological Texture

The focus of ideological texture is how a text manifests conflicts and alliances and how the text and its interpreters align themselves with other groups and individuals. In this case, it's the responsibility of the reader to note and then interpret the ideologies that a text reveals. The ideological texture presupposes that a particular text carries an ideology: a body of political, religious, social, or economic ideas on which judgements, values, and thoughts of a culture are founded (Robbins, 1996a; Tate, 2011).

Social and Cultural Texture

Refers to occurrences in a text where there is interaction with the culture and society through the sharing of cultural and social norms, attitudes, and interaction methods that everyone in the society is well versed with. In addition, the social and cultural texture

may position itself as transforming, rejecting or sharing in the dispositions, attitudes, or values of the dominant culture system (Robbins, 1996a; Tate, 2011).

Assumptions and Scope of the Methodological Approach

The approach used in this study primarily focuses on analysis, interpretation, description, and evaluation of the arguments given by the author in Galatians 4:1–7 (Croft, 1965). This study assumes that the author of the pericope has a particular communication perspective influenced by that time's socio-rhetorical context. Based on that, the author is trying to persuade their contemporaries through the lenses of the textures of that time (Gowler, 2010; Murphy, 2020; Robbins, 1996a). In addition, the study assumes that language, irrespective of its flaws, is sufficient to communicate the desired goals. Thus, the form of the pericope, as it is, is reliable to the present reader.

As a result, this study limits itself to the socio-rhetorical approach and considers it sufficient for drawing the meaning of Galatians 4:1–7.

Justification for the Approach

The message chronicled in the book of Galatians is scripted in a way that the author and the author's contemporaries can understand clearly. On the contrary, the present reader of the book of Galatians lives in a different historical era. As such, Galatian's cultural, literary and rhetorical world might be completely at variance with the present one. Therefore, this study deems it fit to use the socio-rhetorical approach to draw the original meaning from the Greek language of the New Testament.

The Methodological Aspects and Structure

This study will delve into identifying the theological context of the pericope through an outline of the author's argument and an appreciation of the socio-rhetorical context of the author, original audience and text. In addition, this study will endeavour to analyze the literary context comprising the text's genre, flow, language and literary techniques. Language analysis will involve translating the pericope from the original Greek language into English, not forgetting the text's lexical, semantic, grammatical, and syntactical analysis. Besides, the study will outline the implication of the *huiiothesia* metaphor as portrayed in the pericope.

The exegetical analysis of this study will be given a commentary structure. As such, it will move from verse-to-verse, illustrating exegetical insights in the text (Smith, 2008).

Summary

The focus of this chapter has been to introduce the approach used to exegete Galatians 4:1–7 pericope. The study uses the socio-rhetorical approach in analyzing the text. A text has the potential to affect the intellect, sensibilities, and emotions of the readers and hearers. Moreover, the worlds of the hearers and readers affect the text's appropriation. The socio-rhetorical approach takes into consideration the Greco-Roman and ancient Jewish literature and the continuity after that.

In interpreting the New Testament literature, scholars use rhetorical interpretation and analysis founded on literary and oral aspects in the first century's social, religious, cultural, and ideological contexts. In the socio-rhetorical interpretation, a text is given focus from different angles to identify the meanings, emotions, convictions, actions, and

values within the text. Textures of a text useful for interpretation include inner texture, intertexture, sacred texture, ideological texture, and social and cultural texture.

This study assumes that the author of the pericope has a certain communication perspective, which was highly influenced by his socio-rhetorical context. Moreover, the study assumes that every language, regardless of its flaws, is enough to achieve the desired communication goals. Thus, the pericope is entirely reliable. Furthermore, the study is limited to the socio-rhetorical approach, which is sufficient to establish the adoption metaphor's meaning and understanding.

With that said, the next chapter uses the methodological approaches mentioned in this chapter to undertake a thorough exegetical analysis to interpret Galatians 4:1–7.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF GALATIANS 4:1–7

Introduction

According to Martyn, many interpreters of the book of Galatians read it from an apocalyptic worldview (Martyn, 1997). On the contrary, some scholars warn against such a stance as it ignores salvation history. However, Collins suggests that the apocalyptic textures in Galatians are a matter of definition (Collins, 1998). And like the rest of Paul's letters, Galatians contains glimpses of an apocalyptic eschatological worldview (Barclay, 1988; Keener, 2018).

Dominant Theological Themes of Galatians

The theme of the law is conspicuous in the letter (2: 16, 19; 3:2, 5; 4:4–5; 5:3–4). In addition, Paul elevates the theme of the promise (3:14, 16–19, 21–22; 4:23, 28) and makes it a major reference point in his arguments. Moreover, Paul invokes the theme of the Spirit in the ethical section of the letter (5:16–18, 22–23, 25; 6:1, 8). According to the apostle Paul, it is the Spirit that brings true righteousness, not outward keeping of the law (cf. Ezek 36:27). Paul contrasts the Spirit with the flesh in 3:3, where he seems to clarify that the heir is prophetically promised (Spirit-promised), and is not a child born through natural means (4:23, 29). This contrast continues in 5:13, 16–17, 19–21, 24, and 6:8, 12–13 (Keener, 2018). Paul belabours to inform the Gentile Christians that, since they have believed in Christ, they have also received the promised Spirit who makes them full heirs of the promises of Israel. According to Keener, Paul looks at the gentile Christians from the viewpoint of spiritual proselytes (3:29; cf. Romans 2:28–29). On the contrary,

those who opposed Paul's gospel saw them as sympathizers (cf. Acts 15:20) in dire need of the Mosaic covenant to become Abraham's children (Keener, 2018).

Authorship and Date

Virtually all scholars agree that Paul is the author of Galatians (Betz, 1979; Lightfoot, n.d.). Early writers believed that this letter was written in Rome. Other scholars believe it could have been in Ephesus or Corinth. Besides, it could also have been in Antioch if Paul had immediately moved to Galatia after the Jerusalem council (Keener, 2018). Therefore, if Paul wrote before the Jerusalem council (Acts 15), Antioch is the likely location. But if after the council, then Ephesus or Corinth takes the day. The letter might have been written from CA 48 to mid-50s.

The Audience

Evangelical scholars agree that a majority of the audience were Gentiles, who were not circumcised (Gal 5:2; 6:12) and were formally worshipers of non-gods (4:8). It is believed that in areas where Jews lived, some Gentiles were attracted to Judaism practices, which might have been the case in Galatia. Thus, they knew the synagogue practices before conversion (Keener, 2018). In view of these findings, the audience of Paul was a Gentile community.

The Setting of Galatians

It should matter to any person whom Apostle Paul addressed when he said "the churches of Galatia" (Gal 1:2). The territorial area referred to as Galatia formed most of central Asia Minor. This area changed with time. However, the Lystra, Antioch, Derbe, and Iconium cities were part of the Roman Province of Galatia during the time of Paul

(Keller, 1981). During Paul's three missionary journeys, he visited all the cities, with some scholars asserting that Acts 16:6; 18:23 reference his visits to the northern region. There is no consensus among scholars as to whether Paul wrote the letter while in the northern or southern region. Mitchell supports the South Galatia opinion in her work, while Betz is of the northern opinion (Mitchell, n.d.).

If the southern proposition is correct, it makes Galatians the oldest of Paul's books (Decker, 1958). On the contrary, the northern view would need a later date, preferably after the Jerusalem council in Acts 15. That notwithstanding, Jervis (1999) notes that some scholars adopt the north Galatian proposition, as it chronicles the letter to the latter years of Paul's life (Jervis, 1999). The northern view is founded on the Jerusalem council mentioned in Galatians 2 and the similarities between Romans and Galatians (Gundry, 1970). However, Ngewa (2010) points out that there is no indication of Paul having preached in the northern region because the language used in chapters 16 and 18 of Romans is not decisive (Ngewa, 2010). And based on Ngewa's work, a majority now favour the Southern view. This is supported by the lack of information that supports the northern hypothesis. In addition, the internal and external evidence of Galatians lean toward the South Galatia proposition. DeHoff (1978) argues that there is a category that takes no side and believes that the letter was written to both the northern and southern churches (DeHoff, 1978).

Background Issues in Galatians

In the first century, the Jews had divergent opinions concerning the Gentiles, similar to Jesus-believing Judeans. In that light, some Jews expected that eschatology would

destroy the Gentiles. Another faction believed that the Gentiles would be converted (Donaldson, 1997; Sanders, 1985). Hellenistic Jews were more lenient to the Gentiles than rural Judeans and wilderness pietists who held hardline sentiments. Several factors contributed to the rise of Judean nationalism during the 40s and 50s, during the Antioch conflict highlighted in Galatians 2:11–14. At this time, the conservatives might have also gained prominence in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:5; 21:20–21). In Judea, the Jews believed that the Gentiles who believed and worshipped the true God and shunned sexual misconduct would be sharers of the world to come. However, if they needed to become Jews, children of Abraham and heirs of the covenant promises, they must convert, beginning with the circumcision ritual. During the 30s and early 40s, leaders who were part of the Jesus Movement understood that Gentiles who believed in Christ had received the eschatological Spirit, though reluctantly in the beginning. Thus, they had the advantage in the restoration era, just like the covenant Jews who had the historic physical sign of circumcision (Keener, 2018).

