

# UNDERSTANDING VALUES Sunday School- February 19, 2012

## Unifying Topic: HEIRS TO THE PROMISE

### Lesson Text

I. The Law And The Promise (Galatians 3:15-18)

II. Believers Are Heirs To The Promise (Galatians 4:1-7)

**The Main Thought:** Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Galatians 4:7, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** Sometimes a person inherits a system of values without personally investigating the appropriateness of such values. Why is it important to understand, rather than merely inherit, the values by which we live? Paul stated that Gentiles received God's blessing as heirs of Abraham, but maturing in their faith in Jesus Christ.

**Lesson Aim:** To read and explore Paul's statements about being heirs of Abraham in the faith.

**Life aim:** To understand the meaning of inheriting the faith and confessing it as one's own.

---

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

---

1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

### **HISTORY:**

<sup>1</sup>Paul is writing to a group of churches which he had helped to establish. After having established these churches, there were a group of teachers called "Judaizers" who came in and began spreading their own doctrines. The Judaizers felt that a Gentile couldn't really be saved apart from first becoming a Jew, and that started by being circumcised. What is at issue is whether or not a Christian is supposed to strive to keep the law.

<sup>2</sup>To show the error of their way Paul now turns from subjective experience to the objective evidence of the Word of God. We should never judge the Scriptures by our experience but should always test our experience by the Word of God. The Law says "do and live" but grace says "believe and live," The Law could only inform man of his sin and it could never save him from his sin. In these verses Paul quotes Old Testament statements to prove that salvation is by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law.

There is a <sup>3</sup>contrast between the portion of faith and that of law. We found that the law necessarily brings in a curse; not that the law is bad, but because men — because Israel — were sinners. The law, therefore, because it is holy, just, and good, must condemn those that were not good, but evil. The conclusion of the law, for such, accordingly, was a curse. On the other hand, God loves to bless. How can these things be? The answer is, that "*they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*" Abraham received a blessing, not a curse, and this because of faith and not law. The apostle thence proves that since the law, no matter how good in itself, can only bring a curse upon every soul who takes this ground in its dealings with God. Faith brings me into a blessing and all blessing through God's grace.

The law never brought a blessing upon those who were under it, even though they were Abraham's seed, and this, because they were sinners; nor was it ever the means of their receiving the Holy Ghost as the power of enjoying Christ. On the other hand, the hearing of faith, as of old for Abraham himself, is the one simple means that the Holy Ghost uses for all real peace and blessing; and this avails, through redemption, not only for the Jew, but even for the Gentile.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.calvaryfullerton.org/Bstudy/48%20Gal/1995/48GAL03B.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/galatians-36/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/kelly/2Newtest/galatian.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

## LESSON:

### Galatians 3:15-18 The Law And The Promise

**3:15 Brethren,** — Notice that <sup>4</sup>Paul calls them "*brethren*," which is kind of softening the tone a little bit. He opened Chapter 3 by calling them "idiots." That was pretty strong. But now he's just trying to get them to think with him, and he affectionately calls them "*brethren*" regarding them as the sons of Abraham. **I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto** — means he's using a human analogy, he likens God's promise to Abraham to the "will" that people make; when a man writes his last will and testament. The word "*testament*," in fact, is from the same Greek word that is translated "*covenant*" in this verse. Paul notes here that even in the case of a human "*Will*," once it has been confirmed or validated, the terms therein cannot be altered. The point is that once a covenant has been made and executed, it stands: it cannot be annulled or added to. By law the promises of the covenant are sealed; both parties are bound to keep their word, their promise. They would have concluded that the blessing, which was given to Abraham by God, was received by Abraham by faith as he believed in the promises of God.

**3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.** Notice, the promise was not given to Abraham alone, but it was also given to the seed, the descendants and offspring of Abraham. Who is meant by the seed of Abraham? — Scripture declares that it is Jesus Christ. The word "*seed*" is singular, not plural. Therefore, God's promise points to one single person, and that person is Jesus Christ. The promises of the gospel, points first to Christ, then by Him to those who are by faith engrafted into Christ. <sup>5</sup>Fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant does not depend on the nation of Israel but on the person of Christ. God's salvation is always through the finished work of Christ on the cross. Legalism is lethal because it undermines that finished work, making it unfinished.

