

II Corinthians: Lesson #32: Adopted as Heirs

Notes for Parents to Study with Their Children

For Sunday, August 17th

Read Gal. 4:1 – 5:12 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: Gal. 4:7 “Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

Paul is still trying to teach the Galatians that we are not under the Law of Moses. We are under Jesus and must do what He teaches us.

Heirs and Their Inheritance

- Do you know a will is? A will is a paper that says what a person wants to happen to their house and money once they die.
- If the will says that you can have \$1,000, then when that person dies you will be given that much money. That is called an inheritance, and the person that gets the money is called an heir.
- Usually parents leave a will that says their children can inherit their money.
- But what if a 7 year old child inherited their father and mother’s house, car, and money? Would they know what to do with it? Probably not.
- In that case some adult would be appointed to take care of them and the inheritance until that child became an adult.
- Paul said that the Law of Moses was like that guardian who took care of the child until they grew up.
- Once they grew up, they would no longer need that guardian. Now they had Jesus.

Sarah and Hagar and the Two Covenants

- Paul also tells an Old Testament story about Abraham’s wife Sarah and her slave, Hagar.
- God had promised Abraham a son, but Abraham and Sarah were getting older and older and had never had a child. Sarah wanted to have a child through her slave, Hagar.
- Hagar had Ishmael, but later God promised that Sarah would have a son. They trusted God and in time had Isaac. Isaac was the son God had promised.
- Paul said those under the old covenant were like the children of Hagar, slaves. These were the Jews who were enslaved to the Law of Moses.
- Those under the new covenant, Christians, were free like the children of Sarah. They weren’t slaves to the Law of Moses, but were free from it. They like Isaac were the ones God had promised.

Two Jerusalems

- The Jews worshipped in Jerusalem.
- But Christians have Jerusalem above. The heavenly city of Jerusalem as their true home.

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

Sons that Inherit the Promise

4:1 Suppose a father died while his child was still young. That child one day will inherit all his father's money and possessions. But even though this child will one day inherit and have control of all that their parents have, while they are still a child they don't have control over it. That child has no more authority than a servant would in a family.

2 In fact while they are still children, the father had set it up so they will be under guardians and managers until the time when the father had decided that they old enough to have their inheritance.

3 Now our relationship with the Law of Moses was like this. When we were children, it was like we were slaves having to live under rules. And many of those rules didn't have much spiritual significance, but had to do with the physical world [what special clothing you had to wear, what you could eat, what days you had to observe, Gal. 4:9,10; Col. 2:20-21].

4 But then the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son who came from a woman, and came to live under the Law of Moses.

5 And the reason God sent His Son was to redeem those who were under the Law so that we could have what was promised – that we would be recognized as sons.

6 And now, because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”

7 And that means that you are no longer a mere child with no more rights than a slave, but you are officially recognized as a son; and even more, a son that is an heir of God through Christ.

8 But when you Gentiles didn’t even know God, you were enslaved to various gods, who were not really gods at all.

9 So now that you have finally come to know God (or even more important to be known by God), how is it that you are turning back to the Law of Moses – rules which were weak and poor. Why would you want to be enslaved by those things all over again?

10 For instance, you now think you have to observe certain days, months, seasons and years as taught in the Law.

11 I’m afraid about you that maybe the hard work I did in you was all for nothing.

Paul and His Relationship with the Galatians

12 Brethren, I beg you, be like I am. After all, I was willing to become like you. You did no wrong to me.

13 Don’t you remember how the first time I came there I preached the gospel to you even though I was physically ill.

14 And even though I was going through that physical trial, you didn’t despise me or reject me. You received me like I was an angel of God, even like you would have received Christ Jesus Himself.

15 You felt blessed back then, where is that sense of blessedness now? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.

16 So have I become your enemy because I’ve told you the truth?

17 These people who are distorting the gospel are zealous to get you, but not in a good way. Their whole point of demanding that you keep the Law is to shut you out of the church, so that you will zealously want their help in getting back in.

18 Of course, it’s always nice thing to have someone zealously wanting you if what they want is a good thing. I know because I zealously sought you when I was there preaching, and I still feel that way even though I can’t be present with you.

19 My little children, it looks like I’ve got to go through all the pain of childbirth all over again until Christ is formed in you.

20 I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, but I don’t know what to think about you.

The Two Covenants

21 Tell me this, you who want to be under the Law of Moses, do you not hear what it says?

22 It is written, that Abraham had two sons, one born from the slave, Hagar, (Ishamel) and one born from a free woman, Sarah (Isaac).

23 And that son born to the slave was born according to a human decision, but the son born to the freewoman was born according to God’s promise.

24 Now I’m going to use these people figuratively to describe something to you: Think of these as being like the two covenants. One covenant is from Mt. Sinai which bore children that we be slaves. That one compares to Hagar.

25 This Hagar is Mt. Sinai in Arabia and represents Jerusalem as it is now. I use that to describe it because she under slavery to the Law with her children.

26 But there is another Jerusalem, the one above. She is free from the Law and she is the true mother of us all.

27 We remember what the Scripture said, "Rejoice, childless woman who could not have any children. Break out and shout, you that are in not in labor. For the woman who couldn't have children has ended up with more children than the one who had a husband."

28 Now we, brethren, just like Isaac, are the children of promise.

29 And we remember that after Isaac was born, Ishamel (the one born by human decisions) persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit. And that's the way it still is.

30 Now what does Scripture tell us about what was said to Abraham? "Cast out the slave and her son. The son of the slave will not be an heir with the son of the freewoman."

31 So then, brethren, we are not the children of a slave, but children of the free woman.

5:1 Therefore, stand firm in the liberty Christ gave us from the Law of Moses and don't be held again under its yoke of slavery.

A Warning About Keeping the Law of Moses

2 Now listen to me carefully: I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourself be circumcised to keep the Law of Moses, Christ will be of no profit to you.

3 And I'm putting it on record that if you submit to circumcision, you are under obligation to keep the whole Law.

4 Any of you trying to be made right with God by means of the Law of Moses are fallen from grace.

5 Those of us waiting for hope of righteousness will do so by means of the Spirit through faith.

6 In Jesus Christ, circumcision will accomplish nothing and being uncircumcised will accomplish nothing, but faith working through love will accomplish something.

7 You were running your race well, so who is hindering you? Who is trying to persuade you not to obey the truth?

8 This persuasion did not come from the one who called you.

9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.

10 I am confident about you in the Lord that you won't accept any other ideas about this than what I taught you. But that man (whoever he is) that's disturbing you will have the weight of judgment on him.