

II Corinthians: Lesson #31: Abraham, the Law, and the Gospel

Notes for Parents to Study with Their Children

For Wednesday, August 13th

Read Gal. 2:16 – 3:29 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: Gal. 3:27 “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

Christ Has to Live in Me

- Paul says, “ I am crucified with Christ. And I live; still it’s not really me, but Christ living in me.” What do you think it means for Christ to live in me? It means He has to live in our lives. His ways have to be in us. People should be able to see in our lives that we live the way Jesus would have us to.

A Problem in the Churches of Galatia

- We were studying last time about how the churches of Galatia were being affected by people who said you had to follow the Law of Moses to be saved.
- Of course, we study from the Old Testament and learn from it, but the Old Testament does not tell us what we need to know to be saved and serve Jesus Christ.
- Paul is trying to show the Galatians that salvation rests on trusting Jesus Christ, not in the Law of Moses.

How Was Abraham Counted Righteous?

- We may remember studying about Abraham when we were looking at Paul’s letter to the Romans. Paul talked a lot in Romans about the faith of Abraham and how he is an example of the kind of faith Christians should have.
- Here in Galatians (3:6) Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 that Abraham believed God’s promise that He would give him a son and that because Abraham trusted God’s promise, God thought of Abraham as a righteous man.

All Nations Would Be Blessed Through Abraham’s Seed

- God told Abraham that “in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen. 22:18). “Seed” is a Bible term that is describing someone that would be born from a person. Abraham had Isaac, Isaac had Jacob, Jacob had twelve sons, those sons had children and finally became a large group of people. But the word “seed” here is describing just one of those many descendants that came from Abraham who would bless all nations. Paul explains that the one “Seed” which would bless all nations of the earth was Christ. (Gal. 3:16).
- When we have faith like Abraham had we believe in what God promises. When we believe in Jesus we know that He came to give us the promises of God.
- Paul says when we trust in Jesus, we become children of Abraham because we believe like he did.
- If you belong to Jesus Christ, you are one of Abraham’s descendants and no matter what nation you came from will be blessed.

Baptized into Christ

- Have you ever seen someone be baptized? What happens when someone is baptized? Why do people get baptized?
- Paul says that we are to be baptized into Christ. That means we can be saved and have Jesus as our friend that we depend on. But no one is in Christ until they are baptized.
- Paul also said that when you are baptized into Christ, you put on Christ. “Put on” is the same idea as putting on your clothes, or putting on a coat when its cold outside. That’s just a way of explaining it, but it is interesting to think that once we are baptized and become Christians, its kind of like wearing Jesus all around us all the time. We put Him on and He becomes part of our lives, part of what we are.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

We are Justified, Not by the Law, but By Faith in Christ

Gal. 2:16 Be we have come to realize that people are not justified by works of the Law, but by believing in Jesus Christ. That we were made righteous by faith in Christ, not by works of the Law, because no one will be made righteous by works of the Law.

17 But if we who are seeking to be made righteous in Christ, are found to be sinners, does that make Christ one who serves sin? Absolutely not!

18 If is started rebuilding the very things I have torn down, I would be a breaking the law.

19 For I, by the Law, am dead to the Law, so that I can live for God.

20 I am crucified with Christ. And I live; still it’s not really me, but Christ living in me. The life I live now in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

21 I refuse to reject the grace of God; for if righteousness came by keeping the Law, then there was no reason for Christ to have died.

Why are the Galatians Trying to Keep the Law of Moses?

3:1 O foolish Galatians! Has someone put a spell on you? What has happened to the people that had the death of Jesus on the cross so clearly posted before their eyes?

2 I want you to help me understand something: Did you receive the Spirit from doing the works of the Law or because you heard the Gospel and responded in faith.

3 Are you so foolish that you think that you began with the Spirit, and now you’ll be able to finish by observing fleshly rules of the Law?

4 Is all that you’ve suffered for following Christ been in vain, if it really is in vain?

5 He who supplies you with the Spirit and works miracles among you – does He do that because you work practicing the Law of Moses or because you heard and obeyed the Gospel?

We Must Have Faith Like Abraham Did

6 It’s just like Abraham – He believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.

7 So understand that people of faith are the children of Abraham.

8 The Scripture was showing us even before our time that God would ultimately pronounce Gentiles as righteous by faith. It was like the gospel was being preached before it ever came into existence, when God told Abraham, “In you all nations will be blessed.”

9 So that means all those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

10 Now all those who are trying to be saved by keeping the Law of Moses are under a curse; because it was written, “Everyone who does not obey all the things written in the book of the Law is cursed.”

11 But it is clear that no one will be made right before God by keeping the Law because the Scripture said, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

12 The Law is not about your faith in Christ, but the Scripture said, “The person who keeps these Laws shall live by them.”

13 Christ paid the price to free us from the Law’s curse by becoming a curse for us. It is written in Scripture, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.”

14 This was done so that the blessing of Abraham would come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ to receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

All Nations Would Be Blessed Through Abraham’s Seed

15 Brethren, let me give you a human illustration: Even though it’s a will made by just an ordinary human being, still its true that once its been made official, no one can throw it aside as if it means nothing. Nor can anyone come along and add other things to it.

16 Now consider this: we know that promises were made to Abraham and his seed. But think about it, the Scripture didn’t saying “in your seeds all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”, but “in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” That promise wasn’t about many, but about one – Christ.

17 Now this is what I want to teach you: God made this Covenant to Abraham about Christ being “his seed” that would bless all nations of the earth. Now the Law of Moses was given 430 years later, but just because God gave the Law through Moses, it doesn’t mean that He would no longer keep the Covenant made with Abraham. God would never have done away with that promise.

18 Remember, God promised Abraham He would do this. If all nations were going to inherit the blessing by keeping the Law of Moses, then it’s no longer about a promise.

Why Did God Give the Law of Moses?

19 If God made this promise to Abraham to send Christ to bless us, and it wasn’t about the Law of Moses, then why did God give the Law through Moses? What was its purpose? The Law was added in to show people that they were transgressing what God wanted. Though the commands of the Law were communicated by angels and given through a mediator (Moses), still it was only given until the Seed came, the One the promise was made about.

20 In giving the Law God was giving it to all the children of Israel and Moses was needed as a mediator to give the Law to the people. But in fulfilling the promise of giving the Seed which is Christ, no mediator was needed. You don’t have mediators when only one side is involved and God is one.

21 Now am I saying the Law is somehow against the promises God made to Abraham? Absolutely not! If a Law could have been given that was all we would need to give us life, then we could have all been right with God just by keeping the Law.

22 But what was written in the Law shut all of us up under the guilt of sin. This served to make us all aware of that what was promised to those who had faith in Jesus Christ, would be given to those who believed.

23 So before this opportunity for faith in Jesus came, it was like we were all confined and kept under guard by the Law of Moses, all of us shut in until the time when the faith would be revealed.

24 So the Law was like someone who is a custodian for children – someone who takes care of them, guides them, controls them and makes certain they are being properly taught. The Law's role was to deliver us to Christ so that we could be justified our faith in Him.

25 But now that faith in Christ has come, we are no longer under that custodian.

We Become God's Children by Faith When We Are Baptized

26 We understand about these matters that we are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 We are children of God through faith in Christ Jesus because as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

28 There is no Jew, there is no Greek, there is no slave, there is no free person, there is no male, there is no female, because in Christ you all are one.

29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and will inherit just what God promised.