On the contrary, the Jews in Jerusalem held a hardline stance and chided the believers in Antioch for being too accommodative (Acts 15:1). In order to set things into perspective, Antioch's believers sent a delegation led by Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to seek clarity from the leaders there, who James, the younger brother of Jesus, led. To the surprise of Jerusalem Judeans, the Jesus' movement in Jerusalem accepted that the Gentiles did not have to be circumcised (Gal 2:3, 7–9; Acts 15:5–6, 19–20; 21:25) (Keener, 2018).

The decision pleased the top leaders from both camps. However, high-ranking, learned, and Torah-observant Jews needed more (Gal 2:4; Acts 15:5–6). This behaviour might

have also crept into people such as close friends of James who made Peter compromise and started avoiding gentile believers in table fellowship in order to keep the Judean standards when the conservatives from Jerusalem came to Antioch. This confused the Gentile believers, who believed they had been accepted and regarded as friends. It would have meant that the Gentile believers were still second-class and not full members of the people of God (Keener, 2018).

This behaviour sharply angered Paul, who publicly rebuked Peter. Paul regarded this as a betrayal of the agreement brokered during the Jerusalem council. It was also an undercutting of the gospel that both Paul and Peter shared. During the time of the agreement between Antioch's delegation and Jerusalem leaders, the circumcision conservatives had not yet gone far in spreading their influence, save for Syria-Cilicia (Acts 15:23), where Paul had already spread the good news (Gal 1:21–23). However, by the time Paul wrote Galatians, a good number had gone beyond the Taurus Mountains into Galatia, the sphere of Paul's evangelistic missions. As a result, it prompted Paul to write the letter of Galatians as a "sound" teaching to the churches in Galatia that he led (Keener, 2018).

Paul points out that the law was not opposed to the promises of God (that all Gentiles would be blessed through the seed of Abraham), nor was it ineffective. However, it was only to be in place temporarily until faith and Christ came, the substance of the promise. This imagery is seen in the pedagogical illustration where the function of a pedagogue was to last until a young man moved from puberty into adulthood (Young, n.d.). However, the law failed because of sin (Gal 3:10). Additionally, it was not intended to give righteousness and life (Boer, 2011; Keener, 2018). Being under the law subjected

believers to the curse. On the other hand, life results from faith (3:11), a preserve of God's sons (2:20).

In Galatians 3:26–29, Paul advances his discourse by informing the Galatians that they are already heirs of God through faith in Christ. As a result, the right of inheritance is now for the Jews, Greeks, males, females, slaves and the free (Keener, 2018).

In Galatians 4:1–7, Paul gives a full-blown illustration. He retaliates that as long as the Israelites were under the slave guardian (law), they were no better than a slave. However, when Christ came, he redeemed believers from the supervision of the law (4:4) and awarded them full adoption as children. As long as Israel was under the law, they remained minor children and subjects. On the contrary, Gentiles were not God's children; they were not members of the commonwealth of God (Boer, 2011; Keener, 2018).

However, the Gentiles can now enjoy the rights of sons through the regeneration of the Spirit (3:1–5, 14; 4:6). Keener (2018) points out that the law, like the Israelites, did not govern the Galatian Gentiles. Because of their pagan ways (4:8), they were slaves of the elementary things of the world, just as Israel was enslaved by the law (4:9–10). Perhaps this revelation shocked the Israelites, who regarded themselves as better than the Gentiles (Boer, 2011). For this reason, Paul rebuked those who were going back to the observance of the law by likening it to going back to paganism. In effect, they were forsaking their position of being an heir with Christ. The theme of a son being an heir is well encapsulated in 4:1, 7. The minor child is an heir and owns all (v.1). However, they have no access to what they own until they attain maturity after puberty (Keener, 2018).

Structure of Galatians

Lightfoot remarks that, after the opening statements of the letter, its body is divided into three main sections. The first part is a narrative (1:6–2:21). The next part is direct proofs (3:1–5:12). And the final part is exhortation and ethics as seen in 5:13–6:10 (Lightfoot, n.d.). In the middle section, Paul appeals to past experience (3:1–5), and two lines of his argument use Scripture.

A category of people study the letter as a written oration and arrange it as a speech of a particular rhetorical genre (S. Porter, 1997). Since much of this letter is argumentation, there are characteristic features of several speeches in the letter compared to other letters by Paul.

Rhetoric in Galatians

Galatians is laden with rhetorical devices, such as antithetical word pairs, such as law vs. faith, flesh vs. Spirit, curse vs. blessing, bondage vs. freedom, slave vs. son, works vs. grace, and present Jerusalem vs. heavenly Jerusalem (Harvey, 1998). In addition, some scholars have tried to classify Galatians into one of the rhetorical classifications found in ordinary rhetorical handbooks: deliberative, epideictic, or forensic. Some scholars regard the letter as forensic due to the defence that Paul mounts against his detractors, albeit 5:13–6:10, which is a hortatory portion, fails to fit into the measuring rod of forensic rhetoric (Kennedy, 1984). Besides, those who treat Galatians as deliberative argue that Paul is trying to persuade believers in Galatia to consider changing their course of action (Classen, 1992). Generally, letters in the ancient era were meant to be conversational.

The Genre of Galatians 4:1–7

This pericope is part of the body of the letter where Paul wants the Galatians to know that they are not slaves (subject to the law for the Jews and subject to elementary principles for the Gentiles) anymore but sons, making them heirs. The thought structure of this pericope can be described as follows:

The position of “adoption,” as presented in Galatians 4:1–7 is that God sends his son as a redeemer for believers in Christ from law enslavement and elemental spirits of the world. In addition, he elevates them to become children through adoption. Consequently, it makes believers heirs through the Spirit of adoption as was promised to Abraham. The place of freedom of believers in Galatians 4:1–7 rotates around, ἐπιτρόπους (steward, guardian), υἰοθεσίαν (adoption), οἰκονόμους (trustee), ἐξαγοράση (redeem), and δεδουλωμένοι (slavery). God the Father sent Christ, who was born of a woman under the law, to redeem (ἐξαγοράση) the believers in Christ from the slavery (δεδουλωμένοι) of the law and the tutelage of ἐπιτρόπους and οἰκονόμους. Also, believers have been redeemed from the world’s elemental spirits (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου) in order to be set free and receive adoption as sons (τὴν υἰοθεσίαν). These sons are legal heirs of the promise of God to Abraham (Chang, 2021).

Adoption’s Socio-historical Context in Galatians 4:1–7

Just like in the previous chapter, where Paul makes use of the metaphor παιδαγωγός, he moves further to embrace the imagery of a guardian (ἐπίτροπος) and a trustee (οἰκονόμος) in Galatians 4:2. During the Greco-Roman social society; it was the function of the ἐπίτροπος to manage the household of a minor (νήπιός, Gal 4:1) which included

treasury, cattle, and fields till the minor got mature. In addition, the guardian was supposed to provide the minor with clothing and food during their schooling age (Belleville, 1986).

Even though the minor was the legal owner of the property, the control was legally left in the hands of the guardians. In effect, the minor could not act independently. The state of being under a disciplinarian (ὕπὸ παιδαγωγόν) is similar to being under guardians (ὕπὸ ἐπιτρόπους), signifying lack of freedom of a minor with familial structure. It's until the father determines that the minor has reached maturity that the child is released from guardianship (Gal 4:2–4). In the social context of the pericope, the trustees refer to the Greco-Roman guardianship (Bartchy, 1992; Goodrich, 2010). According to Belleville, a guardian was meant to manage monetary revenues, while a trustee acted as the estate agent (Belleville, 1986). The vocabulary trustee is not used in this context in the spirit of Roman inheritance laws but rather in the sense of administration without legal connotations. As such, Paul uses the term οἰκονόμος to describe slave supervisor.

The skillful personification of the law as (παιδαγωγός – Gal 3:23–25) by Paul and as trustees and guardians in Galatians 4:2 is a demonstration of the law's temporary control over the people (De Boer, 2011). Through this, Paul reveals that as long as the son is under the care of trustees, disciplinarians, and guardians, he is not different from a slave who lacks self-determination. Thus, this analogy shows the believer that the law was not permanent because, after the coming of faith, the law was brought to an end through baptism in Christ (Gal 3:27).

In the pericope, we find another socio-historical aspect of adoption (Gal 4:5), a common familial practice in the first century (Oakes, 2015). Chang notes that God, through Christ, has a better intimate relationship compared to the Roman emperors or household fathers of Rome. According to Greco-Roman law, the *paterfamilias* will be absolute; thus, the message that Paul is passing across is vividly non-negotiable (Chang, 2021).

Greek Text of Galatians 4:1–7

¹ Λέγω δέ, ἐφ’ ὅσον χρόνον ὁ κληρονόμος νήπιός ἐστιν, οὐδὲν διαφέρει δούλου κύριος πάντων ὧν, ² ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστὶν καὶ οἰκονόμους ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρὸς. ³ οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅτε ἦμεν νήπιοι, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἦμεθα δεδουλωμένοι ⁴ ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ⁵ ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν. ⁶ Ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν κρᾶζον• αββα ὁ πατήρ. ⁷ ὥστε οὐκέτι εἰ δοῦλος ἀλλὰ υἱός• εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος διὰ θεοῦ.

