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**FROM SLAVERY TO SONSHIP:
A LEGAL ANALOGY OR
EXODUS TYPOLOGY?
AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF
GALATIANS 4:1-7**

A Thesis Presented to the
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ABSTRACT

This study, "From Slavery to Sonship: An Exegetical Study of Galatians 4:1-7," is an attempt to know which of the contending arguments is the appropriate background to the interpretation of the passage. One opinion argues that Paul used the legal analogy from Graeco-Roman background to illustrate or explain the message he was passing to his immediate audience. The other opinion argues that it was not a legal analogy, but an Exodus typology from the Old Testament or Jewish background.

After stating all the introductory matters in the first chapter, the second chapter is a survey of works on the two major scholarly positions. It was discovered in the course of this study that the word, 'hiothesia', which translates as 'adoption' or 'sonship' plays a very significant role in both positions. In this sense, both positions recognize 'hiothesia' as the key word that influenced Paul's thought. From the survey of scholarly works on both positions, there are enough evidences, as appears to this writer, to support the legal analogy as the appropriate illustration for the passage of our target. This serves as the external evidence in support of the argument.

In the third and fourth chapters, attempt is made in exegeting the passage, i.e. Galatians 4:1-7. It is an attempt to discover the evidences from the passage itself. It is amazing to discover that the idea of an infant heir put under the slavery or bondage of 'guardians' and 'stewards' in verses 1 and 2 obviously indicates that this is an illustration from a legal practice known to Paul and his first century readers.

In chapter five, we have the summary and conclusion of this study. It is then observed and noted that before the advent of Christ, both the Gentiles and the Jews were in their spiritual infancy, though they were potential heirs. In this pre-messianic condition, they were under "bondage

of the elements of the world" until the "appointed time". At the "fullness of time" God sent His Son in order to redeem them from slavery and restore them to sonship with God. They are "no longer slaves, but sons."

An attempt is made to apply the message of this passage, and some important facts to our contemporary Christian experience. For instance, there is the need for the Church in African to make caution in laying more emphasis on rules and regulations that may seem unbiblical on the members of the church, which may be to the detriment of their salvation experience.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter demands that we bring our study to a conclusion. This we will do by summarizing what we have discussed so far.

From the onset, we have noticed that the study is an attempt to know which of the two basic arguments (the legal analogy or Exodus typology) is the most appropriate background that informed the apostle Paul in writing Galatians 4:1-7.

The summary of the most important conclusions which we reached in the course of our research can be categorized into two major divisions, i.e. the external evidence and internal evidence.

In considering the external evidence, two major schools of thought have been critically scrutinized: The legal analogy from the Graeco-Roman background as spearheaded by Francis Lyall and other eminent scholars; and Exodus typology as put forth by James M. Scott and others. In both positions, 'huiiothesia' plays a very significant role in the sense that both positions recognize 'huiiothesia' as the key word that influenced Paul's thought. Lyall and others see 'huiiothesia' as a legal metaphor from the Graeco-Roman background while J.M. Scott and his colleague see it as emanating from Old Testament/Jewish tradition. These arguments then lead us to what we have as the thesis of this research, that is, to know which of these lines of argument is the most appropriate in interpreting Galatians 4:1-7.

In the course of our research toward realizing the thesis of this work, some salient points obviously came to our awareness. We shall briefly enumerate some of them.

1. 'Huiiothesia', which translates as 'adoption,' was unknown as a legal issue to the Jews as levirate marriage. There are some cases of

