

Heirs to the Promise

Key Verse:
***“Wherefore thou
art no more a
servant, but a son;
and if a son, then
an heir of God
through Christ.”***
—Galatians 4:7

Selected Scripture:
Galatians 3:15-18;
4:1-7

IN THIS LESSON, THERE is a picture of how a father might transfer wealth to his son upon reaching maturity. Until that time, the heir's status is similar to that of a slave. Such was the condition of the Jews who were required to follow the Mosaic Law even though it could not provide life to those who attempted to follow its requirements.—Gal. 4:1-3

“When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”—vss. 4-6

Our Key Verse confirms that believing Jews were freed from bondage to the Law by faith in Christ's shed blood which made them sons of God.

Before their conversion to Christ, Gentiles were in bondage to various idols. Now that they had come into a relationship with God, Paul warns them not to relinquish their new liberty and attempt to manifest holy living by observing Sabbaths and other festivals associated with the Jewish calendar. “Now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye

desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”—vss. 9-11

When Paul met the brethren of Galatia, they deeply appreciated his ministry, and, figuratively would have “plucked out their eyes” on his behalf. (chap. 4:15) Subsequently, however, they were influenced by false teachers who wanted them to come under bondage to the Mosaic Law. Thus, it was needful for Paul to reiterate that their standing as sons of God was directly attributed to their acceptance of Christ’s sacrifice exclusively, as opposed to legal encumbrances related to the Law Covenant.—vss. 16-20

Additionally, Paul contrasts the two sons of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, as springing forth from two covenant mothers, Sarah and Hagar. Sarah gave birth to Isaac as the child of promise after Ishmael was born of the slave girl Hagar. When Christ declared the Jewish polity was cast off and their house was left desolate (Matt. 23:38), the true heir of the Abrahamic promises proved to be Christ and his church. All believers who have accepted Christ as their Redeemer and Savior would be the heirs of these promises—the spiritual seed through whom the blessings would flow to the human family. As noted in our previous lesson, the Jewish legalists resented Paul’s clear teaching on the matter.—Gal. 4:21-30

Despite Israel as a nation being blinded to this dispensational change, their eyes will be opened during God’s kingdom as they receive favor once again when the New Covenant is established.

“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”—Rom. 11:25,26 ■