My Translation of Galatians 4:1–7 from Greek to English

¹ Moreover, I say, for as long as the heir is a minor, he is no different from a slave, although he owns everything. ² But he is under guardians and trustees until the time appointed by his father. ³ Even so we, when we were minors, we were in bondage under the elementary principles of the world. ⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God sent forth

the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father.”⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, also an heir through God.

Verse-by-Verse Textual Analysis and Commentary

The Heir as a Child

Gal 4:1 Λέγω δέ, ἐφ’ ὅσον χρόνον ὁ κληρονόμος νήπιός ἐστιν, οὐδὲν διαφέρει δούλου κύριος πάντων ὧν,

Gal 4:1 Moreover, I say, for as long as the heir is a minor, he is no different from a slave, although he owns everything.

In this verse, Paul uses the term λέγω to begin an analogy that reflects the παιδαγωγός described in 3:24–25, although at this time in detail. In addition, Paul uses the verb λέγω to appeal to his apostolic authority in that present moment. This is similar to a prophetic voice as seen in Jeremiah 2:5, “Thus says the LORD” (Bailey, 2016). It is essential for believers in Christ to note that the ideas Paul tries to bring out in this verse to the Galatians (who were grownups agewise) concerning a minor is not synonymous to immaturity, but rather the state of being under the observance of a guardian. The term διαφέρει bears the notion of “differing with an advantage over.” It is also used in Galatians 2:6. However, Galatians 2:6 defines οὐδὲν μοι διαφέρει through the addition of a parallel clause ἐμοὶ... οὐδὲν προσανέθεντο to bring out the “advantage over” idea strongly (Yeong, 2014).

Paul uses κληρονόμος (heir) to point to a son designated to inherit property from the father. However, what remains unclear is whether the father has passed on and if the heir is adopted or a biological child. The term “*nepios*” is used in a sense that means a minor. It is at the main clause where Paul compares a minor to a slave. However, the verb ὧν

qualifies the child heir as the owner of everything, besides being limited by age. Even though the minor is technically a slave, he is also a master in waiting. The appearance of κύριος before ὧν in the phrase δούλου κύριος πάντων ὧν indicates that the slavery of the heir is temporary (Bailey, 2016).

Longenecker notes that ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον (as long as) is a temporal phrase that illustrates some temporary relationship. The fact that the minor lord is no different from a slave is meant to show that both the slave and the minor are subject to rules and regulations. The picture Paul paints in this verse is of a minor born in a wealthy home, thus a legal heir of all the father owns. However, age prevents him from inheriting the family possessions (Longenecker, 1990). Additionally, this verse clearly shows that a minor lacks legal rights until they reach the maturity age. Contextually, *nepios* here means legal dispossession and incompetence, unlike in other areas (1 Cor 3:1), where Paul uses the term to mean spiritual immaturity (George, 1994).

Scheck (2010) notes that the imagery of a child-heir used in 4:1 illustrates the human race, while the predetermined time points to the appearance of Christ. Even the unborn are already dead in Adam but made alive through the second Adam. This point of view is entirely agreed upon by the evangelical and underscores the divine strategy that unites the OT and NT (Scheck, 2010).

According to Aquinas (1966):

As long as the heir is a child” refers to the Jewish people (designated heirs of Abraham’s promise) and Christ, who has been made heir of everything. For the Jews, while they were still under the law, they were children, while Christ was

made a child through incarnation. In 1 Corinthians 13:11, Paul likens being under the law to being a minor, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child.” In the era of the law, there is the imperfection of knowledge just as for a child compared to the full-blown revelation of the era of grace and truth through Christ (Aquinas, 1966).

Calvin posits that the patriarchs and the Israelites in the OT were already God’s sons and free, yet they did not own the freedom. The law put them under a tutor and, consequently, under a yoke. The OT fathers, like today’s believers, have pointed to a similar inheritance since they were also partakers of a similar adoption. Despite their outward slavery, their consciences were at liberty. The pardon of sin liberated their consciences from death and sin’s tyranny. Calvin concludes that they believed the same doctrine, had faith in one Mediator, shared with believers the same faith, referred to God as their father, and were guided by the same Spirit. As a result, the difference between OT fathers and today’s believers is in accidents rather than substance. That era referred to the infancy of the church, but after the appearance of faith through Christ, the church has now attained maturity (Calvin, n.d.).

4:2 ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ ἐπιτρόπους ἐστὶν καὶ οἰκονόμους ἄχρι τῆς προθεσμίας τοῦ πατρὸς.

4:2 But he is under guardians and trustees until the time appointed by his father.

The noun ἐπιτρόπους can be put into two domains. First, a foreman is a person given the mandate to supervise workers. The other domain, a guide, refers to someone who shows

concern for, directs or guides: leader or guardian. Considering the context of the pericope, “guide” is more appropriate in Galatians 4:2, for it bears the meaning of “help by leading” or “care through leading”, which is the same as the word παιδαγωγός (disciplinarian) found in Galatians 3:24 (Louw & Nida, 1996).

The noun Οἰκονόμους is found in the ‘household activities’ domain. And its function exists in three sub-domains. The first sub-category refers to a “manager”, someone with the mandate of running a household. The second sub-domain refers to an administrator. The last sub-category refers to a city treasurer, an individual with the power to manage a city’s finances. With regard to the context of the pericope, the terms “manager” and “administrator” are the most appropriate for Galatians 4:2. It brings out the meaning of an individual with the responsibility of running a household and safeguarding the heir’s assets (Louw & Nida, 1996).

Different Bible translations have translated ἐπιτρόπους varyingly. In the KJV, YLT, NKJV and RSV, it is translated as “tutor.” The NASB, NIV, and ESV have translated it as “guardian.” In Matthew 20:8, it was translated as “foreman” in the NIV, KJV, HCSB, NASB, and ESV, and translated as “steward” in YLT, RSV, WEB, and NKJV, and “manager” in the NET (Yeong, 2014). But the most suitable translation is the word “guardian.” In order to capture the concept of someone who has to be guided or taken care of, due to their inability to do so because of their young age.

A ἐπιτρόπος is mandated to have legal control and serve as the guardian over a designated time during the father’s absence. In ancient Roman law, the guardian was

supposed to serve while the father was alive or after his death. In some cases, the guardian was a slave.

The noun οἰκονόμος is defined as a household manager or a steward. And they could be a freedman or a slave who was made in charge of every internal matter of the household, such as finances and labour. The steward's duties also included the master's external affairs, such as property belonging to the minor heir (Yeong, 2014).

A child remains under the care of a slave until a time decided by the father that the minor heir can now be left in charge of the inheritance responsibly, hence no need for guardians and trustees (Ngewa, 2006). Paul employs the terms trustees and guardians to reinforce his message in 3:24–25 that the law's purpose was to protect and shepherd the Israelites from the destruction of sin while revealing what sin appears before God. The inheritance was available to the minor at a time established by the father's discretion, on death or at a different set time (Garland & Longman III, 2008). Childhood is a period that is under control (Arnold, 2001).

Scheck (2010) observes that the “trustees” and “guardians” can be regarded as the prophets through whose words the Israelites were informed consistently of the coming of the Messiah, just as the Law is regarded as the pedagogue. Those under the spirit of fear (law) can be termed to be under-trustees and guardians. Those in the minority age fear making mistakes, transgressing the law, and have no trust in their freedom, even if they are masters by birth. According to Roman law, adulthood was attained at the age of twenty-five. Likewise, it is the coming of Christ that marks the human race's maturation (Scheck, 2010).

Enslaved by Immaturity

4:3 οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅτε ἦμεν νήπιοι, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἦμεθα δεδουλωμένοι

4:3 Even so we, when we were minors, we were in bondage under the elementary principles of the world.

In this verse, the use of the verb ἦμεν illustrates a past time and state of being a minor. Whereas, the phrase τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (the elements of the world) has a parallel in the book of Colossians 2:8, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ”. Just like in Colossians chapter two, στοιχεῖα in Galatians 4:3&10 refers to the religious veneration of seasons and years, and days and months. Like in Colossians, Paul is calling the Galatians to come out of attachments based on what is material or temporal, whether pagan or Jewish.

The adverb οὕτως does point back to what the author was illustrating in vv. 1 and 2. While the conjunction καὶ, which in this verse is not used as a conjunction, portrays confirmation and parallelism with the vv. 1 and 2 illustration. The positioning of καὶ besides ἡμεῖς suggests two things: 1) the start of parallelism in v.3 and 2) the people referred to by ἡμεῖς might not have the consciousness of them being minors (Longenecker, 1990).

The author does three correspondences between v. 3 and vv. 1–2. Firstly, the ἡμεῖς found in v.3 corresponds to κληρονόμος in v. 1. The Galatian believers in Christ and Paul are the referents of ἡμεῖς. Secondly, ἦμεθα δεδουλωμένοι corresponds to οὐδὲν διαφέρει

δούλου in v.1, and δεδουλωμένοι's past tense is stative while ἡμεθα puts the state of affairs in the past. Further, the author uses the passive voice of δεδουλωμένοι in order to use the construction of ὑπὸ to parallel the construction of ὑπὸ in v. 2. The parallel constructions of *υπο* reference the negative effects of sin (Bailey, 2016; Schreiner, n.d.).

Just as the heir was ὑπὸ οἰκονόμους and ἐπιτρόπους, similarly, the Galatians and Paul were ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. Therefore, subject to the control of στοιχεῖα. The noun στοιχεῖα can be interpreted from four different viewpoints. First, it refers to “fundamental” components that make up material existence (BDAG 946), whereby, in the first century, it referred to the earth, fire, and air.