**3:17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.** This verse is saying: "*this is what I mean*," by what I said in Gal. 3:15. <sup>6</sup>Paul now brings back this idea of human agreements (from verse 15), and says that just because there was a new agreement with Moses, doesn't mean that God's original contract with Abraham was null and void. The original contract with Abraham was yet to be fulfilled! It would be fulfilled in Jesus.

- When the law was given, the promise to Abraham had not yet been fulfilled; therefore, the law could not void or change the covenant of faith with Abraham. The promises of God to Abraham and his descendent, Jesus Christ, still stood. Since Jesus Christ, who is eternal existed before Abraham, the covenant of faith was given to Christ even before it was given to Abraham (*Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians, p.45*).

<sup>7</sup>According to Usher's Chronology, the promise was made to Abraham in B. C. 1921; the law was given at Sinai B. C. 1491; the interval is 430 years. But some have held that Paul made a mistake because in Exod. 12:12 it said that Hebrews were in Egypt 430 years. The matter is easily explained. The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament is the one usually followed by Christ and his apostles. Its translators, following the Hebrew copy before them, render Exodus 12:12, "The sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years." Whether this is right, or our Hebrew text, does not matter. Paul gave the usually received statement. His point was simply that the law was given many ages after the covenant with Abraham.

**3:18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.** If the inheritance is based on law, then it is conditional and is not a promise. But God gave the inheritance to Abraham as a promise - therefore it is unconditional. Notice the "*if*" and "*but*." You see the inheritance was not given to Abraham by law, that is, Abraham could not earn, win, or merit it; but as Scripture declares— "*God gave it [the inheritance] to Abraham as a promise.*" The same promise is given to believers, that is, to all those who walk in the faith of Abraham.

## PURPOSE OF THE LAW

### -----NOT APART OF THE LESSON-----

**<sup>8</sup>3:19-23. Wherefore then serveth the law?** What was its object then? **It was added** in order to restrain transgressions among men, and especially among the fleshly race of Abraham, until the promised seed, **to whom the promise was**

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/galatians/3\\_15-18.htm](http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/galatians/3_15-18.htm)

<sup>5</sup> <http://versebyversecommentary.com/galatians/galatians-316/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.calvaryfullerton.org/Bstudy/48%20Gal/1995/48GAL03C.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/bjohnson/hg1/PNT09-03.HTM>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/bjohnson/hg1/PNT09-04.HTM>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

made, even Christ, should come. It was therefore only to last until that seed came. **Ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.** Communicated through the means of angels to the mediator between Israel and God; that is, to Moses. See Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2; Deut. 33:2, and Deut. 5:5. **20. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one.** A mediator implies two parties between whom he acts. **But God is one.** The idea is that when God makes a promise by his sovereign power no mediator is required. God acts alone. Thus it was when the promises were made to Abraham. God, too, is One, the same, always, and hence the law is not due to a change of the divine mind. **21. Is the law then against the promises?** No. The law does not give life at all. If it did, and could impart righteousness, then it might be said to be opposed to the promises of righteousness by faith. **22. But.** But none became righteous by the law. The Scriptures place all under sin that the promise should be to them only who believe through Christ. All hope is in the gospel. See Rom. 11:32. **23. Kept under the law.** Before the faith was revealed we were confined under the law, as it were in prison, in a state of preparation for the faith that was to **be revealed.** The law was "added" (see verse 19) in order to do a work of preparation until the gospel was revealed.

**3:24-29. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster.** "Tutor," in the Revision. In Roman families a trusted slave, a pedagogue, had charge of children, preserved them from harm, and took them to school. The law is such a tutor; not a schoolmaster, but a guide to lead us to the school of Christ. There we are **justified by faith.** **25. After that faith is come.** When once brought to Christ we do not need the tutor any longer. We are no longer under him. **26. For ye are all the children of God.** Faith has come to all of you. You are all God's children by faith in Christ. Hence you are under the schoolmaster no longer. **27. For.** He now shows how their faith acted to bring them into Christ. As Dr. Schaff says, "Faith always implies surrender." Faith leads to obedience. The believer is **baptized into Christ,** and being found in him has **put on Christ.** Being in Christ, a member of his body, a part of the Son, the believer becomes a child of God. Compare Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 10:2, and Matt. 28:19. "The baptized is surrounded by Christ and covered by his merits. . . . The figure of putting on Christ as a new dress afterwards gave rise to the custom of wearing white baptismal garments."--Schaff, *in loco.* **28. There is neither Jew nor Greek.** In Christ the old, worldly lines of separation are all blotted out. **All one.** One person, as it were, "one new man" (Eph. 2:15), of which Christ is the head. All, without regard to race, blended into one whole. **29. If ye be Christ's.** As Christ is the seed of Abraham, all in Christ become the spiritual seed of Abraham, and hence heirs of the promise to Abraham's seed.