Ngewa observes that people who insist on living under the law live like children, governed by rules, which Paul here terms as basic principles. The elementary principles refer to things such as the Jewish law, African traditional sacrifices, and cultic rituals of the Gentiles. Such principles led the people away from God rather than toward Him (Ngewa, 2006). Returning to the supervision of the law for the Jews is the same as the Gentiles going back to a life governed by the basic things of the world. The basic principles were only necessary during immaturity. However, after the coming of Christ, they are no longer valuable (Garland & Longman III, 2008).

According to Bailey, the second meaning of στοιχεῖα is “rudimentary religious teachings,” commonly referring to the Mosaic Law. And in 4:8–9 it refers to “paganism” mixed with Gentile religious teachings. Third, στοιχεῖα also denotes “elemental spirits.” Contextually, the elemental spirits were either angelic beings in the case of Judaism or demons with regard to gentile paganism. And fourth, στοιχεῖα also made reference to

heavenly bodies like the stars and planets. These heavenly bodies dictated Jewish feasts. The Gentiles used to worship these heavenly bodies by observing special festivals and dates and often regarded them as deities. And Galatians 4:10 alludes to such observances (Bailey, 2016).

George asserts that Jesus Christ, in his death and resurrection, dethroned the evil powers so that every true believer does not live subject to the tyrannical dominion of the basic principles. Nor should they live in a perpetual conflict with elemental spirits. Elemental powers today may come against the believer because of temptations, and the Bible calls Satan the “tempter” (1 Thessalonians 3:5). However, the believers in Christ must be on guard to resist him (1 Cor 7:5). The author of Galatians presents the book as an account filled with spiritual warfare (George, 1994).

According to Augustine, Paul shows the law as a disciplinarian that governed the Jewish people. In this verse, he now terms the basic elements of this κόσμος as the trustees and guardians that made the Gentiles virtual slaves (Augustine, 2003). On his side, Jerome argues that the believers were initially under the control of the world because they could not understand that the son of God had appeared. He also posits that these overseers were angels ruling over the earth, wind, water, and fire. According to Jerome, one must be ruled by these elements before their eyes are opened to see Christ. Further, he notes that some scholars deem the elements to be the utterances of the prophets and the Mosaic Law (Scheck, 2010).

In his commentary, Luther observes that the believers were the minor heirs and the tutors were the world's elements. Believers were like slaves because of their servitude.

However, they were masters of everything since the heavenly Father had already predestined them. On the contrary, Luther points out that the elements mentioned here are not to be understood from the philosophical view as fire, earth, air, and water but as referring to Mosaic Law. The letter of the Law governs through fear of punishment and compels one to the Savior, who offers the spirit of freedom and inheritance (Scheck, 2002). In addition, in a later publication, Luther further argues that the law can bring forth sin and the horror of death. Both sin and death, together with other evils, are elements of the world. By themselves, they cannot give life or save, thus the reason why Paul alludes to the phrase “elements of this world.” By saying this, Paul does not encourage the believer to treat the Law with contempt (Scheck, 2002).

Boice (1976) argues that the notion of basic principles or the elemental spirits could refer to the basic religious stages experienced by all people. In addition, Boice says that the word στοιχεῖα refers to the Israelite law. He also agrees with Jerome that it refers to heavenly bodies such as the planets, sun, stars, and the moon. These heavenly bodies are linked to goddesses and gods as they controlled the calendar and marked the pagan ceremonies honouring their gods (Boice, 1976). According to Wright, the nation of Israel was in slavery, though their taskmasters this time were not the Egyptians; it is the world’s element. And Paul, in this verse, reveals that the Mosaic law is not different now from other guardian angels that watch over the nation of Israel, temporarily in place before the manifestation of God’s plan of eternal freedom (Wright, n.d.).

Yeong posits that in the book of Galatians, it is sometimes difficult to know when Paul is speaking to the Gentiles, Jews, or a mixture of the audiences. Although in some instances, he uses the pronouns “you” referring to the Gentiles and “we” referring to the

Jews, which is still not sufficient. The general message in v.3 is that the Gentiles and the Jews were restricted to an elementary age before the coming of faith. For the Jews, it was the keeping of the law, while for the Gentiles, it was the veneration of false gods and idols. However, both the Jews and Gentiles were locked up in sin (Yeong, 2014).

Adoption as sons through the Son

4:4 ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον,

4:4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

Paul uses the phrase τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου only in this epistle. In Ephesians 1:10, he uses καιρός instead of χρόνος, which has a close but entirely different meaning. The phrase πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου marks a specific “fullness of time” through the incarnation of Christ. This appointed time refers back to the “appointed time” (προθεσμία) in v.1.

The adjectival-participle (γενόμενον), the noun (γυναικός), and the preposition (ἐκ) have been extensively explored by commentators. No wonder they act as a precursor before Paul uses the allegory of Hagar and Sarah later in Galatians 4. Paul uses the two women in a status sense, their gender not having any theological interest (Yeong, 2014).

According to Bailey (2016), v.4 marks the second phase (vv. 4–6) in the entire discourse of vv. 1–7. Conjunction δὲ, which is adversative, introduces a change in time and deliverance from slavery, a solution to the challenge presented in vv. 1–3. The clause ὅτε δὲ ... χρόνου reveals to the reader when the Father send his Son. In addition, it is a

parallel to the temporal clauses in vv. 1–3, whose argument is a time prior to fulfilment and that the awaited time of the Father has now come. Further, the parallel in v.2 of the Father who was the mastermind of the set time with God in v. 3 reveals that it was God who appointed the fullness of time, as we can read in Ephesians 1:10, “... to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment” (Bailey, 2016).

Furthermore, the phrase ὅτε δὲ ... χρόνου echoes the scriptures of Deuteronomy 30:6, which looks forward to a time when God would transform the heart of Israel in order to walk in obedience. In addition, it echoes the words of Jeremiah 31: 31–34, which in the LXX says, ἡμέραι ἔρχονται (the days are coming) when the Father would establish a new covenant to enable the people to be obedient (Bailey, 2016). Ngewa argues that the Father decides the right time for someone who has been the legal heir all along to be the governor. Similarly, the Father decided the time for those in the slavery of elementary principles to gain maturity of His redemptive plan through knowledge. God had already prepared the world for the right time to receive the light of the gospel (Ngewa, 2006).

The clause ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ describes one of the two sendings of God in vv. 4–6. By the sendings, God brought to an end slavery and actualized the believers’ promise of inheritance. Considering the background of the OT, ἐξαποστέλλω shows that the purpose of God’s sending was meant for service. According to Exodus 4:23, God commanded Pharaoh to ἐξάποστείλον (send out) the Israelites so that they might serve (λατρεύση, LXX) him. In the same light, Jeremiah 7:25–26 informs the believer that the LORD (ἐξαπέστειλα) sent out the prophets his servants (Longenecker, 1990).

The word “Christ” is used six times in Galatians 3:23–29. However, in clause τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, Paul changes from using “Christ” to using “Son,” introducing the theme of sonship, which brings into life the role of Christ in creating the believers’ sonship. Plus, the reference to the Son of God is an echo of the Davidic Son (2 Sam 7:12–14) when God vows that he will establish his kingdom (Runge, n.d.). The term γενόμενον indicates that the birth was as a result of the sending. The verb γενόμενον also functions as an adjective that modifies υἱὸν, specifying the Son and showing his connection to the law and his humanity. Preposition ὑπὸ subjects Christ to the jurisdiction of the law, which includes its penalties and requirements, such as the curse (3:13). The birth of the Son under the law qualifies him to be a Jew (Gal 2:15). Unlike all other sons born of a woman; this Son was not subject to the power of evil and sin. In addition, he was not enslaved by the elements of this world since he was sent to bring liberation (Bailey, 2016).

This verse introduces God’s divine intervention in the soteriological work of Jesus Christ. The incarnate Son of God was born of a woman, describing his humanity, and born under the law, describing his ethnicity (Jew). The advent of the coming of Christ would bring into maturity those under the law and basic principles. The phrase “in the fullness of time” illustrates that the appropriate time for the Son to be manifest in the world was to be determined by God alone, showing divine intentionality. The incarnation fulfilled prophecies concerning the Messiah (Ps 40, Heb 10:7) and consummation of a divine plan established by the triune God before the foundations of the world. As a result, “Christology from above” preceded “Christology from below” (George, 1994; Marshall, 1987).

The preexistence of the Son of God can be seen in other texts in the Pauline corpus (Rom 8:3; Phil 2:5–9; 1 Cor 8:6; 10:4; Col 1:15–17). Christ affirmed to have come from the Father in Mark 9:37 by referring to God as “he who sent me.” Christ is the only begotten of God who proceeds from the bosom of the Father. God lived in the world in Christ of Nazareth (Schweizer, 1990). George observes that, even though the conception of Jesus was supernatural, his birth was ordinary: in a manger, in unsanitary conditions, and in swaddling clothes. Sadly, a faction of Gnostics refuted the humanity of Christ by claiming that he was born “through” Mary and not “of” (George, 1994).