#### BACK TO THE LESSON

### Galatians 4:1-7 Believers Are heirs To The Promise

**4:1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;**

—<sup>9</sup>Each society has a time for a young boy to become a man. In Paul's days, it was a very important event. As soon as a boy became a man, he had full legal rights. Until that time, other people had to manage a child's personal and business affairs. Young children could not own property, even if their father gave it to them. Young children had no rights. Slaves could not own property either. Slaves had no rights; so young children and slaves were in the same situation. In Jewish society, a boy became a man soon after he was 12 years of age. In \*Greek society, a boy became a man at about 18 years of age. In Roman society, the child's father decided when the child was ready to be an adult. So Paul was probably using Roman society as a model in this verse. Paul is illustrating the spiritual immaturity of those living under the law and who are being prepared for faith in Christ. When a son is a minor and too young to receive his inheritance, he might as well be a slave. This was the situation of Paul and his fellow Israelites under the old covenant.

**4:2 But is under tutors and governors** Paul uses two terms that both carry the idea of entrusting someone with something of value: 1) tutors and 2) governors. Tutors are guardians who have the supervision of the person. Governors are stewards who have supervision of the property. They are trustees who manage the estate. The minor child, like the slave, is subordinated to other decision-makers and authority-figures **...until the time appointed of the father.** The child cannot speak or act on his own behalf. In Roman society, the child's father decided when the child was ready to be an adult. In God's eternal timing, He appointed a time when the believer would operate under grace.

**4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage...** Paul now brings the point home. <sup>10</sup>The Galatians were bound in legalism when they operated by rules. People subject to rules function like children. The law enslaved those under it from Sinai to Christ. The Greek indicates that they were in a permanent state of bondage to the law. **...under the elements of the world** referred to the "*elementary principles*" the Galatians previously followed, which for Jews would be the Mosaic law and for Gentiles, the basic concepts of their pagan religions. But they were enslaved

<sup>9</sup><http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/galatians-lbw.htm>

<sup>10</sup><http://versebyversecommentary.com/galatians/galatians-43/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

like little children in terms of their mind-set and life situations under a legalistic system. Legalism is not a step toward maturity; it is a step back into childhood. When enslaved by the law, the Jews were children in bondage, not sons enjoying liberty.

#### **4:4 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,—**

<sup>11</sup>The idea behind the phrase "*the fullness of time*" is "*when the time was right.*" Jesus came at just the right time in God's redemptive plan, when the world was perfectly prepared for God's work. There was a fullness of time when God delivered the world— God sent forth His Son, born of a woman— Jesus came not only as God's Son, but also as one born of a woman, born under law to deliver man from condemnation of the law. Jesus Christ had to live under the law in order to secure the perfect righteousness of law for man. He had to obey the law in every single precept and stand before God as the Perfect and Ideal Man—Ideal Embodiment of Righteousness. God spoke the Word and the woman conceived miraculously by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**4:5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.** Paul has told us who came—God's Son; he has told us when He came and how He came. Now he explains why He came: to redeem them that were under the law. "*Redeem*" is the same word Paul used earlier (Gal.3:13); it means "*to set free by paying a price.*" <sup>12</sup>The reason that all must be redeemed from the law is the fact that by the law, all are condemned to die. The law brings death. *Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Therefore redemption was necessary that we might receive the adoption of sons. The word "*adoption*" (*huiothesia*) means "*to place as a son.*" In the ancient world the family was based on a Roman law called "*patria potestas*," the father's power. The law gave the father absolute authority over his children so long as the father lived. He could work, enslave, sell, and if he wished, he could pronounce the death penalty. Regardless of the child's adult age, the father held all power over personal and property rights. Therefore adoption was a serious matter. Yet, it was a common practice to ensure that a family would not become extinct by having no male children. And when a child was adopted, three legal steps were taken.

1. The adopted son was adopted permanently. He could not be adopted today and disinherited tomorrow.
2. The adopted son immediately had all the rights of a legitimate son in the new family.
3. The adopted son completely lost all rights in his old family. He was looked upon as a new person, that old debts and obligations connected with his former family were cancelled out and abolished as if they never existed.

This "*adoption of sons*" is bestowed as a gift. We cannot have it, and still be in bondage; <sup>13</sup>that we might no longer be accounted and treated as servants, but as sons grown up to maturity, who are allowed greater freedoms, and admitted to larger privileges, than while they were under tutors and governors.

#### **4:6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.**

God the Father sent the Son to die for us, and God the Son sent His Spirit to live in us—can you see the Trinity? The contrast here is not between immature children and adult sons, but between servants and sons. Like the prodigal son, the Galatians wanted their Father to accept them as servants, when they really were sons (Lk.15:18-19).

#### **4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**

<sup>14</sup>This verse ends a long section that Paul started in 3:1. The Christians in Galatia were no longer slaves. They were part of God's family. They were receiving the good things that God promised to Abraham. They received these good things because they trusted Jesus Christ. The contrasts:

- <sup>15</sup>The son has the same nature as the father, but the servant does not. When we trust Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us; and this means we are partakers of the divine nature (2Pt.1:4). The law could never give a person God's nature. So when the believer goes back into the law, he is denying the very divine nature within, and he is giving the old nature (the flesh) opportunity to go to work.
- The son has a father, while the servant has a master. No servant can ever say "*Father*" to his master. When the sinner trusts Christ, he receives the Holy Spirit within, and the Spirit tells him that he is a child of the Father (Rom.8:15-16). It's natural for a baby to cry, but not for a baby to talk to his father. When the Spirit enters the heart, he says Abba Father (Rom.8:15). The word "*Abba*" is an Aramaic word that is the equivalent of our

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/com/guz/view.cgi?book=ga&chapter=004>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/galatians/07.html>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.studylight.org/com/mhc-com/view.cgi?book=ga&chapter=004&verse=001#Ga4\\_1](http://www.studylight.org/com/mhc-com/view.cgi?book=ga&chapter=004&verse=001#Ga4_1)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/galatians-lbw.htm>

<sup>15</sup> The Wiersbe Bible Commentary

English word "papa." This shows the closeness of the child to the Father. No servant has this.

- The son obeys out of love, while the servant obeys out of fear. The Spirit works in the heart of the believer to quicken and increase his love for God. The Judaizers told the Galatians that they would become better Christians by submitting to the law, but the law can never produce obedience. Only love can do that.
- The son is rich, while the servant is poor. We are both sons and heirs. And since we are adopted—placed as adult sons in the family—we may begin drawing on our inheritance right now. God has made available to us the riches of His grace (Eph.1:7; 2:7), the riches of His glory Phil.4:19) the riches of His goodness (Rom.2:4), and the riches of His wisdom (Rom.11:33)—and all of the riches of God are found in Christ (Col.1:19; 2:3).
- The son has a future while the servant does not. While many kind masters did provide for their slaves in old age, it was not required of them. The father always provides for the son (2Cor.12:14).

**SUMMARY:**

**3:15-18** <sup>16</sup>The Judaizers thought they had Paul backed into a corner. They had been saying that the law was given and this changed the original covenant of promise. <sup>17</sup>A covenant, or agreement, among men, after it is ratified, cannot be annulled or altered without the consent of both parties. The covenant with its promises was made with Abraham and his seed. There were promises spoken on several occasions. The promises of the covenant were to the seed, as well as to Abraham, and hence did not terminate with his death. But there is a seed to whom the promise is given; a seed that embraces many, but is one. That seed is Christ the head, and all in Christ. The whole spiritual seed of Abraham concentrates in Christ. The promise is to Christ and all in Christ. He returns to the argument introduced in verse 15. Hence the law, made over four centuries after the covenant was given, could not disannul it. The covenant made with Abraham is still in force. Law and promise exclude each other. The legal heir receives his inheritance by law, if there be no will; one not a legal heir may receive it by the promise of a will. The inheritance was given to Abraham by promise; and ours depends on the promise.