On the other hand, the Docetists refuted the fact that Christ was with a human body. According to the Docetists, Christ only appeared to be human but was a ghostlike creature. Jesus' birth under the law is equivalent to the minor heir described in Galatians 4:1–2. In effect, he differed not from a slave, even though by all means, he was Lord over all. However, he was different from an ordinary heir subject to the universe's basic principles as he lived with absolute freedom and total submission to his Father. In his entire ministry, Christ was victorious over all elements: stilled winds, cleansed lepers, cast out demons, and raised the dead. Additionally, even though Jesus was born under the law, he was not subject to sin (2 Cor 5:21). As a result, he needed no guardian or a steward (Bruce, 1982).

In his commentary, Augustine observes that after the fullness of time, God sent the Son to free the heir (child) under the law, acting as a disciplinarian and under the elements of this world that acted as trustees and guardians. The Son who was sent was made from a woman. The Son was also made *ὕπὸ* the law since Christ got circumcised, and the sacrifices prescribed by the law were offered for him (Augustine, 2003).

Aquinas also weighs in on v.4 and comments that, while believers are interpreting the phrase “made of a woman”, they must guard themselves from the error made by Photinus, who argued that Christ was man only and he began his existence from the virgin birth. In addition, they also need to distance themselves from the error committed by Ebion, who asserted that Jesus was conceived from the seed of Joseph because, to Ebion, the terminology “woman” denotes defloration. The term “made of a woman” is significant in Christian circles as it dismantles Nestorius's misconception, arguing that Christ did not inherit his body from the Virgin but received it from the heavens. Also, Nestorius wrongly posits that it only went through the Virgin as if through a channel or corridor. Furthermore, he says that the Virgin was not the mother to God’s Son but a mother to the son of a man (Aquinas, 1966).

Calvin, a highly respected scholar in evangelical circles, suggests that the Son existed before God sent him, which stands as proof of the Son’s eternal Godhead. In effect, it makes Christ the son of God sent from οὐρανός. The son was formed from a woman, thus possessing human nature, a confirmation that he bears two natures. The fact that Christ was not born of the seed of Joseph is a clear differentiation from the rest of the human race, not an ordinary generation (Calvin, n.d.).

Jerome strongly opposes the understanding that Christ was “made through a woman,” a stance held by Marcion. This heresy and others of this kind say that the body of Christ was imaginary. He corrects this heresy by stating that Christ was “made of a woman” and not through a woman (Scheck, 2010). The term γυναικός is used in a genitive nuance. Genitive indicates origin, thus, “made of” is the best translation. This informs the reader that Jesus possessed a human body. Thus, disqualifying the “made through” stance. This

also resonates with John's teaching that Christ came in the flesh (1 John 4:2–3; John 1:14).

During the Patristic period, the preposition ἐκ was used by the proponents of the humanity of Christ and defended it against the teachings of the Docetists (Yeong, 2014).

4:5 ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν.

4:5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

The term υἰοθεσίαν, as used in Galatians 4:5, is used to signify the process someone uses to declare officially and legally that a person who was not formally their biological child will henceforth be given the status of a legitimate child with the addition of the rights of inheritance (Louw & Nida, 1996).

This verse shows the reader the purpose (appointed task) of the son, to ἐξαγοράσῃ (deliver) those under the law. The referent of Paul in the clause τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον is out rightly the Jews, and not both Gentiles and the Jews. Evidently, the noun νόμον refers to the Law of Moses, and the recipients of the law were the Jews. Those who were subject to the law were expected to keep and obey it (Deut 29: 10–15). The deliverance (ἐξαγοράσῃ) effected by the Son has the following recipients. First, to τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον. Second, due to the ἵνα-clause and the “us” in 1:4, it shows that the deliverance also extended to the Gentiles. In addition, the recipients' deliverance was from their slavery to στοιχεῖα and their sins (1:4; 3:22). There are remarkable similarities in 3:13–14 and

4:4–6 (χριστός/υἱὸν, ἐξηγόρασεν/ἐξαγοράσῃ, λαβωμεν/ἀπολάβωμεν,

πνεύματος/πνεύμα) illustrating how Christ redeems in (3:13) is similar to the way the Son gives deliverance in 4:5; he became a curse for the believers (substitutionary death). Essentially, he became the scapegoat that bore the sins of all humanity (Lev 16:15–22).

Some scholars argue that the pronoun “we” in ἀπολάβωμεν makes reference to both the Gentiles and Jews. However, some scholars say that it refers to Gentile or Jewish Christians. Those who hold the view of both Jews and Gentiles posit that Paul makes reference to the Galatians alone in v. 6 using the second person pronoun “you” (plural). Hays, who leans on the Gentile’s only opinion, regards the adoption metaphor to be applicable to the Gentiles (with a possibility for the Jews too) (Hays, 2000). On the contrary, Bailey challenges Hays’ position by maintaining that the requirement in 3:16, 29 for the believer to be in Christ to become the seed of Abraham illustrates that adoption is for the Jews too (Bailey, 2016). The noun υιοθεσίαν, based on the Greco-Roman setting, is a legal term that means that the adoptee, just like a natural born or a biological child, has full rights, especially the right to inheritance (McDonald, n.d.; Moo, n.d.).

Yeong notes that, given the context of the birth of Christ, the phrase ἐκ γυναικός portends a great significance. The phrase ἐκ γυναικός, when interpreted in the light of γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, signifies that Jesus was ethnically Israelite, becoming part of the νήπιός church (under-age church). And being the only seed of Abraham prophesied, Christ in his earthly life marked the set and appointed time of the Father. In effect, it inaugurated the mature age of Israel and set aside the guardianship of the Law. In addition, ἐκ γυναικός might have been used instead of ἐξ ἀνθρώπου to illustrate that Christ had no father nor inheritance through birthright. Paul gives another illustration of Christ in Philippians 4:7, who emptied himself of the glory of heaven and took the nature of a slave. This informs

the believer of the supernatural role reversal, whereby the Son, a legitimate heir of everything by becoming human, disinherited himself and became a slave. Then, those who are by nature slaves of the law and elements of the world would be adopted as sons and gain the full inheritance rights like a natural-born son (Yeong, 2014).

George posits that, in v. 4, we were introduced to Christology by the Father sending his Son. However, in v. 5, we are introduced to the soteriology of Jesus Christ, shifting the focus from his deity to his salvific and regeneration work. Both the Jews and Gentiles can only become part of God's family through their faith in Christ. The essence of this verse is to show the reader that believers are justified by faith and not through the works of the law. Those who have been redeemed from the slavery of the law are to live by faith in the Son of God (George, 1994). Christ became flesh and bound to the obedience of the law. He became a curse for all, making the doom of the world his. He laid on himself the responsibility of sinful men. And through this, his love for humanity is manifest (George, 1994).

Adoption is a term that is unique in the writings of Paul. Ephesians records that God has “predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.” According to Romans 8:23, adoption refers to believers’ resurrection, “the adoption of our bodies,” which believers in Christ eagerly look forward to. Adoption is a precious gift to the people of Israel due to their relationship with God (Rom 9:4–5). However, in v. 5, adoption refers to the state of sonship, a gift to all believers through their new birth, thus becoming heirs with Christ as a fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise (Garland & Longman III, 2008; George, 1994). In the Hellenistic era, adoption was a

common familial practice. Julius Caesar adopted Octavius, his nephew, who later took the throne as the Roman emperor after him (Roebuck, 1966).

Adoption also has its roots in the Old Testament, though scripted as sonship. 2 Samuel 7:14 records, “I will be to him a father, and he will be to me a son” (Scott, 1993). Israel’s sonship in the OT is primarily adoptive, based on divine election and covenant, rather than natural begetting. Israel is God’s firstborn son by grace and calling, prefiguring the NT concept of adoption in Christ (Horton, 2011).

In his commentary, Augustine asserts that Paul uses the term “adoption” to differentiate the sonship of believers from the one of the only Son of God. Differentiating the sonship of Christ from that of the believers, Augustine further argues that believers are God’s sons based on God’s mercy, while Christ is a son by nature, as Jesus is what the Father is. In addition, believers in Christ attain adoption because the only son of God participated in human nature (made of a woman). Thus, he became the first-born among many brothers by participating in human nature.

Victorinus (n.d.) weighs in and observes that the law, through its precepts, held those under it in bondage. It subjected its adherents to uprightness of morals but with no guarantee of eternity and deliverance. But God sent his son to redeem those who were under the law and received adoption as sons (Victorinus, n.d.). Luther notes that the expressions employed by Paul, such as “to redeem” “you are sons” “we might receive” and “he is an heir and son and not a slave” among others, have been fulfilled in Christ so that they might be fulfilled in the believers more and more, and day by day. Luther also says believers have been redeemed and are continually being redeemed. They have been

made sons, and they shall be sons. Luther further argues that Christ struggled with sin, law and death for the whole world, and by undergoing them, he abolished them in himself. And through that, he freed the believers from all evil and the law.

According to the scriptures, Christ was exempt from all forms of subjection yet became subject to the law. He did this on behalf of the believers in order to obtain freedom for them. The patriarchs of the OT knew about their adoption but could not enjoy the privileges thereof. Just like the phrase “redemption of our bodies,” it is the believer’s actual possession. In the present time, we have received the fruit of adoption. However, believers will receive the fruit of our redemption in the age to come. Before the coming of Christ, the patriarchs could not partake of the fruit of adoption. As a result, any church burdened with OT ceremonies defrauds itself of the legal right to adoption (Calvin, n.d.).