-----  
**4:1-7** <sup>18</sup>Children who are under age are no better off than slaves, even though everything their parents own will someday be theirs. This is because children are placed in the care of guardians and teachers until the time their parents have set. Paul is saying, "*We were minors, children, not yet delivered from bondage, since the time had not come appointed by the Father.*" But when the fulness of the appointed time came, the Father sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that we would receive the adoption of sons crying, Abba, Father, where we would be no more a servant but a son, and an heir of God through Christ. Couldn't change a thing; it speaks for itself. Paul is making a contrast between servants and sons. He says that you were once slaves but now you are sons.

**APPLICATION:**

We do not have to earn God's favour because Jesus already earned that for us. We have the same status that He has before the Father—His rights are our rights. Be assured of who you are in Christ as you accept His promise. As we inherit the promise, know that it came at such a great cost to the Father. I would rather be a son than a servant with no rights. As I call on Abba Father, it's good to belong! Let Christ be always before your eyes, as a sure argument for the defense of faith, against dependence on human righteousness.

**<sup>19</sup>Info on Galatians**

Another word for Letter	<b>Epistle</b>	Who wrote Galatians?	<b>Paul</b>
When was Galatians written?	<b>Shortly after A.D. 49 sometime after the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15</b>	Where did Galatians get its name?	<b>From the Greek PROS GALATAS describing the region in which the churches were located to whom Paul addresses this letter</b>
To whom was Galatians written?	<b>The Christians gathered in the region of Galatia, in the churches that Paul planted in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe</b>	Where was Paul when he wrote Galatians?	<b>Most likely Antioch</b>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/galatians-41/>  
<sup>17</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/bjohnson/hg1/PNT09-03.HTM>  
<sup>18</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/galatians-41/>  
<sup>19</sup> <http://flashcarddb.com/cardset/62412-galatians-and-ephesians-flashcards>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

Galatians is the only letter Paul addresses to what? <b>Addressed to a group of churches rather than a single congregation</b>	What was the main purpose of Galatians? <b>To refute the beliefs of Juudaizers who had corrupted the church with false doctrines regarding salvation, and to establish again the central focus of Christianity — justification by faith.</b>
What is Galatians often referred to as? <b>Epistle of Grace</b>	What is a key word or key verse in Galatians? <b>"Grace" 5:1</b>
Who are the key people in Galatians? <b>Paul, Peter, Barnabas, Titus and the Judaizers</b>	In the Old Testament we see the _____ of Christ <b>Promise</b>
In the gospels we see the _____ of Christ. <b>Person</b>	In the book of Acts, we see the _____ of Christ <b>Power</b>
In the Epistles we see the _____ of our Christianity <b>Practice</b>	Galatians portrays the work of Christ through _____ <b>Grace</b>
Galatians established that Jesus was _____ in His service to God and man <b>Perfect</b>	Galatians also established that the law was _____ in Jesus <b>Completed</b>
Christ liberates from the Law and sin, those who _____ <b>Believe in Him</b>	What is the basic outline of Galatians? <b>AUTHENTICITY of the Gospel of Justification by Faith SUPERIORITY of the Gospel of Justification by Faith FREEDOM of the Gospel of Justification by Faith</b>
Teaches that the source of the gospel is God <b>True Gospel</b>	Treats Chris's death as meaningless <b>False Gospel</b>
Says people must obey the Law in order to be saved <b>False Gospel</b>	Knows that life is obtained through death - we trust in the God who loved us and died for us so that we might die to sin and live for Him <b>True Gospel</b>
Explains that all believers have the Holy Spirit through faith <b>True Gospel</b>	Tries to find favor with God by observing certain rules <b>False Gospel</b>
Counts on keeping laws to erase sin <b>False Gospel</b>	Declares that we cannot be saved by keeping laws-the only way of salvation is through faith in Christ, which is available to all <b>True Gospel</b>
Says that all believers are one in Christ, so there is no basis for discrimination of any kind <b>True Gospel</b>	Proclaims that we are free from the grip of sin and that the Holy Spirit's power fills and guides us <b>True Gospel</b>
Galatians was written primarily because... <b>The Christians in Galatia were being bombarded with false teachings from false teachers.</b>	At the beginning of Galatians, what did Paul call God to do to those false teachers? <b>Let God's curse fall on anyone who preaches any other message...</b>