Advantages of Becoming a Son

4:6 Ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξέπεμψεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν κρᾶζον• αββα ὁ πατήρ.

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

The particle δέ denotes a development of the discourse in the previous verses. It introduces to the Galatians that they are υἱοῦ (sons). And as proof of that, God has already sent them the Spirit as evidence that they are sons of God. Conjunction Ὅτι can be interpreted from two perspectives. First, and according to Dunn (n.d.), it functions as an “explanatory” since Ὅτι means “that” (to prove/show). This kind of interpretation

reveals the Spirit as a witness, as seen in Romans 8:16, “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children,” which lines up with giving witness (es) within “Roman adoption” (Dann, n.d.). The second interpretation is that Ὅτι shows why God sent the Spirit. This interpretation connects the sending of the Spirit to soteriology.

In the main clause ἐξαπέστειλεν ... ἡμῶν, ἐξαπέστειλεν parallels v.4, a demonstration of God’s availing sonship by sending the Spirit of his son and sending his son too. Additionally, God sending the Spirit is an echo of ἐξαποστελεῖς (Psa 104:30, LXX), where the Spirit of the Lord is sent out to create sons as a fulfilment of Joel 2:28–29 after God pours his Spirit on every flesh (Ciampa, 2010). Moreover, the addition of υἱοῦ to πνεῦμα signifies sonship, since the Spirit is said to be the Spirit of sonship (Rom 8:15). The καρδίας illustrates where the Son’s presence was in the Galatians and Paul; through the presence of the Holy Spirit. In the NT, καρδίας is also used to mean inner self, inner being, very being, or mind. Hence giving an emphasis of regeneration. This is an eschatological fulfilment of the Ezekiel 36:27 prophecy (“I will put my Spirit within you”) (Betz, 1979; De Boer, 2011; Moo, n.d.).

The phrase καρδίας ἡμῶν κρᾶζον• ἀββα ὁ πατήρ is a right-dislocation, where the word κρᾶζον modifies πνεῦμα, showing a father-son relationship (Runge, n.d.). Romans 8:15 (we cry, Abba, Father) differs from Galatians 4:6 in the sense that it is the Spirit who cries, thus underscoring that the believers are “sons of God” 3:26. On that note, κρᾶζον is a reflection of the OT cries to the LORD who hears and delivers; Exodus 22:23 (κεκράξαντες, LXX) and Isaiah 19:20 (κεκράζονται, LXX). Paul uses the words of Jesus in Mark 14:36 to show that, just as the Son is a son, the believers are sons, too (Moo,

n.d.). Silva notes that $\alpha\beta\beta\alpha$ in the Jewish background is a common term for “father” rather than a “baby language” (Silva, 2014). Finally, as used in 4:6, father echoes Isaiah 63:16; 64:8, signifying God’s eschatological fatherhood.

In this verse, Paul introduces the aspect of pneumatology. Just like the Father sent his son, he also sent his Spirit into the hearts of the believers. However, the Spirit was there since the beginning, for he was present during the creation of man in God’s image (Gen 1:27). Just as the Spirit participated in the creation, he once again participates in the making of sons of God. The same Spirit came upon the Virgin Mary, and she conceived the Messiah. In evangelical circles, there is a heated debate about whether the sending of the Spirit comes before adoption as sons (Betz, 1979). But according to v. 6, the Spirit is sent after becoming a son, “Because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts.” Paul retaliates the aspect of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8:15–16, “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship (*huiiothesia*). And by him, we cry ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

The noun ‘Abba’ is still used in the Middle East by children while greeting their fathers as a familial term that denotes intimacy. Marchel (1971) observes that Abba, an Aramaic term appearing in the legal writing of the Mishna, is commonly used by mature children claiming the inheritance of their dead father. As such, this word is more associated with intimacy than infancy (Garland & Longman III, 2008). Using the Aramaic term alongside the Greek texts in the original manuscripts shows that Christian worship is bilingual and not restricted to one language. The same Spirit enabled the believers to speak in other tongues during the Day of Pentecost (George, 1994).

According to Jerome, the crying out in the Scripture does not mean making loud sounds but rather refers to a profundity of teaching and knowledge (Scheck, 2010). Furthermore, Aquinas observes that the “crying” is done with a huge fervour of love. The cry of Abba Father comes from the affection believers experience when their affections are fanned to desire God by the compassion of the Holy Spirit (Aquinas, 1966).

In his commentary, Calvin expresses that the Spirit is given when someone believes. Expounding further on the spirit of adoption, Calvin says that the Spirit is the believers’ pledge of adoption, giving them a firm understanding that God looks at them through the lens of a father’s love. Believers in Christ are sons of God since they have been given the same Spirit in the son (Calvin, n.d.).

4:7 ὥστε οὐκέτι εἰ δοῦλος ἀλλὰ υἱός• εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος διὰ θεοῦ.

4:7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, also an heir through God.

This verse summarizes the pericope by addressing slavery, heirship, and sonship. Here, the apostle Paul, instead of the plural υἱοί, uses the singular υἱός. One reason for the use of the singular is to ensure that the number matches with the singular κληρονόμος in v. 1. As such, it ties vv. 1–7. In addition, Paul uses the singular to address each believer in an emphatically personal way (Fung, n.d.). Conjunction ὥστε functions as a coordinating conjunction referencing the discourse happening in vv. 4–6 to be related to vv. 1–3. At the same time, the adverb οὐκέτι is referring to the old era of slavery, which has now passed away. The conjunction ἀλλὰ negates the old era and introduces the reader to the

new era of sonship. In this verse, Paul chooses to remove implicit εἴ to emphasize κληρονόμος and υἱός. The particle δὲ signifies development as a marker showing the conclusion of vv. 1–7 discourse that the Galatian believer is legally an heir (κληρονόμος). Wallace argues that εἰ functions as a first-class condition that assumes that a condition is true to validate an argument (Wallace, n.d.).

Conjunction καὶ, which here functions as an “additive,” implies that υἱός parallels κληρονόμος. As such, the believer of Christ in Galatia is κληρονόμος, thus an heir of God who has been given the Spirit of promise (3:14, 26; 4:6) and in the coming age will inherit eternal life and God’s kingdom (5:21; 6:8). The prepositional phrase διὰ θεοῦ, illustrates that God who is the Father is the causal agent who makes the believers heirs and translates them from slaves to sons and then to heirs (Bailey, 2016).

In this verse, Paul summarizes his entire discourse. He reveals to the Galatians that becoming a son of God has made them free from slavery and subjection to elemental spirits. In addition, the believer in Christ is no longer a minor. On the contrary, they have full rights of inheritance through God due to their adoption as sons. Moreover, believers are not under the power of sin, the curse of the law and the tutelage of the *paidagogos*. Relating with God is no longer determined by race, role or rank but by the father-son relationship, by faith in Jesus Christ. The promise God made to Abraham is fulfilled in the Messiah, and the blessing is extended to all humanity who believe in the Son (George, 1994).

According to Scheck (2002), a slave is the person who keeps the law and does not keep it. Such a person keeps the law because of the fear of punishment. In addition, he may not

keep the law because he desires that there is no law. As a result, this person hates the righteousness of the law in his heart but pretends outwardly in front of men. On the contrary, the son, who is an heir, gladly keeps the law διὰ God's grace and has no desire that it was not there (Scheck, 2002).

Moreover, in this verse, Paul illustrates that no death, terror, disturbance, or wrath is allowed in the believer's conscience. In the eyes of justification, the believer must be ignorant of the law and have no place in his conscience. Thus, every son is an heir. Merit and work are not what brings the inheritance, but being natural born of God. And it is faith that receives that promise (Scheck, 2002).

Jerome posits that whoever is a son owes an inheritance. And by accepting God as Father, they have passed from slavery to freedom and have become heirs to God. All believers are united in Christ and are members of his body (Scheck, 2010).

Summary

It is believed that Paul is the author of Galatians and wrote it from CA 48 to the mid-50s. This letter was written to uncircumcised Gentiles (Gal 5:2; 6:12). The letter's audience was scattered in different churches in the region of Galatia (1:2), the present-day central Asia Minor. Paul wrote to address a challenge by some Jews who were demanding of the Galatians to be circumcised in order to be converted into Jews first and become children of Abraham so that they may become heirs of the covenant promise. However, the good news preached by Paul believed that faith alone in Jesus Christ was sufficient to make the Gentiles heirs of the Abrahamic blessing.

Galatians, like other Pauline letters, contains apocalyptic and salvation history themes. In addition, we can also see the themes of the law and the promise of the Spirit. It is the Spirit who causes true righteousness and not the external keeping of the law. The heir mentioned in the book of Galatians is spirit-promised and does not refer to a child born according to natural means.

The child-heir referred to in v. 1 is the Israelite nation in slavery under the law. It also refers to the Gentiles who were under the basic principles of the world. The law, to the Jews acted as guardians and trustees, waiting for the appropriate time appointed by the Father.

Those who fight to live under the law are living like children, governed by rules, which Paul terms as basic principles (v. 3). Elementary principles here refer to the Jewish law, African traditional sacrifices, and cultic rituals of the Gentiles. And these observances led the adherents away from God rather than closer to him. These basic principles were only needed in the period of immaturity. However, with the advent of Christ, they are no longer valuable. At the cross and after the resurrection of Christ, he dethroned the works of the enemy so that every true believer should not live subject to the tyrannical dominion of the basic principles.

God divinely intervenes in the human race through the soteriological work of Christ in v. 4. The son of God incarnated, born of a woman, illustrating his humanity and born under the law, describing his ethnicity (Jew). The coming of Christ was meant to bring into maturity those who were under the law and the basic principles of the world. The phrase “in the fullness of time” illustrates that the appropriate time for the Son to be manifest in

the world was to be determined by God alone, showing divine intentionality. The incarnation of the Messiah fulfilled the prophecies concerning Christ (Psa 40; Heb 10:7).

Soteriology is demonstrated in v. 5, shifting the focus from the deity of Christ to his salvific and regeneration work. The essence of v. 5 is to show that believers are justified by faith and not through the works of the law. Those who have been redeemed from the slavery of the law are to live by faith in the Son of God. Christ laid upon himself the penalty of sinful men, making the doom of the world his.

In the same manner, the Father sent forth the Son and his Spirit into the hearts of believers (v. 6). And the Spirit of God is given to those who become sons, not unbelievers. Those who have believed are no longer minors, without inheritance. They are free from slavery and subjection to the elemental spirits. In addition, they have full rights of inheritance through God due to their adoption as sons. They have been delivered from the power of sin, the law's curse, and the tutelage of the *paidagogos*. Thus, God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled in the Messiah, and the blessing extended to all humanity who believe in the Son.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary of Findings, Pastoral Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Introduction

Paul's emphasis on the Galatians seems to stress that the Galatians are sons and heirs. Paul and his contemporaries in Galatia were formally slaves to world's elements (the Galatians not being in the commonwealth of God were subject to world principles, while Paul was subject to the dictates of the Law) in the same way a minor heir is a slave. However, God effected their sonship by sending his Son to offer adoption and the Son's Spirit. Historically, the critics of Paul's gospel in Galatians were propagating a wrong teaching that the Galatians could not qualify to be sons of God and heirs without keeping the Mosaic Law (Bailey, 2016).

Pastoral Implications

The adoption (υιοθεσία) metaphor in Galatians 4:1–7 applies to the contemporary believer in three ways. Firstly, all believers are at liberty to live their lives for Christ and have no obligation to allow any cultural standards or elaborate religious rituals, such as ceremonial observances and circumcision, to enslave them as a way of securing God's favor. For they have already been accepted in the beloved (Eph 1:6). Secondly, the believer in Christ today has received the Spirit of the Son in their heart, enabling them to

relate with God as their Father, which is an assurance of their salvation in Christ. And thirdly, as legitimate heirs of God, all believers ought to be confident that their Father is mindful of their interests and are assured of eternal life, present miseries notwithstanding (Bailey, 2016).

The pericope of Galatians 4:1–7 is theologically essential in understanding salvation in two significant ways. First, before the salvation and deliverance purchased by Christ, all humanity compared to a minor in slavery and the control of the world's elements. The second theological significance is that the Spirit is the Son abiding in believers and manifests His sonship through them, since the Bible calls Him the Spirit of sonship in Romans 8:15 (Bailey, 2016).

According to Yeong (2014), Paul belabours to explain that justification is not ἐξ ἔργων νόμου in 2:7–3:18. Furthermore, in 3:19 he explains the purpose of the Law that it was intended to shut Paul and the Galatians under it, in it, and render them slaves until the fulfilment of νιοθεσία. As such, adoption is coined in the union with the Son (Christ).

Chang (2021) posits that adoption and inheritance are different sides of the same coin. As such, anyone whom God gives sonship through adoption likewise receives an inheritance. In the Roman background of adoption, an adoptive father possessed full authority that protected the rights of an adopted son. Paul uses this imagery to show that God has absolute power to legally adopt as many sons as possible into his household with no obligation to keep the Jewish law. The debts of an adoptee were forgiven under Roman law, and he began an entirely new life as a legal member of his adoptive family and honoured his father's name. Seemingly, Paul does not employ the concept of sonship as

presented in the 1st-century Jewish culture or in the OT to drive the gospel of God's soteriology to the Galatians. Rather, he prefers the ideology of adoption as a son, which can only be grasped using the social framework of 1st-century Greco-Romans. And by using this imagery, Paul clearly illustrates the truth concerning redemption for the Gentiles and the Jews (Chang, 2021).

The context of the Galatian's pericope is the one of slavery, as verse 4:3 says, "When you were infants, you were enslaved to elements of the world." It further says, "You are not slaves, but sons. If sons, then heirs through God" (4:7). Believers partake of the adoption by the Spirit of the Son through whom they cry "Abba, Father." Being united to Christ guarantees to partake of the inheritance. The adoption described in Galatians was effected upon strangers, people enslaved by the law and elements of this world. As such, it is a gracious and extraordinary act that total strangers owned by a different master (world elements) would become legitimate heirs (Kim, 2014).

Similar to Galatians, Apostle Paul takes quality time in Romans 8 and 9 to talk about υιοθεσία. The context of υιοθεσία in Romans 8 does mention the aspect of first-born son and joint inheritance. Paul points out that he himself is sold into slavery, "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin" (Rom 7:14). This reveals to the reader Paul, and the Romans are not freeborn children. However, it is through the Spirit they gain liberty, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom 8:1). In Romans 7:24, Paul shows us the meaning of redemption. This allusion connects to the υιοθεσία metaphor in Romans 8:15. In the previous verse (v. 14), the Apostle Paul posits that the people whom God's Spirit

leads are out rightly sons of God and have gained the status of sonship through adoption as seen in v. 15 (Kim, 2014).

In Romans 8:15, slavery is contrasted with adoption. Like the adoption metaphor in Galatians 4:5, adoption in Romans 8:15 refers to adopting slaves rather than freeborn children. In addition, slavery results in fear, while adoption empowers an adoptee to cry out, “Abba, Father.” Both adoption metaphors of Galatians 4:5 and Romans 8:15 should be understood in the historical context of the Greco-Roman culture, where the adoption of slaves was hardly practised, but adoption freeborn children. In this context, this kind of adoption was extraordinary, for only on rare occasions were slaves adopted, especially by the high-status people of Roman society. The slave mentioned in Galatians belonged to a different master, sin. As seen in the metaphor, God, in his mercy and love, adopts complete strangers, which was unusual in Greco-Roman society (Kim, 2014).

Moreover, adopted slaves could not be given the same status as freeborn or biological children. More than that, it was against Roman conventions to adopt a slave in a family with a potential heir, especially a biological (firstborn) son. However, God does the total opposite of what the Roman society does. He defies the norm to adopt the believers even in the existence of a potential firstborn son. And the inheritance status of the adopted children is the same as that of the firstborn Son. Paul notes in Romans 8:32, “He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?” This is contrary to Roman custom, where there was a high possibility of disinheriting adoptive sons. In other cases, an adoption case would result in conflicts. On the contrary, it is not so with God’s adoption. As such, His adoption for the believers

is motivated by love, “But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8) (Kim, 2014).

The adoption metaphor illustrated in the pericope (Gal 4:1–7) is exceptional and extraordinary. God adopted the least deserved (slaves of sin and elements of the world). And as if that was not enough, He made them heirs and joint heirs with the firstborn Son (Jesus Christ).

The infancy period Paul speaks about is the time of the Israelite community under the law. In comparison, the period of inheritance is the time brought into effect by Christ. Being in slavery was the time during the works of the law. Being accepted by God is a function of faith in Christ rather than the observance of the law. In effect, those who believe, whether Jew or Gentile, free or slave, female or male, are all accepted by the Father. This understanding contradicts what the Judaizers were advocating to the Galatian believers, that they had to convert to Judaism to become a certain nationality to receive acceptance from God. However, to help the Galatian believer, Paul stands very firm in the message of God’s free grace through Christ and the Spirit and of faith to all people (McKnight, 1995).

McKnight argues that we are surrounded by the unending demand for women's liberation in the contemporary world. However, in his view, if all that liberation means is “slavery to Christ” (Gal 1:10; Rom 12:11; 14:18), it gives a resounding advantage to the people. Due to the overarching theme of sonship in the book of Galatians and the entire Bible, feminists have incessantly accused the Bible of not advocating the freedom of women. They argue that, Paul in the company of other writers, has not given attention to the call

for women's liberation from male dominance and the patriarchal world. However, put correctly, the sonship that Paul speaks about is the one effected by the Spirit of God when he argues, “The Spirit you received does not make you slaves so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father” (Rom 8:15). Again, in Galatians 4:6, Paul says, “Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” As seen, Paul is not speaking about ethnic sonship but spiritual sonship. This is not an extension of the patriarchal practice. A concept that feminists have failed to grasp. Referring to God as Abba was the most intimate way in the Jewish world. It was the first term every Jewish child learned and is usually translated as “daddy.” The term “Abba” denotes relational intimacy and honourable respect.

The “son of God” relates with Him respectfully and in love. Believers nurture intimacy with God through worship (prayer). We embrace prayer that is vulnerable and trusting in the infallible word of God and his promise and prayer devoted to living before God lovingly and obediently. Each day we commune with God, our intimacy with him continues to get better. We also listen to him speak to us as his dearly loved children. In addition, intimacy with God can be developed through reading the Word, obeying it, believing it, and preaching it to others. God also requires believers that they should desire him. He gets delighted in our desire for him, and in return, we get delighted in his delight. And all this is the essence of being a son of God.

Feminists demand to be called “daughters” and not “sons” since they are not males. According to them, the language of the Bible is highly chauvinistic. As a result, some Bible translations have adopted sexless terms, such as the NIV in Galatians 3:7, where

they have used “children” instead of “sons.” In the patriarchal world, the son had a higher privilege when it came to inheriting the father’s estate. Thus, in order to convey such an advantage to all believers, Paul chose to use the patriarchal familial practice language. And as McKnight observes, something is lost by the use of “child” instead of “son” in 3:7 in pursuit of not being offensive (McKnight, 1995).

Thus, translation should not tamper with the original meaning of a text in order to be relevant and tolerant in the present world. This is because using more accommodative words cannot remove the reality that patriarchy and chauvinism existed in the ancient world. However, this does not negate the importance of being sensitive to the plight of women in society. In that light, there is a need to change structures in a move to eliminate the oppression of women in the same way we have stood against racial and cultural biases (McKnight, 1995).

McKnight advises that, to sail safely, we must understand “inheritance” and “sonship” from the context of the Jewish and Roman backgrounds. This will help understand the message of Paul with the intended gravity. We can only come to such conclusions when we focus on the positive ideas carried by the terms “sonship” and “adoption” rather than the patriarchal and chauvinistic nuances behind them. Moreover, we must study how the lives of women were around the Mediterranean Sea and the texts of the New Testament before transferring the text into our modern world (Kroeger & Kroeger, 1992).

For Paul, sonship portrays the intimacy the people of God can enjoy with Him. In addition, it signifies freedom from the curse and slavery of the law and elementary principles of the world, qualifying them to receive the Spirit of God who enables them to

cry out, “Abba Father.” In preaching the message of sonship, we ought to be historically sound and pastorally sensitive, retaliating the patriarchal ideas in a sensitive way that fosters the author's critical intention candidly.

In addition, to make the intent of Paul accommodative, he clearly shows that sonship is for “all” in 3:26–29. He demonstrates that God’s love belongs to all. In v. 26, he says that you are “all” sons of God and that “all” were united with Christ (v. 27). Moreover, in Christ, there is no Greek nor Jew, free or slave, male or female, but “all” are one in Christ (v. 28). As a result, this message of universalism is critical to the world. The bottom line is that the ancient world differs from our present world. As a result, there is a need to bridge the time gap properly. This can be achieved through a comparative study of the social norms and structures of both the ancient and modern worlds (McKnight, 1995).

Summary

The thesis of Paul’s letter is to establish that the Galatians are sons and heirs of God through Christ. For the believer, adoption as a son offers three key advantages. Every believer in Christ is free from external rituals and observances to secure God’s favour. In addition, believers have received the Holy Spirit of adoption and sonship, enabling them to relate with God as their Abba Father. Moreover, for believers, God, being their Father, is mindful of their interests.

The Galatians 4:1–7 pericope is vital in understanding the soteriological work of Christ. Before Christ, believers were like minors who needed a caretaker. However, after the salvific work of Christ, they are now mature children with the privilege to access all that the heavenly Father has. Thus, spiritually, believers are transferred from slavery into

being heirs and owners. The adoption described in Galatians, unlike the Greco-Roman culture that preferred a freeborn and a relative adoptee, here God adopts strangers, the Gentile Galatians. The Gentiles were from a different master (elements of the world) compared to the Jews, who were already God's chosen people. This shows that salvation belongs to all humanity, regardless of the race.

The believers' adoption is extraordinary, as God adopts both the Jews and Gentiles in the existence of a potential firstborn heir (Jesus Christ). This is a heavy-weight truth that defies Roman conventions. It was illegal to adopt a child when one had a potential heir in waiting in the Greco-Roman world.

In keeping with the gospel preached by Paul to the Galatians, there is no need to convert to Judaism to be accepted as a son of God. Instead, all that is needed is to have faith in Christ Jesus. In addition, in order to address the attack by feminists that the Bible is overly chauvinistic and male-dominated, it is important to understand that Paul speaks about spiritual adoption rather than ethnic adoption. God is a Spirit, and those born of the Spirit are a spirit (John 3:5–6).

Sonship portrays intimacy with God. Believers develop this intimacy through worship and prayer. They also cultivate intimacy through preaching the Good News to the lost. Just as God has adopted us in the presence of a firstborn Son, we should also be eager to see the adoption of more sons into the family of God. And this is accomplished through intentional evangelism.

Conclusion

As seen in chapter one, υιοθεσία (*huiiothesia*) is translated as “adoption as sons.” And the theme of adoption is a major one in the Pauline letters. To clearly grasp the subject of adoption, one has to study adoption in the ancient Greco-Roman society, the Old Testament saints, and early Judaism, which forms the basis of Paul’s teaching.

Adoption is different from other significant evangelical themes such as regeneration, sanctification, and justification. During regeneration, the Holy Spirit puts a new nature in a Christian, even though they still possess their biological nature. Whereas, justification takes a believer from the court room into God’s family. On the other hand, sanctification is a lifetime process where a Christian develops God’s-family characteristics. In the Roman era, adoptees were picked from relatives’ children, or from close friends’ children. It was rare for slaves and strangers to be adopted.

The apostle Paul is the author of the book of Galatians, where the pericope 4:1–7 is picked. Galatians was addressed to churches found in the Galatia region (1:2). Paul wrote the letter to counter some Jews who were forcing Galatian believers to be circumcised for them to become children of Abraham and heirs of the new covenant promise. According to Paul, faith alone in Christ was enough to make the Galatians (Gentiles) heirs of the Abrahamic blessing.

The child heir mentioned in v.1 refers to the Gentiles while under the basic principles of the world. It also refers to the nation of Israel during their time under the law. The law was simply a trustee and a guardian, put in place until the appropriate time, when faith (Christ) was to be revealed. Elementary principles as mentioned in v.3 refers to the

African traditional sacrifices, and cultic rituals of the Gentiles. Christ through his soteriological work is the one who delivers the human race from the basic principles (v. 4). Thus, bringing the age of immaturity to an end. The Jews were delivered from the dominion of the law, while the Gentiles from the basic principles of the world in order to live by faith in the Son of God. As a result of adoption for both the Jews and Gentiles, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts. He is referred to as the Spirit of the believers' adoption.

In summary, the thesis of Paul in the book of Galatians is to establish that the believers in Galatia are legal sons and heirs of God through Christ. And heirship sets them free from outward rituals such as observance of the law and circumcision, as a way of securing God's favor and blessings. The Galatians 4:1–7 pericope is key in understanding the salvific work of Christ. Prior to Christ, believers could be likened to minors who needed a caretaker. However, in the advent of Christ, they are mature to inherit the kingdom of God. Unlike the Greco-Roman prescriptions, God adopted the Galatians, who were total strangers from the commonwealth of the family of God. And this is done in the existence of a potential heir, first born son (Christ).

Recommendations

Firstly, this study recommends that the teaching on adoption as sons be given a similar emphasis on pulpits that are given to other doctrines such as salvation, justification, and righteousness, among others. This will properly ground believers on how they relate with God the Father.

Secondly, the research recommends studying the theme of sonship in the Bible books and comparing with adoption. This will give believers and scholars alike a comprehensive understanding and distinction of both as presented in the Bible. Even though they are closely related, they still bear theological differences.

Thirdly, the study recommends a deeper study on the themes of regeneration, sanctification and justification to understand how they relate to the theme of adoption. These themes, together with adoption are all connected to the soteriological work of Christ. As such, any adopted son through faith in Christ receives regeneration of the inner man, is sanctified and continues to be sanctified throughout their life, and gets justified through the resurrection of Christ.

Finally, the study recommends further study on the subject of pneumatology. As seen in the pericope, the Spirit is essential for the adoption of believers. The Holy Spirit plays a critical role in the life of a believer for God sends to them the Spirit of adoption. It is the Spirit who causes regeneration, and continues to sanctify a believer. Also, the Holy Spirit daily guides a believer in their daily walk of faith.

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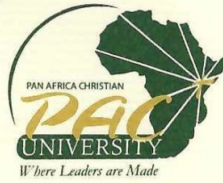
Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Work Plan

Date	Activity
September 2022	Submission of Concept Paper
November 2022	Presentation of Concept Paper
January 2023	Supervisor Allocation
February 2023	Chapter 1
March 2023	Chapter 2
April 2023	Chapter 3
May 2023	Corrections

October 2023	Submission of Research Proposal
Feb 2024	Defense of Research Proposal
March 2024	Corrections
April 2024	Chapter 4 & 5
May 2024	Submission of Draft Final Thesis and Defense

Appendix 2: Research Authorization Letter



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9th July 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER FOR
MBONI JOEL MAKUMI REG. NO: MDIV/15593/0/19**

Greetings! This is an introduction letter for the above named person a final year student at Pan Africa Christian University (PAC University), pursuing a Master of Arts in Divinity.

He is at the final stage of the programme and he is preparing to collect data to enable him finalize on the thesis. The thesis title is ***“Adoption as Sons and Its Implications: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis of the Υιοθεσία Metaphor in Galatians 4:1-7 within Graeco-Roman Context”***

We kindly request that you allow him obtain a research permit so as to proceed and collect data.

Warm Regards,

Hongirwa

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